

SOURCE: WINNIPEG SUN, DECEMBER 2001

---

## FILM CELEBRATES ABORIGINAL HOCKEY GREATS

Hockey fans! Here's one you don't want to miss.

I speak of the public screening of *They Call Me Chief* this coming Tuesday night, December 11, at the Walker Theatre, a fascinating documentary profiling the lives of aboriginal hockey players in the NHL.

Written and directed by Don Marks, narrated by Don Francks, the one-hour Canadian documentary offers an intimate look at a group of hockey greats and how their accomplishments are changing the game and their communities.

The players recount the obstacles they faced as they pursued their dreams and the work they are doing to remove barriers for the next generation of players. Their actions include the development of role-model hockey schools, the purchase of junior hockey franchises and the development of proper facilities and coaching.

While the film touches on some of the racism, stereotyping and isolation that affected these players along the way, *They Call Me Chief* focuses mainly on the passion and positive choices that enabled these players to realize their dreams.

Those featured include greats Fred Sasakamoose, Jim Neilson, Stan Jonathan, Reggie Leach, Ron Delorme, Ted Nolan, Bryan Trottier, Gino Odjick and Sheldon Souray. There's a commentary by Don Cherry (among others) and superb archival footage of thrilling moments in hockey history.

The film also provides a revealing look at the aboriginal experience, offering insight invaluable for better understanding the challenges faced by Aboriginal youth – in hockey and society.

Let's be honest. Our city has an unfortunate past with regard to relations between the white majority and the aboriginal minority. Neither group has tried very hard to discover the best of what the other has to offer, which is a shame.

Three more things about the screening you should know.

Doors open at 7 p.m., show time is 8 p.m. Tickets are a very reasonable \$10 per, available by calling 231-1524 or at the door.

Proceeds from the event will fund Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre Youth Programs, including the Adolescent Parent Support Project for teen mothers, Aboriginal scouts, Pow Wow Club, Youth Cultural Development and Arts program.

Thirdly, Mr. Marks would like you to know that while the film is a tribute to the tenacity and overwhelming success of these particular aboriginal NHLers, “it is also intended to share a message of hope with our young people, inspiring viewers both young and old alike to dream and reach for the stars. Our beneficiary, the Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre also strives to help youth reach their full potential, so this is a great fit.

Finally, a P.S. from Don, regarding the hockey sticks you see here: “While filming *They Call Me Chief*, we asked each player to autograph two hockey sticks, which we will eventually sell to raise money for the Adolescent Parent Support Project, along with a 500 goal stick signed by every NHL player who has scored 500 goals – donated by Bryan Trottier, and yet another stick signed by 40 NHL greats.

He’ll give you more details on their availability Tuesday night at the Walker. Excellent doc’. Don’t miss it.