

## **“This Land Was Made for You and Me”**

### **Mayor Aidsand F. Wright-Riggins**

One evidence that Collegeville is “A Great Place to Come Home to” is the proposal of Perkiomen Valley Middle School East students to name a loop around the campus, “**Chief Tammanund Circle**” after the Chief of Chiefs and Chief of the Turtle Clan of the Lenni-Lenape nation in the Delaware Valley. Chief Tammanund lived from 1628 to 1701 and negotiated a peace treaty with William Penn that lasted for seventy years.

Over 500 middle school students signed a petition to this effect which was presented to the PV School Board on October 3, 2022. Their proposal was supported by members of the Delaware Tribe of Indians also known as the Lenape. The name, “**Tammanund**” itself means “*Affable One*” and the students described the proposal to name this loop in the Chief’s honor as a “small gesture of good will and hope for a peaceful and prosperous future.” Although there are some other tributes to the Chief in the greater Philadelphia area, this one is will be the first spelled in the way that the Delaware Tribe itself prefers.

For about eighteen months, , I have been working with Ursinus College, the PV School District and members of the Delaware Tribe of Indians on matters of acknowledgement, education, collaboration, and inclusion to bring to our community a greater awareness of the history and culture of the Lenape people. I am proud that our students are showing us one way to do this. Recently, Ursinus College adopted a Land Acknowledgement Statement which is read at the beginning of many of their meetings and gatherings. It reads:

*Ursinus College respectfully acknowledges that our campus rests on Lenapehoking, the ancestral and spiritual homelands of the following five nations: Delaware Tribe of Indians, Delaware Nation, Eelūnaapèewii Lahkèewiit (Delaware Nation at Moraviantown), Stockbridge-Munsee Community, and Munsee-Delaware Nation (Ontario).*

*Our community carries names derived from the Lenape language - names holding spiritual and cultural meaning while also bearing the remembrance of the systematic removal of the Lenape people over 250 years ago by European colonial powers, whose legacy still reinforces and benefits from the Lenape's disenfranchisement.*

*Ursinus College commits to collaboration, representation, and inclusion as we work together with the Lenape people to bring about healing and reconciliation between and among all our communities.*

November is Native American Heritage and History Month. At our November Council Meeting, I will be urging our Council to adopt a similar Land Acknowledgement Statement. Just as we begin each of our meetings with the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States it is also important that we acknowledge the ancestral home on which our aspirational commitments to liberty and justice for all is based. In the spirit of the "Affable One" who was committed to peace and prosperity for all, this is the least that we can do.