

About the Peace Tree

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The WVU Peace Tree was planted on September 12, 1992 to commemorate the University's commitment to the rediscovery of America's Indian heritage. Chief Leon Shenandoah, Tadodaho (Presiding Moderator) of the Grand Council of the Haudenosaunee Six Nations Iroquois Confederacy, and Chippewa Chief Robert TallTree, also a musician, artisan and storyteller, were invited to plant and bless the tree. On August 8, 1996, vandals cut down the Peace Tree. A second Peace Tree, which still stands today, was planted by Mohawk Chief Jake Swamp on October 19, 1996.

According to Haudenosaunee oral tradition, the Creator sent a Peacemaker to unite the warring Seneca, Cayuga, Oneida, Mohawk and Onondaga Nations by planting the original Tree of Peace at Onondaga ca. 1000 A.D. The Tree marked the formation of the Haudenosaunee Six Nations Iroquois Confederacy.

As told by Chief Jake Swamp, when the Tree was planted, the Peacemaker told the first leaders:

*“This will be the symbol that we will use.
The white pine
will be the symbol of peace.
Now the greenery of this tree
will represent the peace you have agreed to.”*

*“Every time you look at this tree
and its greenery,
you will be reminded of this peace you agreed to
because this tree
never changes color the year round,
it's always green,
so shall be your peace.”*

To learn more about the meaning and history of the Peace Tree, read Paul Wallace's *White Roots of Peace* (Clear Light Publishing, April 1994).