

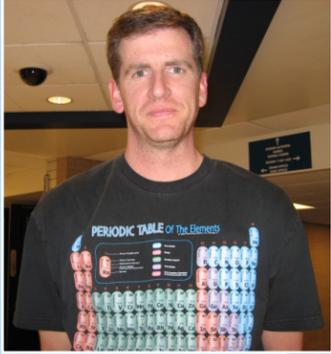
March 20 2009

**WESTWORD**  
WEB EXCLUSIVES

# Whatchoo talkin' 'bout, Willis?

## Proposed Sears Tower name change sparks debate

by Hillary Lindwall  
News/Wire Editor



Heinz

"I feel that the Sears Tower shouldn't have to go through a name change. It is a national monument recognized throughout the entire world, and it is a rather pointless change," freshman Patrick Melnick said in response to the news that the Sears Tower will undergo a name change this summer.

According to the *Chicago Tribune*, Willis Group Holdings, an insurance brokerage company based in London, will move its scattered offices to the current Sears Tower. As a part of the contract, the company will put its name on the 36-year-old skyscraper in July, branding it the Willis Tower, replacing the Sears Tower moniker, a name by which the building has been called since its completion in 1973,

Students and teachers alike agree that the name change is unnecessary for the city of Chicago and that Willis Group Holdings will receive much grief over the issue.

"I hate to see the name change, but I know that there have been a lot of changes in the last few years," College and Career Resource Center clerk Nancy Ouska said. "I was more sorry to see Marshall Field's change to Macy's. I think that many people will just continue to call it the Sears Tower, but I understand where the name needs to change now. I am not really happy about it, but all things must change eventually," Ouska said.

Most students take a more traditional stance and believe that the change is unnecessary.

"It has always been the Sears Tower. I am against it because you can't change the name of a historical landmark," junior Kristin Koder said. "The Willis Tower does not identify with the Sears Tower at all, and if they change the name and we get to host the 2016 Olympics, people from other countries will not be able to identify the tower either."

Freshman Meril Mani shares a similar opinion.

"I don't think that they should change it because it is traditional. Everyone knows it as the Sears Tower," Mani said. "Everyone comes and sees it, and they know it is the Sears Tower. They shouldn't change it just because there is a new owner."

Junior Matt Moy sees both sides. While he laments the change, he believes if a company has the money to do so, it should be allowed to change the name.

"I think that the name change is Sears Corporation's fault," Moy said, referring to the fact that Sears moved its corporate headquarters to Hoffman Estates in 1995. "I don't think that [changing the name] is a good thing, but [Willis Group Holdings] has the right to change it. Even though it is a historic landmark, changes happen," Moy added.

Science teacher Michael Heinz agrees with Ouska, believing that although the official name may change, Chicagoans will still refer to the tower by its original name.

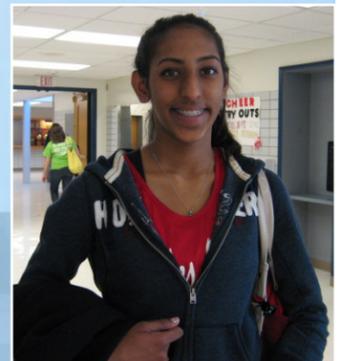
"I still call Cellular One Field Comiskey Park, and I think that a lot of other people still do, but that is the nature of today. With everyone having corporate sponsorship, you have to expect that," Heinz said.



Koder



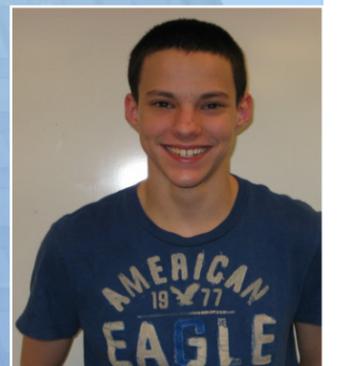
Ouska



Mani



Moy



Melnick