FERGUSON CHOSEN “NAME OF THE YEAR”

The American Name Society, at its annual meeting in Portland, Oregon on January 9, 2015 chose Ferguson the Name of the Year for 2014.

The name of this suburb of St. Louis, Missouri has become famous world-wide because of the protests which followed the shooting death of Michael Brown by a police officer. “Ferguson is now a name with the power to invoke immediate associations, like Columbine and Selma,” said Iman Nick, incoming President of the society. “It is a rallying cry for those concerned about issues of race and policing all over the world.”

Ferguson was also voted Place Name of the Year for 2014.

Uber was ANS’s Trade Name of the Year. The name of this app-based transportation network and taxi company has received world-wide publicity because of controversies about its use of non-regulated drivers. “To Uber” has also become a verb referring to any kind of delivery ordered by an electronic app.

Malala was voted Personal Name of the Year. The name of Pakistani activist Malala Yousafzai, who in October became the youngest winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, has become iconic for the rights of girls to be educated around the world. People wear T-shirts saying “I am Malala” around the world to show their support.

Elsa was voted Fictional Name of the Year. The name of the heroine of the Disney animated film “Frozen”, released in November 2013, became famous in 2014 as the film earned the distinction of being the highest-grossing animated film ever. The character Elsa gave a new stronger image to Disney animated heroines. The name Elsa has shown a sharp rise in use for babies in both the United States and the United Kingdom over 2014 as this association has replaced Elsa’s former “old lady” connotations.

The American Name Society is a scholarly organization founded in 1951 devoted to studying all aspects of names and naming. The Name of the Year vote has been held since 2004. “Francis” was the 2013 Name of the Year, and “Sandy” the Name of the Year for 2012. “Malala” was ANS’s Personal Name of the Year for 2012 as well as 2014.

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