

1984

Elinor Z. Taylor

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
156TH DISTRICT

Thank you very much Don

Distinguished ~~guests~~ <sup>guests</sup> ... Ladies & Gentlemen ... Friends  
Flag Day 1984 ~~the~~ the 207<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the American Flag

The Flag we honor to-day represents many things to many people ... and as citizens of this nation, we have our collective traditions ..... and unique ways of paying tribute individually .... to the symbol of our great nation.

Perhaps the most common of all is reciting the pledge of allegiance on occasions like this... When we do that .... although the words are the same ... the thoughts about what they mean are as diverse as the numbers of us who are here this evening.

1- It is the flag that flies high wide & handsome on joyous happy occasions - a fight won ... a country freed ... a peace remembered.

2. It is the flag that is solemn as it drops the casket of a loved one or of a comrade fallen in the line of duty. Only recently it dropped the casket of the unknown soldier from Viet Nam. That soldier - unknown - finally captured victory +

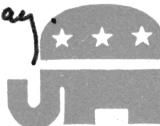


proper recognition for all who fought the unpopular war.

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3. It is the flag children wave <sup>in joy</sup> / widows clutch in sorrow.
4. It is the flag that in anger & rebellion that has been desecrated by our own misguided & misled ~~people~~
5. It is the flag that was burned by the terrorists in Iran - and that act served only to unite our people.
6. It is the flag carried <sup>in battle</sup> to protect our land & liberty
7. It is the flag that symbolized freedom to the oppressed people of Europe - it was carried on the beaches of Normandy - All American ~~inspired~~ ~~by Pres Reagan~~ ~~that day~~ were reminded on the 40th anniversary of D day of the sacrifices of brave men who fought & died for our precious freedom.
8. It was raised in glory at Iwo Jima
9. It was the flag that led the parade when in Norristown a band escorted my father to the R.R. station to fight a war that was to end all wars.
10. It is the flag that embodies patriotism. It is the spirit of the American nation. It is the history of the American people. When the founding fathers of this nation ordered the creation of Old Glory . . . . Their thoughts of what it should symbolize must have been different from what we think today.



TO THEM IT MAY HAVE STOOD FOR A NATION OF PURITY... REPRESENTED BY WHITE. THAT PURITY WAS BOUGHT AT THE PRICE OF RED BLOOD... WITH THE STARS ... A NEW CONSTELLATION OF SOVEREIGN STATES... RISING ON AN UNCLUTTERED AND CLEAR HORIZON OF BLUE.

GEORGE WASHINGTON, THE FATHER OF OUR COUNTRY, LOOKED AT IT ANOTHER WAY. HE SAID:

"WE TAKE THE STARS FROM HEAVEN, THE RED FROM OUR MOTHER COUNTRY, SEPARATING IT BY WHITE STRIPES, THUS SHOWING THAT WE HAVE SEPARATED FROM HER, AND THE WHITE STRIPES SHALL GO DOWN TO POSTERITY REPRESENTING LIBERTY."

ANOTHER INTERPRETATION OF OUR FLAG EXPLAINS THAT THE RED IS FOR VALOR, ZEAL AND FERVENCY; THE WHITE FOR HOPE, PURITY, CLEANLINESS OF LIFE AND RIGHTNESS OF CONDUCT; THE BLUE -- THE COLOR OF HEAVEN -- FOR REVERENCE TO GOD, LOYALTY, SINCERITY, JUSTICE AND TRUTH.

THE EXPLANATION GOES ON TO DEFINE THE STAR -- AN ANCIENT SYMBOL OF CIVILIZATIONS IN THE EAST -- AS A SYMBOL OF DOMINION AND SOVEREIGNTY, AS WELL AS LOFTY ASPIRATIONS.

THE CONSTELLATION OF THE STARS WITHIN THE UNION -- ONE STAR FOR EACH STATE -- IS EMBLEMATIC OF OUR FEDERAL CONSTITUTION, WHICH RESERVES TO THE STATES THEIR INDIVIDUAL SOVEREIGNTY, EXCEPT FOR RIGHTS DELEGATED BY THEM TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

WHATEVER THE INDIVIDUAL INTERPRETATION OR MEANING... OUR FLAG IS UNIQUE IN THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MESSAGE IT SENDS TO ALL THE WORLD... A MESSAGE OF INDEPENDENCE... OF INDIVIDUAL LIBERTY... OF IDEALISM... AND DEDICATION TO THE RIGHTS OF FREE PEOPLE EVERYWHERE. IT HAS ENDURED THROUGH GENERATIONS, REPRESENTING THE FINEST IDEALS OF MANKIND. AMONG EACH GENERATION, UNIQUE MEANINGS HAVE EMERGED FOR DIFFERENT SEGMENTS OF OUR SOCIETY.

FOR THE VETERAN... THE FLAG REPRESENTS HOME... FAMILY... AND NATION. IT REPRESENTS ALL THAT HE SACRIFICED WHEN HE TOOK UP ARMS IN THEIR DEFENSE. IT REPRESENTS A STANDARD AROUND WHICH HIS AND OTHER NATIONS RALLIED IN TIMES OF STRIFE... ~~WHEN THEY WERE LOCKED IN MORTAL COMBAT WITH THE DARK FORCES OF TYRANNY... OPPRESSION... AND TERROR.~~ IT REPRESENTS AN UNSELFISH DEVOTION FOR WHICH MANY GAVE THEIR LIVES.

FOR THE MILLIONS OF MOTHERS AND FATHERS OF THIS LAND WHO WATCHED THEIR SONS MARCH PROUDLY TO THE CALL OF THEIR NATION... OUR FLAG REPRESENTS A RIGHTEOUS CAUSE FOR WHICH THEY COMMITTED THEIR LOVED ONES. IT STANDS FOR THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE ~~ANY~~ <sup>PARENTS</sup> ~~PARENT MAY~~ MAKE TO UPHOLD FREEDOM... JUSTICE... AND DEMOCRACY.

TO THE CHILDREN OF THIS NATION... OUR FLAG REPRESENTS PERHAPS THE FIRST ATTEMPT TO RECITE SOMETHING OTHER THAN NURSERY RHYMES OR PLAY SONGS. IT IS A COMMON RITUAL OF THEIR FIRST LEARNING YEARS TO LEARN THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE... EVEN AS THEY ARE JUST STARTING TO LEARN OTHER SKILLS THAT WILL CARRY THEM INTO YOUTH AND ADULTHOOD.

FROM THEIR YOUNGEST YEARS, OBSERVANCES SUCH AS OURS TODAY BUILD WITHIN THEM THE PROPER RESPECT AND REVERENCE THAT BELONGS TO SUCH A SACRED SYMBOL AS OUR STARS AND STRIPES.

BUT, PERHAPS MOST OF ALL... OUR FLAG SYMBOLIZES TO ALL PEOPLE OF THE WORLD A NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND POPULAR SOVEREIGNTY. IT IS NOT THE FLAG OF A REIGNING FAMILY OR A ROYAL HOUSE. IT IS THE FLAG OF MORE THAN TWO HUNDRED MILLION PEOPLE WELDED INTO A NATION... ONE AND INSEPARABLE... UNITED NOT ONLY BY COMMON INTEREST, BUT BY VITAL UNITY OF SENTIMENT AND PURPOSE.

It is the Flag of a NATION DISTINGUISHED  
for its citizens' concept of their obligations ...  
their privileges ... and their rights

Contrast our stars + stripes with the hammer  
and sickle of the Soviet Union ... which has subjugated  
the will of the people to the will of the state. There  
are no rights ... very few privileges ... endless obligations ...  
and all for the welfare of the state -- not the individual.

OUR FLAG EMBODIES THE ESSENCE OF PATRIOTISM. ITS SPIRIT  
IS THE SPIRIT OF THE AMERICAN NATION. ITS HISTORY IS THE HISTORY  
OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. TALES OF NATIONAL HONOR AND GLORY CLUSTER  
THICKLY ABOUT IT. EVER VICTORIOUS... IT HAS EMERGED TRIUMPHANT  
FROM GREAT NATIONAL CONFLICTS. (IT BEARS WITNESS TO THE EXPANSION  
OF OUR NATIONAL BOUNDARIES... THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR NATURAL  
RESOURCES... AND THE SPLENDID STRUCTURE OF OUR CIVILIZATION.)

IT IS THE PROMISE OF THE TRIUMPH OF POPULAR GOVERNMENT...  
OF CIVIC AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY... AND OF A VIRTUOUS NATION.

YES, MY FRIENDS... THE AMERICAN FLAG IS MANY THINGS TO  
MANY PEOPLE. BUT ON THIS FLAG DAY LET US REMEMBER... THE UNITED  
STATES FLAG... OLD GLORY... IS UNIQUE IN THE DEEP AND NOBLE  
SIGNIFICANCE OF ITS MESSAGE TO THE ENTIRE WORLD -- A MESSAGE  
OF NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE... OF INDIVIDUAL LIBERTY... OF IDEALISM...

AND OF PATRIOTISM. ~~It is the visible sign of the strong spirit  
that has brought liberty and prosperity of the people  
of America~~ It is the Flag of us All. Thank you.

IT IS THE VISIBLE SIGN OF THE STRONG SPIRIT THAT HAS BROUGHT  
LIBERTY AND PROSPERITY TO THE PEOPLE OF AMERICA. IT IS THE  
FLAG OF US ALL.

THANK YOU.