

Title:

Who Created the First US Flag of 50 Stars?

Word Count:

576

Summary:

How did a 17 year old, high school sophomore, from Lancaster Ohio turn a 1958 high school project into the American Flag that we have known and loved since 1960?

Keywords:

US Flag, 50 star flag, 48 star flag, American Flag

Article Body:

Who designed our current US Flag with 50 stars?

Robert Heft, a then 17 year-old high school sophomore from Ohio created our current American Flag of 50 stars.

When was this flag created?

Robert Heft created his 50 star, hand sewn, US flag in 1958 prior to Alaska and Hawaii being admitted to the Union.

What drove Robert to create this new flag?

It all began as a high school project assigned in 1958 in Lancaster, Ohio, for his teacher, Mr. Stanley Pratt. Each student's assignment was to create a project of their own choosing that would be graded for creativity.

What prompted Robert to create a flag as his project?

Robert was always interested in government and politics and was aware of the possibility of Alaska and Hawaii becoming the next new states. While other kids at his high school struggled with ideas on what to create for their projects, Robert knew right away that he wanted to create the first 50 star flag.

How did Robert go about designing this one-of-a-kind flag?

Being an astute student of history, Robert knew that the design of the US Flag

had not changed in since 1912. He wanted to change the design of the flag so carefully that it would be almost unnoticeable.

How did Robert go about creating this one-of-a-kind flag?

Unbeknownst to his family, Robert took his parent's 48 star US Flag and began cutting the flag apart and rearranging the stars and adding 2 stars so that there would be 50 stars in total. His design featured five rows of 6 stars (30 stars) alternating with four rows of 5 stars (20 stars). Robert spent over 12 hours one weekend arranging and sewing this new combination of stars.

Was his teacher, Mr. Pratt amazed and impressed by Robert's newly created 50 star US Flag?

No, Mr. Pratt told Robert that his project lacked creativity and told him, "anybody can make a flag". Mr. Pratt gave Robert a B minus for his project but told him that he would raise his grade if Robert could get Congress to adopt this new American Flag design.

Was Robert discouraged by this challenge from his teacher?

No, Robert accepted this challenge and took his flag to his congressman, Rep. Walter Moeller, who worked to get the new 50 star design accepted after Alaska and Hawaii were admitted to the Union.

Was this original, hand sewn, 50 star US Flag ever used or was it just used as a model?

Yes, it was first flown on July 4, 1960 at the US Capitol dome with President Dwight D. Eisenhower, Congressman Moeller and Robert Heft in attendance. It has flown over every US state capital building and has flown over the White House under five administrations.

Where is Robert's original US Flag of 50 stars?

Robert Heft still owns this original first flag of 50 stars and has turned down offers of up to \$350,000 to sell it.

Is that the end of Robert Heft's story?

No, shortly after he completed his 50 star high school project, he went on to create a 51 star US Flag in the event that Puerto Rico ever joined the Union. The 51 star flag has six rows of stars, starting with a row of nine and

alternated by rows of eight to total 51 stars.

What is the moral of this story?

If your child comes to you with a wacky, seemingly crazy, creative idea - let them run with it. It may turn out to launch their life long career, as it did for Robert Heft.