

23d Session of the General Assembly
Fédération internationale des associations vexillologiques

Rotterdam, Zuid-Holland, Netherlands

**REPORT ON THE STATUS OF THE
FLAG RESEARCH CENTER**

Mr. President, Messrs. Secretaries-General, Delegates:

On behalf of the Vexillological Association of the State of Texas, I am pleased to report on the status of the Flag Research Center collection.

In October 2010, Dr. Whitney Smith announced that he had signed a letter of intent with The University of Texas to transfer the FRC collection—indisputably the largest and most comprehensive collection of vexillological and related research material in the world—to The University in Austin, Texas, and to be housed at that institution’s Briscoe Center. The Briscoe Center is a leading history research center that collects, preserves, and makes available documentary and material culture evidence encompassing key themes.

Since at least 1987, Dr. Smith has been engaged in securing the future of the FRC collection at a major research institution that would agree not only to preserve the collection, but sustain it and grow it by continuing the acquisition of flags and flag-related material. He sought an institution that would make the collection available to scholars and schoolchildren alike so that they could engage “directly in the creative process” themselves, “without wasting countless hours” having to hunt and search for sources. He wanted an institution that would provide a place where it was “possible to achieve total immersion in the shapes and colors and symbols and usages and history and meanings of every flag.”

The transfer of the FRC collection to The University of Texas fulfills Dr. Smith’s vision. The University of Texas is one of the world’s leading research institutions—the Times of London ranks it as number 25 in its World University Rankings. It has an internationally diverse student body and its faculty is home to award-winning professors, including Nobel laureates. As many of you know, the FRC has evolved to meet the demands of the 21st century and accommodate Dr. Smith’s research interests, both of which determined the schedule for transferring the collection. On 16 July 2013, representatives of VAST, the North American Vexillological Association / Association nord-américaine de vexillologie, the Federation, the Flag Heritage Foundation, and the Briscoe Center gathered in Boston to mark the transition of the collection. Secretary-General Charles Spain, Foundation Trustee Dr. Scot Guenter, Briscoe Director Dr. Don Carleton, Dr. Smith and his son Austin, the Smith Family, FRC employees, and I participated in a unique ceremony to mark the physical relocation of the collection to Austin, Texas. In addition to speeches by the organization representatives, Dr. Smith reminded us of the quarter-century endeavor to secure the FRC, ending appropriately with the words, “We did it.”

The FRC collection is currently housed at Sid Richardson Hall on the campus of The University, adjacent to the Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library, awaiting cataloging and

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processing. That will be a monumental task, with over 1,000 boxes, map cases, filing cabinets, and other material that will need review and classification. The Briscoe Center has expressed a desire for a long-standing cooperative partnership with the vexillological community and that commitment will permit us to continue to further interest in flags and promote research that explains the human condition.

Having observed similar processes, I can say that there are a million ways for a deal to go wrong and few ways for a deal to go right. This was one of the times things went right, and that is due to the unwavering commitment of all participants to Dr. Smith's vision of vexillology and their desire to secure this collection.

This endeavor would not have succeeded without the tireless efforts of Secretary-General Spain, Dr. Guenter, Dr. Carleton, Dr. Kirby Baker, chairman of the Flag Heritage Foundation Trustees, Trustees Annie Platoff and David Philips, Pete Van de Putte, VAST President James Liston, the support I received from other NAVA members, and—most importantly—Whitney and Austin Smith. On behalf of VAST, I move a vote of thanks to these persons for their critical and lasting work.

Respectfully submitted,

Hugh L. Brady FF
Delegate for the
Vexillological Association of the
State of Texas