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FINAL GOODBYE: Judge Spain delivers remarks at the Oct. 14 memorial service for Dr. Smith in Boston, Mass. Spain is flanked by (L-R) Smith's personal flag; the FRC gonfanon; the flags of FIAV, its secretary-general, and its secretary-general for congresses; and the flags of NAVA and its former presidents, all topped by mourning streamers. BYRON DELEAR.

IN FINAL EUOLOGY FOR WHITNEY SMITH, SPAIN SAYS "LET US NOT FAIL" TO CONTINUE HIS WORK ESTABLISHING VEXILLOLOGY AS DISCIPLINE

Note: These remarks were delivered by Charles A. Spain at the memorial service held Oct. 14, 2017, at the Omni Parker House Hotel, Boston, Mass.

This is the final goodbye.

Whitney died last November. His family conducted a private memorial service last December in Winchester, where he worked and lived at The Flag Research Center. Whitney asked that a public memorial service be held for the vexillological world, and one was held in South Kensington, London in August in conjunction with the Twenty-Seventh International Congress of Vexillology. This service tonight is the last formal remembrance of him and his life's work.

Whitney always kept his own counsel about his plans, and it came as a surprise to me when his son Austin informed me that Whitney had asked that I conduct the public memorial services. Both Austin and I agreed that it was "so Whitney" to leave instructions for others to carry out.

Since his death in November, there has been media coverage in newspapers spanning his local communities of Winchester and Lexington, *The Boston Globe*, *The New York Times*, *The Times (London)*, and *The Economist*. I was especially touched by a *Boston Globe* file photo of Whitney as a child holding U.S., North Korean, and Texas flags with a look of wonder on his face at the power of these bits of cloth.

The official obituary, written by Whitney, of course, was issued by The Flag Research Center on the day he died. It was published as he instructed in *The Flag Bulletin*, Number 234, and each of you has a copy.

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ICV 27: Group photograph. COURTESY FLAG INSTITUTE

REPORT: LONDON FLAG CONGRESS

The 27th International Congress of Vexillology was held at Imperial College, London, England, from Aug. 7-11, 2017. The Congress was organized by the Flag Institute under the auspices of the Fédération internationale des associations vexillologiques.

The Association was represented by Association Secretary-Treasurer Charles Spain, who was present and re-elected as the FIAV Secretary-General. Judge Spain led a service in memory of the late Dr. Whitney Smith on Thursday, Aug. 10, at Holy Trinity Church, Prince Consort Road, South Kensington, at which he and Vice President Hugh Brady, among others, delivered tributes to Dr. Smith. Prof. Brady represented the Association in the General Assembly and delivered a report on the pending arrangements for HEMISFLAG: The 28th International Congress of Vexillology, to be held in July 2019 in San Antonio.

Dr. Scot Guenter delivered another excellent presentation, "Historical Shifts and Emergent Paradigms: Tradition, Ideology, Sources of Power and Influence in Flag Studies." In his presentation, he reviewed the evolution of flag studies on a global level, from its origins in, and continuing link to, heraldry, and Dr. Smith's efforts in developing vexillology as a discipline of the social sciences. He critically examined the claims by so-called "active vexillologists" to recast vexillology primarily as a graphic design practice, articulating new purposes and seeking opportunities for self- and program promotion. These "active vexillologists" promote their counter-ideology through spurious exercises that purport to be, but are not grounded in any accepted, academic method. These exercises include aesthetic ratings, diagnoses, counseling, and/or redesign guidance. The alternative facts and spurious methods employed by the counter-ideologists, although not always based on the truth, can be very powerful. Dr. Guenter urged more attention to scholarship, not less as the solution to the problems created by the "active vexillologists," including a "resolved diligence to employ traditional academic regard for verification of information, stronger peer review, a clarion call for more critical thinking, and a scholarship that moves increasingly beyond cataloguing to analysis of flags as the powerful and compelling cultural artifacts they truly are." At the end of the presentations, Prof. Brady gave delegates a preview of the contemplated arrangements for HEMISFLAG.

At the closing dinner held on Friday, Aug. 11, at the National Liberal Club, Judge Spain, Prof. Brady, H.P. (Pete) Van de Putte, and Vanessa Van de Putte, on behalf of HEMISFLAG organizers VAST and FRC, received the FIAV flag from Fédération President Michel Lupant and Secretary-General for Congresses Graham M.P. Bartram to the refrain of "The Yellow Rose of Texas."

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VEXILLOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION OF THE STATE OF TEXAS

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SMITH'S "VISION QUICKLY BECAME HIS DESTINY"

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Much has been written and said about Whitney since last November, and many of you here tonight knew him. Personal remembrances were given in August when we gathered at Holy Trinity Church in London. So I will assume that you know the basic information about Whitney and his many accomplishments. The majority of our time here tonight will be informal, where you can share stories of Whitney with new and old friends in small groups.

Whitney knew that vexillology depended in large part on establishing personal relationships and fellowship, and it was Whitney who first proposed in 1963 that a gathering be organized of those interested in studying flags. FIAV was born from that idea of personal relationships, and after that first gathering there came other vexillological institutions and organizations. I will keep my remarks brief so we can enjoy that fellowship Whitney realized was indispensable to the success of his vision.

And a grand vision it was, and still is.

Whitney didn't create the love of flags and the passion they engender. He didn't write the first scholarly books on flags. Preble, Neubecker, and others got there first.

But Whitney saw something different, and it was this vision that quickly become his destiny. Whitney recognized that political symbols, and specifically flags, had never before been considered by social scientists as legitimate subjects for study. He saw two reasons for this, first, flags were considered to be mere decoration for "real" events, and second, the people who deal with graphic symbols are often unfamiliar with the social sciences. Whitney concluded that social scientists treated flags as superficial or trivial objects, and therefore "having no hypotheses, no theoretical framework allowing them to deal with the subject, [social] scientists have simply not known what to do with flags, how to think about them."

I believe there was a third reason flags were ignored by academia. Flags engender intense passion, and how does an academic secure a faculty teaching position and achieve tenure while writing dispassionately about the preeminent symbol of nationalism in the 20th and 21st centuries? Such controversy has left other fields barren before—the lack of scholars of post-1949 China is a famous example in which anti-communist political orthodoxy left the United States with a very real knowledge gap from the 1950s to 1970s. Despite the popular anti-intellectual dislike of scholars in the U.S., lacking knowledge really is a bad thing.

Whitney's vision was to apply social-scientific principles to flags, which he viewed as "the strongest and most independent of time of all the symbols." And he was a teenager when he began making this seemingly impossible vision a reality. This was no mere kid with a crazy idea, this was a man with the determination of a biblical prophet.

Whitney created the word that describes the sub-discipline of the social sciences that studies flags—vexillology. With his friend Gary Grahl, Whitney founded The Flag Research Center and published the first vexillological publication, *The Flag Bulletin*. He enabled the founding of organized vexillology, becoming the father of those institutions and organizations, and a teacher, mentor, and friend to so many of us, past and present. He gave up an academic career as a professor, becoming the unlikely entrepreneur who made his living as a professional vexillologist.

I think of Whitney as a genius, not merely because he was brilliant, but because he figured out how to make his vision a reality. There was no one else like him, and there never will be. He was a Titan.

How did he do it? He did have a huge ego, but the same could be said about many in this room. He was relentless in his quest, but, again, that didn't make him unique amongst us. I think there are three reasons he succeeded.

First, he had a vision worthy of devoting a lifetime. We know the power of these symbols, of which Emperor Napoleon bluntly stated, "It is with these things that men are led." Of course flags should be studied by the social sciences to explain the human condition. Recent controversies in the United States over flag rituals cry out for a respected expert to explain the history and context of singing the national anthem at sporting events.

Second, Whitney saw everything in his life as expendable in the quest to make vexillology a reality. Just ask his family. Whitney also saw no need to micromanage vexillological institutions and organizations. Many such entities were created and vanished in his lifetime. Whitney certainly had an opinion about the value of their work, but trying to police their behavior was ultimately not his concern. He kept his eyes on the prize.

Third, Whitney cultivated friendships that enabled him to accomplish things he couldn't do by himself. While his ego was enormous, he understood his limits.

Was he successful? If the test is, "Did he accomplish everything he wanted in his lifetime?", then the answer is "No." But things rarely work out for prophets. Moses got to see the Promised Land, but he did not cross the River Jordan and set foot in it.

Whitney wanted his collection to be placed in an internationally recognized academic research library. Many of you in this room participated in discussions over the decades about how to make that happen. He also wanted an International Flag Museum, where the public could view significant flags and flag-related objects. But those projects weren't ever going to happen as long as Whitney could work at The Flag Research Center—his vast library and collection. He just couldn't separate himself from it. It was failing health that finally led him to the conclusion that it was time to act. With the help of friends and family his Collection was placed at The University of Texas at Austin, something that Whitney publicly announced in 2010 in Arcadia, California at the last vexillological meeting he attended.

The availability of the Whitney Smith Flag Research Center Collection to scholars is an enormous step forward in recognizing Whitney's vision of vexillology. Already Annie Platoff has traveled to Austin and used the Collection as she works on her dissertation. I certainly expect her to join that slowly growing group of scholars who have been conferred doctorates for writing on flags—William Crampton, Scot Guenter, Fred Brownell, and Željko Heimer.

A missing piece is still the museum. The public loves historic flags, and there are private collections that I hope can become part of that institution. I'm doubtful we can raise the money to fully support the Smith Collection if we don't also have the companion museum. Scholarship is linked to public support, and vexillology needs that public support.

So, did Whitney succeed? Absolutely. The question now is, what can we do to further vexillology?

Whitney's most complete statement on vexillology was his "Fundamental Theses of Vexillology," published 35 years ago in *The Flag Bulletin*. It's as close to a catechism of vexillology as there is. And it's pedantic, but the audience was mainly Whitney's fellow social scientists. It's a thorough justification of why flags are worthy of serious study. It's reprinted in *Flag Research Quarterly*, Number Three, and worthy of your time.

In the manner of Martin Luther, Whitney wrote a number of theses, which you have along with your service program. Please read them. Understanding vexillology helps us promote vexillology, as well as understanding the relationship of related flag matters. As I said before, lacking knowledge really is a bad thing.

In his article, Whitney concluded as follows: "Since vexillology is very much in its infancy, it is impossible at present to say what directions it will take in the future. Indeed it is not at all certain that it will achieve the 'escape velocity' necessary for launching as a recognized scientific discipline. A century from now it is possible that the study of flags will be considered exactly as it was a century ago—an antiquarian curiosity suitable as a hobby for children or the retired, but scarcely a fit subject for the serious consideration of adult women and men. If so, the failure will be ours for having inadequately developed the inherent possibilities of the subject."

Let us not fail him.