



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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## A Salute to the Flag

JACK M. MARTINS June 14, 2013

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June 14, 2013 marks the 236th birthday of the United States flag, a day that honors the U.S. Flag and more specifically, what it means to us.

### **History**

The tradition began in 1885 when a Wisconsin schoolteacher wanted his students to observe June 14th -- the anniversary of the official adoption of The Stars and Stripes. In 1894, New York State Governor Levi P. Morton directed that the Flag be displayed on all public

buildings on that same date each year. Inspired by decades of individual state and local celebrations like these, Flag Day was officially established by a proclamation of President Woodrow in 1916 but it was not until 1949, that President Truman signed an Act of Congress designating June 14th as National Flag Day.

### **The Red, White and Blue**

The colors of our flag symbolize the patriotic ideals and qualities of the citizens of this country. The red stripes proclaim the courage, integrity, and self-sacrifice of our service men and women. The white stripes signify liberty and equality for all. The blue represents the blue of heaven, loyalty, and faith. The Flag was designed to represent the eternal principles of liberty, justice, and humanity. Our forefathers wanted it to embody core American freedoms: freedom of speech, religion, assembly, the press, and the sanctity of the home.

### **Treatment**

Worn flags need proper treatment. But most people don't know what to do with flags that are old, torn or discolored. In all cases, they should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning. In that case, a flag should be folded with the stars on top and burned in a barrel, specifically dug pits or trenches. The ashes should also be discarded properly. Often, they are scattered over veterans' graves, or buried near another flagpole. Even paper flags that are displayed in cars and home windows should be disposed of this way. No flag should ever be simply thrown into the trash. Call your local veterans' organization for help in the proper disposal of the flag. On Long Island, call the Nassau County Veterans Service Agency at (516) 572-6560.

I hope all New Yorkers will proudly fly the American flag from their homes this Flag Day. It is the symbol of our freedom, and it remains a source of hope and inspiration to the rest of the world.