
OFFICE OF GOVERNOR RONNIE MUSGROVE
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: GOVERNOR
FROM: RILEY
SUBJECT: FLAG COMMISSION: GRAPHIC DESIGNER
DATE 11/7/00
CC: SIMMONS
TELL
BOYD

William Winter and I met with the Design Committee of the Advisory Commission at lunch yesterday. Members present included Fran Ivy, Vanessa Long and Senator Frazier. David Sansing, Professor Emeritus of History at Ole Miss and a vexillologist serving as a consultant to the Design Committee, was also present. Chairman Winter arranged this meeting last week in order to present your request for the Commission's speedy action in making its recommendations to the Legislature, including allowing citizens to vote between two designs. The Design Committee strongly supported this plan.

I explained that you would like to have a design developed by a graphic designer which represents components of the flags that have flown over Mississippi in order to minimize opponents' arguments that the traditional state flag represents their heritage. The Design Committee thinks that the Commission should recommend a flag with the least amount of change and the Design Committee did not support trying to encompass components of prior flags due to concerns that such a flag would be too busy and that components would be too small. Senator Frazier stated that he did not think that black legislators would support a Bonnie Blue component because the Bonnie Blue was the flag of secession. The Design Committee has voiced support for the attached design prepared by Clay Moss, another vexillologist. The Committee feels the attached design represents a compromise solution that respects African Americans' dislike for the battle flag and confederate patriots' wishes not to void the flag of Mississippi's confederate heritage. I again explained that you would like to have a design that represents components of the flags that have flown over Mississippi in order to minimize the "heritage argument."

As I am to contact a graphic designer on the Advisory Commission's behalf and not this office's behalf, please advise as to my contacting such a designer given that the Design Committee does not support a flag design encompassing components from prior flags.

William Winter and I met with Clay Moss this morning. According to Moss, he has shown this design, along with others, to Dolphus Weary and other black leaders and they have voiced support for the design, specifically because it does not contain the battle flag canton's "stars and bars." Senator Frazier has expressed that the majority of African Americans will be pleased with any design that does not incorporate this element. The blue-white-blue color scheme of the bars is in recognition of confederate interests, as the color scheme of the original "Stars and Bars of the Confederacy" flag was red-white-red. By changing the red to blue, the Design Committee feels as if we have respected both sides of the issue and have recognized Mississippi's confederate heritage, while also designing a flag truly unique to Mississippi. The color blue has traditionally stood for justice, loyalty and perseverance.

The 15 stars in the outer circle represent the 15 states in the Union when Mississippi became a territory. The 5 stars inside the circle bring the grand total to 20, symbolizing Mississippi's admission as the 20th state in the Union. The 5 stars inside the circle may also represent the five other nations or republics besides the United States who have claimed dominion over Mississippi in the past. In alphabetical order they are the Confederate States of America, France, Great Britain, the Republic of Mississippi, and Spain.