WHITNEY SMITH

PHD LF FF WSF FFI FVAST

FEBRUARY 26, 1940 – NOVEMBER 17, 2016

Photo courtesy of Sybil Smith
Dr. Whitney Smith, a founder, Secretary-General Emeritus, Laureate, and Fellow of FIAV, the founder of The Flag Research Center and the North American Vexillological Association-Association nord-américaine de vexillologie (NAVA), editor-in-chief of The Flag Bulletin, the creator of the word “vexillology,” and beloved mentor and friend to so many vexillologists all over the world, died on November 17, 2016 in Peabody, Massachusetts USA, aged 76. Dr. Smith is survived by his sons Adrian and Austin of Seattle, Washington, grandson Aaron Blu of Vancouver, Washington, and sisters Sybil Smith and Lynne Hartwell of Billerica and Gloucester, Massachusetts. FIAV has lost the last of its three founders, NAVA has lost its founder, and vexillology has lost its chief herald. All who knew him will mourn the death of a friend.

A memorial service for family and invited friends was held on December 3, 2016 at the Winchester Unitarian Society in Winchester, Massachusetts. Vexillologists who attended were FIAV Secretary-General Charles Spain, FIAV Secretary-General Emeritus Ralph Bartlett, Flag Heritage Foundation President Kirby Baker, and James Croft.

The Smith family has conveyed Dr. Smith’s request that Secretary-General Spain conduct public memorial services, which will be held in conjunction with ICV 27 in London and NAVA 51 in Boston. Selected remarks and remembrances will published in Info-FIAV after ICV 27.

The following obituaries and memorial have appeared:


The Senate of the State of Texas, Proclamation No. 976: In Memory of Whitney Smith Jr., https://perma.cc/JZ2E-6U7T.

The FIAV Board extends its deep sympathy to Dr. Smith’s family and to NAVA.
Comment by Secretary-General Charles Spain on the day of Dr. Smith’s memorial service in Winchester, Massachusetts, December 3, 2016

Much has been said in the last two weeks about my good friend and mentor, Whitney Smith.

Many, many people in the flag world knew him, and tens of millions of people know the word he coined, vexillology. Such is the power of pop culture with the likes of Dr. Sheldon Cooper on television’s *The Big Bang Theory*.

I can only speak for myself, but this transition has been very sad. I’m happy for Whitney, because he had a life that was a bit larger than most. But I am sad.

Not many people know it, but Whitney was a big fan of Buddy Holly, a son of Lubbock, Texas. This was but one of a number of small things that connected Whitney, the proud Bostonian, to far-off Texas, including his 1966 meeting with President Lyndon B. Johnson at The White House. The relationship steadily grew, and in 2008 the governor commissioned Whitney as an Honorary Texan. Whitney’s life work, The Flag Research Center Collection, is now at The University of Texas at Austin, available to the world’s scholars.

For me, a sentimental way to sum up how I feel today is to say it’s raining in my heart. I suspect it’s raining in the hearts of many vexillologists.

But this feeling will pass. What will not pass is Whitney’s legacy. Truly the eyes of Texas—and many non-Texans—are upon him.

Felice Bryant and Boudleaux Bryant, “Raining in My Heart (Buddy Holly),” released Jan. 5, 1959 (Coral Records), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UeZof1wGps.

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**IN MEMORIAM**

FIAV notes with sorrow the deaths of the following vexillologists:

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<td>William C. Spangler (NAVA), Cumberland, Tennessee, USA (NAVA)</td>
<td>April 11, 2004</td>
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<td>Harold A. Diceman, Fallbrook, Ontario, Canada (NAVA)</td>
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<td>Jirí Louda, Olomou, Moravia, Czech Republic</td>
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<td>Emmet V. Pope, Oxford, Ohio, USA (NAVA and GWAV)</td>
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<td>Pascal Vagnat, Strasbourg, France</td>
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<td>Whitney Smith, Peabody, Massachusetts, USA (FRC, NAVA)</td>
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<td>K.V. Singh, New Delhi, Delhi, India</td>
<td>November 17, 2016</td>
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CORRESPONDENCE FROM WHITNEY SMITH TO CHARLES SPAIN REGARDING THE ORIGINS OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESSES OF VEXILLOLOGY

[April 16, 2007]

Dear Kin,

Following our conversation I did research in my old correspondence to trace quotes relevant to the history of our ICVs.

In his 21 December 1961 letter Klaes Sierksma wrote me:

We [i.e. he and Karl Fachinger] correspond on flags already 7 years and we never met till now!

Sierksma was referring here to a train trip he was to make to Germany to see Fachinger’s collection. He sees this as extraordinary and never mentions the concept of getting vexillologists to hold a conference.

In my 29 August 1963 letter to Karl Fachinger I said:

Is there any possibility that you might be visiting the United States? Mr. Grahl and I should like very much to meet you and we could gather in New York or Washington if you could not come to Boston (where our Library and most of our files are kept). Incidentally, I am hoping to be able to visit Europe in 1964-65 (Oct.-May) and if so I will certainly plan to see you. I even have hopes that we might hold a “Vexillological Congress” to bring together you, [Klaes] Sierksma, [I.O.] Evans, [Roger] Harmignies, [P.] Bissuel, [Georges] Pasch, [Ottfried] Neubecker, [Arnold] Rabbow, [Preben] Kannik, [?] Couret, myself and others interested in the subject.

This, to my knowledge, was the very first time anyone ever raised the idea of an International Congress of Vexillology.

On 1 October 1963 I sent this message to Klaes Sierksma:

My PhD. exams are next spring and then, if I can secure the money, my family and I will go to Belgium (Oct.-May 1964-65) and Rwanda (May-Oct.1965) for me to work on my dissertation. There will also be time for visits to you and other vexillologists in Europe . . . .

On 10 October 1963 Klaes Sierksma responded:

Wouldn’t there be a possibility to have organized a congress of banistic-interested people in Europe during the time of your being over here? I think it will be possible and interesting to meet one another e.g. at Brussels or The Hague. Me thinks we can reckon with an assistance of 50 or 60 men. Mr Karl Fachinger wrote to me about your planning such a congress. If I can help you -- I have some experience with congresses of 50 - 3000 men!

In my 27 October 1963 letter to Klaes Sierksma I said:

I certainly hope there will be an opportunity for an International Congress of Vexillology and your offer of help is welcome. I do not know if there would be more than 20 people in all (not counting wives), but it would be very valuable for us to meet at least once.

That is all the surviving correspondence on the 1st ICV I have, although there is extensive documentation concerning the development of FIAV and, of course, on each subsequent ICV.

Best regards,

Whitney

INFO-FIAV’S THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY

FIAV’s newsletter, Info-FIAV, first appeared in May 1987. It is authorized by FIAV Constitution article 23(b), and it took over official publication of FIAV news from The Flag Bulletin. Info-FIAV is published by the Permanent Secretariat of FIAV and has been edited by the following Secretaries-General:

Whitney Smith+ May 1987 to July 1991 Issues 1–3
Emil Dreyer July 1991 to August 1997 Issues 4–10
Charles A. Spain August 1997 to present Issues 11 to present

All previous issues of Info-FIAV are available at FIAV’s website, www.FIAV.org.
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### UPCOMING DATES

- **February 8, 2017**: Deadline to submit membership applications to the FIAV Board through the Secretary-General for placement on the agenda for the Twenty-Fifth Session of the General Assembly (send to sec.gen@FIAV.org)
- **March 31, 2017**: Submission of abstract of presentation for ICV 27 ([www.ICV27.co.uk](http://www.ICV27.co.uk))
- **April 8, 2017**: Deadline to submit items (other than membership applications) to the Secretary-General for placement on the agenda for the Twenty-Fifth Session of the General Assembly (send to sec.gen@FIAV.org)
- **April 30, 2017**: Acceptance of presentation for ICV 27 ([www.ICV27.co.uk](http://www.ICV27.co.uk))
- **May 8, 2017**: Agenda for the Twenty-Fifth Session of the General Assembly distributed
- **June 15, 2017**: Deadline for Members to submit suggestions for Laureate and Fellow recipients to the Secretary-General for consideration by the FIAV Board (send to sec.gen@FIAV.org)
- **June 30, 2017**: Submission of final version of presentation ICV 27 ([www.ICV27.co.uk](http://www.ICV27.co.uk))
- **August 7–11, 2017**: Twenty-Seventh International Congress of Vexillology, London, England, United Kingdom
- **August 8, 2017**: Twenty-Fifth Session of the General Assembly convenes
The Board at the Twenty-Fourth Session of the FIAV General Assembly: Charles Spain, Secretary-General; Michel Lupant, President; and Graham Bartram, Secretary-General for Congresses.

Behind the Board are the FIAV flag and the Officer flags.

Photo courtesy of Manuela Schmöger

President
Michel R. Lupant
Clos de la Pasture 6
1340 OTTIGNIES-LOUVAIN-LA-NEUVE
Belgium
Telephone: 32 10 41 43 85
e-mail: pres@FIAV.org

Secretary-General
Charles A. Spain
Permanent Secretariat of FIAV
504 Branard St.
HOUSTON TX  77006-5018
USA
Telephone: 1 713 248 0416
e-mail: sec.gen@FIAV.org

Secretary-General for Congresses
Graham M.P. Bartram
Permanent Secretariat for Congresses of FIAV
14 Bell View Manor
RUISLIP
Middlesex
HA4 7LH
United Kingdom
Telephone: 44 1895 673310
e-mail: sec.cong@FIAV.org

“C’est avec ces hochets qu’on mène les hommes.”

President Emeritus: Hugh Boudin
Secretaries-General Emeritus: Emil Dreyer, Ralph G.C. Bartlett, and Bruce B. Berry

Info-FIAV
Info-FIAV (ISSN 1560-9979) is published by the Permanent Secretariat of the Fédération internationale des associations vexillologiques (FIAV) and edited by FIAV Secretary-General Charles A. Spain, 504 Branard St., HOUSTON TX 77006-5018, USA, 1 713 248 0416, sec.gen@FIAV.org. Info-FIAV is distributed free of charge to each FIAV Member using the Member’s e-mail address on file with the Secretary-General. Neither FIAV nor Charles Spain individually claims a copyright in the material appearing in Info-FIAV, although material appearing in Info-FIAV may be the intellectual property of another person. Subject to such intellectual-property rights, Info-FIAV may be freely reproduced. It is the responsibility of each FIAV Member to copy and internally distribute Info-FIAV as necessary. Individual subscriptions to Info-FIAV are not available.
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Secretary-General  
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Roger Harmignies  Provisional council  Councillor  GA 3, GA 9
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<td>Jan Mertens</td>
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Paul Mills GA 4
John Moody GA 15, GA 16, GA 17, GA 18, GA 20, GA 24
Clay Moss GA 17
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Alain Raullet  Fellow
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Secretary-General for Congresses
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Berber Sierksma-Zeeff  GA 2
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Secretary-General Emeritus
Governing board
Provisional council
Secretary-General
Secretary-General for Congresses
Fellow
Vexillon
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Gustav Söderlund  Fellow
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Henrik Söderman  GA 23
V.A. Sokolov  GA 7
Charles Spain  Secretary-General
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Ralph Spence  Councillor  GA 6
Lars Stolt  GA 15
Ronald Strachan  Fellow  GA 11, GA 12, GA 13, GA 14
Adrian Strickland  GA 15, GA 16
Theo Stylianides  GA 15
Ian Sumner  Fellow  GA 18
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Lawrence Tower  GA 3
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Tero Vaarna  GA 9
W.A. van Ham  GA 3, GA 4
Daniel van Leeuwen  GA 17
Thijs van Leeuwen  GA 14
Marcel van Westerhoven  Fellow  GA 20, GA 21, GA 22, GA 23, GA 24
Gerd Vehres  Fellow  GA 16, GA 17, GA 18, GA 19, GA 21
Paul Warming  GA 4, GA 5, GA 6
René Wattiez  GA 2, GA 4, GA 6, GA 8, GA 9
Otto Wiering  GA 2
Stanislav Zamyatin  GA 24
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