



Robert Heft

In 1958, Robert G. Heft was a 17-year-old junior at Lancaster High School in Ohio. When his history teacher assigned a class project to design a new U.S. flag, Heft decided to go beyond the conventional. At the time, the United States had 48 states, but Heft anticipated the imminent inclusion of Alaska and Hawaii into the Union. With this foresight, he designed a flag featuring 50 stars, arranged in a neat, alternating pattern of five rows of six stars and four rows of five stars.

Heft spent countless hours meticulously cutting and sewing the stars onto a blue background and attaching them to the existing stripes of an old 48-star flag. When he presented his work to his teacher, he was met with disappointment, a B-. The teacher explained that the grade reflected the lack of originality and the fact that the design did not follow official guidelines. But Robert Heft was not ready to give up.

He boldly told his teacher that if his flag design were accepted by Congress, the grade should be reconsidered. With that challenge in mind, Heft sent his flag to his congressman, Walter Moeller. Moeller, impressed by Heft's ambition and foresight, took the flag to Washington, D.C., where it eventually caught the attention of President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

In 1959, after Hawaii was officially recognized as the 50th state, Eisenhower selected Heft's design from over 1,500 submissions. On July 4, 1960, the 50 star flag was officially raised for the first time, becoming the symbol of the United States as we know it today. *sensiblemajority*, [October 5, 2024](#)