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**Remarks by Senator Edmund S. Muskie on Presenting the Last 48
Star United States Flag to Fly Over the U.S. Capitol to Waterville
High School**

Edmund S. Muskie

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From the office of
Senator Edmund S. Muskie
137 Main Street
Waterville, Maine

NEWS RELEASE

FOR RELEASE: 12:00 Noon
Friday, Feb. 10, 1961

REMARKS BY UNITED STATES SENATOR EDMUND S. MUSKIE
(D-MAINE) ON PRESENTING THE LAST 48 STAR UNITED
STATES FLAG TO FLY OVER THE CAPITOL OF THE UNITED
STATES TO WATERVILLE HIGH SCHOOL, WATERVILLE,
MAINE, FEBRUARY 10, 1961

The flag which I present to you, today, is not a famous flag. It flew over no battlefield; it is associated with no spectacular historical occasion. And yet, it is an important flag. It is the last of its kind to fly over the Capitol of the United States. When it was lowered for the last time on July 3, 1959, it symbolized the close of 47 years of crisis and spectacular growth in our nation's history.

The 48 star flag was first flown on July 4, 1912, following the admission of Arizona and New Mexico as States. It was replaced by a 49 star flag on July 4, 1959, following the admission of Alaska as our 49th State. It was the official flag of our country longer than any other in our history.

Between those two dates our population had leaped from 95-million to 174-million persons. We had been engaged in two world wars and the

Korean War. Our economy had survived the great depression. We had joined the community of nations through the organization of the United Nations.

This flag no longer represents our nation, but like the flags of 1959 and 1960, and those before it dating back to 1777, it symbolizes the growth of our country and the continuity of our development. It should serve as a reminder to us that while history does not repeat itself, our roots are meaningful and deep. Whatever course we follow must be based on our experience and the lessons of the past.

When President Kennedy took his oath of office on January 20, this year, he demonstrated once again his strong sense of history. Commenting on the situation which confronted the nation at the time of his inauguration, he said:

".....we observe today not a victory of party, but a celebration of freedom -- symbolizing an end, as well as a beginning -- signifying renewal, as well as change. For I have sworn before you and Almighty God the same solemn oath our forbears prescribed nearly a century and three quarters ago.

"The world is very different now. For man holds in his mortal hands the power to abolish all forms of human poverty and all forms of human life. And yet the same revolutionary beliefs for which our forbearers fought are still at issue around the globe -- the belief that the rights of man come not from the generosity of the state, but from the hand of God."

You young people and I were both born within the time this 48 star flag was flown. But the world I knew as a student was quite different from the world in which you are studying. My high school years spanned the end of "normalcy" in the twenties, and the beginning of the great depression of the thirties. The grave question facing our nation in the year of my graduation was whether or not we could restore the economic health of our nation. The grave question in this year is whether or not we can restore the international health of the world.

I hope that you young people will accept this flag as a symbol of the greatness of our nation and that you will recognize your obligation to contribute to the continued growth of the ideals which give us whatever strength we may possess. Some of you may be leaders in the world of tomorrow. But all of you will have a part to play as citizens of a free nation.

Your first obligation today is to learn. Learn what made our forbearers seek freedom in this land; learn what demands were made on those who sought to build our nation; learn the nature of the challenges that face us today, in world affairs, in the strengthening of our economy, and in the conservation of our human and natural resources.

Your second obligation is to understand. With knowledge you will gain perspective on the needs of our nation and the world, and you will understand the nature of the demands you must meet.

Armed with knowledge and understanding you will be ready for your commitment as a citizen. You will be able to perform as a worker, as a responsible member of your community, as a thoughtful voter, and as an active participant in the affairs of this, your country.

To honor this flag and the flag which flies over our nation today is not to make speeches or to say the pledge of allegiance. To honor this flag is to accept the heritage which is yours, and to give of yourself to increase the bounty of that heritage for those who follow.

As our President has said:

"In the long history of the world, only a few generations have been granted the role of defending freedom in its hour of maximum danger.....The energy, the faith, the devotion which we bring to this endeavor will light our country and all who serve it -- and the glow from that fire can truly light the world."

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