Ocean County Flag: Its History and Meaning

By R. Joseph Latshaw, III

Vexillology, the study of flags is a curious pursuit. It elevates something that is often overlooked or forgotten. To many of us, vexillology may seem like a trivial pursuit, but for governments and its constituents, it can help show a shared sense of civic pride and commonalities of a place we call home.



Miss Sandra Pier of Pt. Pleasant, the designer, with Gov. Meyner and Ocean County Freeholder Director Chafey. Photo credit: Asbury Park Press, 1954.

Ocean County and its flag are no different. Knowing its original meaning and history can help us reflect on the emotions and ideals we project onto it. Therefore, we are better equipped and able to come to an understanding of our identity.

Its design and adoption were spearheaded by Jack Lamping, affectionately known as "Mr. Ocean County", director of the Bureau of Publicity and a board member of the Ocean County Historical Society. He suggested in a historical society board meeting on April 2, 1954 that a flag be made to represent the county. Five high schools were charged with coming up with an appropriate design. By June 30 of that year, out of all the talented young artists, Sandra Pier of Point Pleasant Beach High School made the winning design and received a $25 savings bond as a prize. A picture of the new flag was also published in an Asbury Park Press article on July 12. It was officially presented to Governor Robert B. Meynerat the fifth annual Big Sea Day on August 14 in Point Pleasant with much fanfare.

On July 7 with the resolution moved and accepted, Ocean County officially had a flag to call its own. It is described in the resolution saying, "It shall contain a full field of light blue to represent the glory and majesty of the sky overhead, upon which shall be centered a circlet of two gold rings containing the letters OCEAN COUNTY, N.J., in the bright gold of God's sun. These rings shall encompass the blue waves of the Atlantic Ocean and the red and white tower of historic Barnegat Lighthouse, "Grand Old Champion of the Tides" and symbol of the seafaring tradition of Ocean County. Overhead gulls shall appear in flight. This representation must and always shall be flown with an accompanying pennant overhead on its staff, of the color red, with the letters gold as follows: OCEAN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, in honor of its sponsorship of the flag."



Although these days the pennant is not flown accompanying the flag, it points to the civic minded nature behind its idea, design, and adoption. Next time you drive by or go into a county office, gaze up and appreciate the flag flapping in the wind. Take pride in knowing it represents you and everyone else that calls Ocean County home.