

Mayor Thaddeus J. Kobylarz
Flag Day Remarks
June 14, 2023

Flag Day forms a trio of patriotic holidays, beginning with Memorial Day at the end of May, and ending with Independence Day on July 4th. And yet its broad significance, for our nation, often goes underappreciated.

Part of the reason, no doubt, is that Flag Day is a Congressionally recognized but still *non-Federal* holiday. Moreover, only two states currently recognize Flag Day as a *state* holiday, namely Pennsylvania and Connecticut. (And I resolutely maintain that New Jersey should join them!)

Even so, a growing number of municipalities across the country now celebrate Flag Day. And I am proud to count Chatham Borough as one of them. Moreover, this is precisely as it should be.

That is because Flag Day is not just a day when we (rightly) join together to commemorate the tri-color banner that has come to symbolize this great nation of ours. In fact, Flag Day is a day when we also celebrate the great *traditions* and *history* associated with our nation's revered symbol – the red, white, and blue.

In fact, Flag Day is a day when we rejoice in *all* that the flag represents, including the *values* and *principles* that define this great nation of ours. As such, Flag Day is a day when we reflect on the great American experiment in freedom; democracy; constitutional government; and the kind of open, diverse, and tolerant society that we as a nation aspire to be.

Finally, Flag Day is, most importantly, a day in which we honor all those who have so bravely served, fought, and in a great many cases, died, for the freedom and rights that we today cherish as Americans – each and every one of us.

In short, the true genius of Flag Day is that its significance is befittingly expansive and reflective of all that we hold dear about this great nation of ours.

As the distinguished American abolitionist and social reformer Henry Ward Beecher once said:

A thoughtful mind, when it sees a nation's flag, sees not the flag only, but the nation itself; and whatever may be its symbols, its insignia, he reads chiefly in the flag, namely: the government, the principles, the truths, and the history which belongs to the nation that sets it forth.

Wise words indeed. Happy Flag Day to you all!