
**FROM THE OFFICE OF SENATOR ADAM HINDS
BERKSHIRE, HAMPSHIRE, FRANKLIN & HAMPDEN DISTRICT
MASSACHUSETTS STATE SENATE**

PRESS RELEASE

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HINDS, KOCOT HELP WESTHAMPTON RAISE NEW TOWN FLAG AT THE STATE HOUSE

BOSTON – Today, State Senator Adam G. Hinds (D- Pittsfield) and State Representative Peter V. Kocot (D-Northampton) hosted a delegation from Westhampton at the Massachusetts State House to present the community's newly designed town flag to state officials.



Photo Caption: From left: Superintendent Tammy Kraus, Robert Miller (flag designer), Priscilla Miller, Senator Hinds, Representative Kocot, Westhampton Selectman Phil Dowling, Westhampton Town Administrator Cheryl Provost, Mary Montague (flag Designer), and Peter Montague.
Photo Credit: Office of Senator Hinds.

The flag was presented to Superintendent Tammy Kraus of the Bureau of the State House by designers Mary Montague and Robert Miller, Selectman Phil Dowling, Town Administrator Cheryl Provost, and Westhampton residents Priscilla Miller, Peter Montague, and Lloyd Peters. The Bureau works to preserve, maintain and restore the Massachusetts state capitol building. The Bureau's efforts insure that the State House is a secure place for government and business, a museum of art and history, and a site for public congregation.

Westhampton's town flag was designed by local artist Mary Montague, who also owns Bridgmont Farm, a beef and maple syrup farm in town with her husband Peter. Mary was approached by former Selectman John Shaw after the Board received correspondence from Kocot and former Senator Ben Downing; the legislators were trying to help complete the Bureau's municipal flag collection.

Montague reviewed other town flags for inspiration, and decided to portray the Massachusetts Champion Walnut Tree, located in the center of Westhampton, on the flag. This tree is the largest of its kind in the state, planted by local resident and blacksmith Sylvester Judd in the early 1800's, today it stands in front of the Westhampton historical museum, which was the site of Judd's blacksmith shop.

Montague decided to use a photograph of the tree for the flag's background, to honor the community's forefathers. Tapping the computer skills of another town resident, Robert Miller, together they created Westhampton's flag which pictures the walnut tree in the background, overlaid by the town seal in the center.

"It was a pleasure to be here, and we're happy to see our flag join others from across the Commonwealth", said Phil Dowling, Select Board Chairman for the Town of Westhampton.

State Representative Peter V. Kocot (D-Northampton) added, "I want to thank the Miller and Montague families, Phil Dowling and Cheryl Provost for helping to bring the Westhampton town flag to the Massachusetts State House today, where it will be displayed above visitors, elected officials and their staffs for many years to come."

Once properly cataloged by the Bureau, Westhampton's flag will be added to the impressive array of municipal flags in the Great Hall of Flags to be admired by all State House visitors.

The Great Hall of Flags serves as the largest function room in the Massachusetts State House. Two decades ago the Bureau began collecting flags from the 351 Commonwealth communities to display them throughout the Great Hall, thereby improving the acoustics of the room. With only 13 municipal flags outstanding, the Bureau is currently working on completing its collection.

When Hinds joined the Senate in January he learned that seven flags were missing from communities in his district. In February he and his House colleagues reached out to town officials urging them to create a town flag for display in the State House.

"Every day the State House welcomes hundreds of visitors, from all over Massachusetts, other states and around the world," said Hinds. "It is always fun to see people in the Great Hall looking for their hometown's flag. My office has received calls from some western Mass. residents who were disappointed that they couldn't find a flag, because their community isn't represented in the Great Hall. I'm pleased that after today Westhampton's flag will hang proudly for all to see and admire on Beacon Hill."

There continue to be six communities from Hinds' Berkshire, Hampshire, Franklin & Hampden Senate District without a flag in the Great Hall: Alford, Hawley, New Ashford, Savoy, West Stockbridge and Williamsburg.

"I'd love to help bring these last six flags to the State House," said Hinds. "Anyone from Alford, Hawley, New Ashford, Savoy, West Stockbridge and Williamsburg interested in working on a town flag is welcome to call my office to get the specifics."

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