

**A Modern History of the Louisiana Pelican Flag;
Or, a tale of the surprisingly difficult quest for the
“Official” state flag**

Glen Duncan with Curtis Vann and Jay Dardenne

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Author's note: As a professional journalist, I was taught and expected to write in the third person and to avoid any presence in my reports. I hope the reader allows an exception here. - gd

Prologue

In 2006, the Louisiana Secretary of State was given a simple task. He was to update the official Louisiana Flag by adding three drops of blood to the breast of the flag's central image: a pelican feeding her young. Yet, almost as proof of the old adage, the task was simple, but it was certainly not easy.

Claiming one of the most distinctive flags in the Union, a white, spread-winged pelican against a vivid blue background, most Louisiana citizens likely could have given an accurate verbal description of the flag or quickly picked it out of a line-up of state flags. It was the blue one with the big pelican on it. However, two citizen volunteers discovered that at the time the Secretary turned to his task, no single image could claim recognition as *the* state flag. Many versions flew above buildings across the state, so picking the one and only official flag on which to apply the blood was impossible.

Although most Louisiana residents could easily conjure an image of their state flag when asked, each resident likely had a different flag in mind. The fact is that at least four strikingly difference versions were flying in the state's capital city region in 2006. Apparently, smallish flags undulating on the top of tall poles appear to be more similar than they truly are, especially when the citizenry gives them little more than a scant glance. Various websites, online articles, printed materials and flag manufacturers displayed a half-dozen or more representations. In true irony, Louisiana's early legislative attempt to describe the flag practically ensured multiple versions. The resulting law was so general that many versions could comply with it. Indeed, should one flag manufacturer intentionally copy another to ensure consistency, a copyright violation would likely occur.

It is against this backdrop that the Secretary of State in 2010 accepted a citizen-led solution to update the official flag and seal.

Louisiana's flag: the rise of the Pelican(s)

The Louisiana flag has a questionable history. Although many state flags are specified in detail by their respective laws and archival documents, the Louisiana flag has flown for more than 150 years with no exact, official description. The pelican flag existed well before 1861, but was not precisely described until the Secretary of State did so in 2010.

Existing documents tell the tale of a flag whose history appears to follow the creation of an official state seal. A couple of years after the 1803 Louisiana Purchase, the new territory's governing council directed the territorial governor, **William C. C. Claiborne**, to authenticate all official acts with a public seal. That seal would be "such a device and inscription as the Governor shall determine." For no reason indicated in legal or historical documents, Claiborne settled on the same image used by the federal government - an upright eagle - clutching a laurel wreath in its beak. It was clearly a popular symbol; the seal of Mississippi bears the same image. Presumably, Claiborne chose the eagle to indicate the territory was, after all, an extension of the United States of America.

Shortly after Louisiana became a state in 1812, the bird on the Louisiana seal became a Pelican in its nest feeding 10 chicks. The seal displayed the scales of justice, 18 stars and the phrase "Justice, Union & Confidence." Although the bird looked more like a bird of prey than a pelican, historian and author of a history of the seal, William Favrot, claimed to have come across a Nashville newspaper of the time, quoting a New Orleans flatboat man. The man explained the choice of Pelican was due to the belief that the Pelican tears its breast to feed its young, a belief, which was a "mistake," he said.

Favrot also offered an alternative reason. The Catholic Church had long used the image of a Pelican tearing its breast to offer its own blood as food to its chicks. That image was - and still is - a symbol of Christ's commitment. Favrot wrote that Louisiana was predominately Catholic at the time of Claiborne's choice and that he (Favrot) had located a Catholic prayer book belonging to a member of Louisiana's legislature of 1812, a book that Claiborne himself may have seen. Favrot described an image in the book of a bird in the act of self-sacrifice that is identical to the image on a Louisiana state seal displayed on an official document created in 1813. Thus, whether through Louisiana's cultural or religious tradition, by 1813 Governor Claiborne chose the Pelican for all official business.



In the following hundred years, the bird on the seal more or less resembled a Pelican through a variety of iterations, some more realistic than others. Sometimes the bird hovered over its nest, and sometimes it sat among its chicks, which ranged in count from three to 18. The motto also varied, as did the various embellishments on the seal. Eventually the Pelican in flight gave way to one in the nest, although the direction it looked seemed to change back and forth, sometimes to the right, sometimes to the left. In that odd moment of time when Louisiana broke from the union during the civil war, the pelican looked both ways, to the right in Union-controlled territory and to the left in Confederate territory. Sometime before the civil war, and the divided state, the Pelican also came to roost on the state's flag. Remarks in the constitution of the newly seceded, independent Louisiana bear this out in an uncomplimentary fashion, stating the Pelican flag had "lost favor." The constitutional convention called for a new flag. It was ugly, multi-colored, striped, filled with forced symbolism, and flew for only a few years during the war.



By 1912 then Governor W.W. Heard must have seen enough: a dozen or more seals, Pelicans of all shapes, sizes and postures, a motto that changed randomly, and the ornithological uncertainty of how many chicks a pelican should have. He finally tried to commit the state seal to a written description.

His authority was granted in the same language that Claiborne had used a century earlier. The constitution still directed the governor to use a seal on all official acts, and that seal could bear a design of his choosing. In an order that is tied to tradition rather than religion, the Secretary of State, Gov. Heard directed the seal to be:

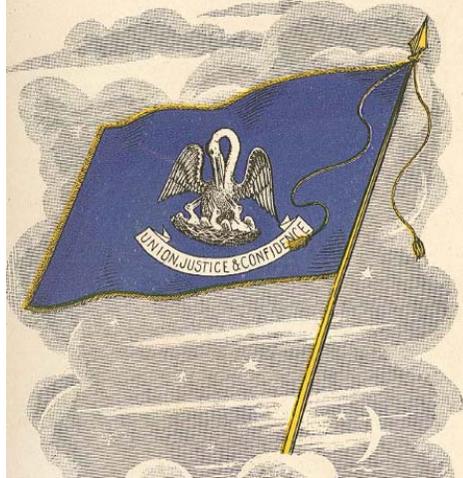
A Pelican, with its head turned to the left, in a nest with three young; the Pelican, following the tradition, in act of tearing its breast to feed its young; around the edge of the Seal to be inscribed 'State of Louisiana.' Over the head of the Pelican to be inscribed 'Union, Justice,' etc.; and under the nest of the Pelican to be inscribed 'Confidence.'

The above, as described, and as shown by the accompanying impression thereof, shall, hereafter, be the State Seal to be in used in all commissions and on all official documents.



Secretary of State John T. Michel published this order on May 12, 1902 in his annual report, and he included an illustration of the seal. To capture and report the generally accepted flag of the state, Secretary Michel also included a color reproduction of the pelican flag, which displayed an image very similar to the seal. His full report on the flag was simply:

There is no legal authority for the "Blue Flag" now in use and commonly known as the "Flag of Louisiana." This was the flag of the State prior to 1861. Since 1877 it has again come into use, but no authority for it can be found of record.

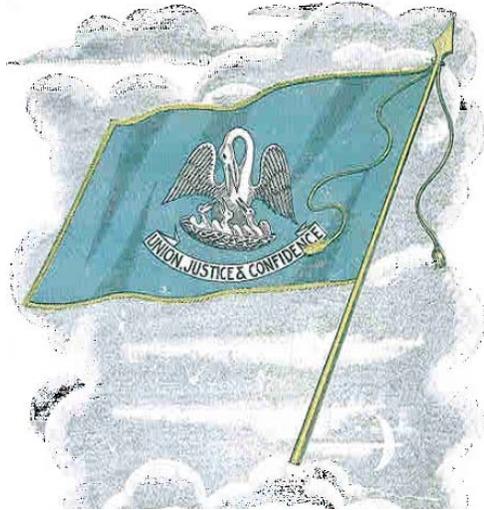


Apparently, one or more people at a time prior to Louisiana secession in 1861 painted, drew or printed a pelican feeding its young on a blue flag, and its sheer popularity propelled it to the forefront as a state symbol, albeit unofficially. The illustration in Michel's 1902 Report of the Secretary of State bears no signature or note as to who created it. As a result, the original artist of our state flag may be a mystery to all but a handful who may now have that lore within their family history.

Because the illustration closely resembled the illustration used to depict the seal in the same report, it is likely the flag artist used the seal as a guide for purposes of publication.

A few years later, in 1912, the legislature finally got around to declaring the Pelican Flag the official state flag with this short description:

That the official flag of Louisiana shall be that flag now in general use, consisting of a solid blue field with the Coat-of-Arms of the State, the pelican feeding its young, in white in the center, with a ribbon beneath, also in white, containing in blue the motto of the State, "Union, Justice and Confidence," the whole showing as below.



Indeed an illustration did accompany this law. At first glance it appears to be the exact illustration published earlier by Secretary Michel. In this publication, however, the illustration bears a signature: Alvin E. Hebert. Mr. Hebert was the Secretary of State at the time the legislation was passed, and his illustration appears to be a very close re-drawing of Michel's unsigned flag illustration of 1902. That raises an interesting question: Did Secretary Hebert intend to claim the flag image as his own to become the artist of record? If so, notoriety did not last long. The illustration has been republished with each revision of Louisiana Revised Statutes, without a signature.

And thus was the state of Louisiana flag law for nearly a hundred years. No official changes or updates altered either the order for the seal or the flag law, until an eighth-grade boy from Houma, Louisiana decided to look, really look, at our state flag.

A school project becomes law

In the spring of 2006, David Joseph Louviere of Houma, Louisiana, spotted a bothersome feature on an old Louisiana flag: four drops of blood. The blood itself was to be expected. The pelican on the Louisiana flag and seal is displayed in an act of self-sacrifice, called vulning. The mother pelican is pricking its own breast to feed its hungry young.* Governor Heard himself likely chose this pose for the official state seal to illustrate the self-sacrificial nature of Louisiana for its population. The four drops were bothersome for another reason; they were on some flags and not on others, according to Louviere, and the number of drops, when present, were inconsistent. Louviere was in prime

* In religious art, this pose is called a "Pelican in its Piety." The imagery is long-standing in Louisiana secular and religious traditions. However, at the time of this publication, state ornithologists stated firmly that Pelicans don't ever do this.

position to notice this. He was an eighth grader hard at work on a social studies project.

Louviere was working in a post-Hurricane Katrina Louisiana, a wounded state working hard to heal, to re-build, and to gather its scattered citizens...not unlike the actions of the mother Pelican herself. On October 25, 2005, Louviere wrote a letter to his Louisiana representative, Damon Baldone, to inquire if the state flag could be corrected. Baldone was apparently unconvinced. Louviere persisted, however, and wrote a second letter dated February 23, 2006. Baldone finally agreed and filed a bill for the legislative session of 2006; the bill specifically called for the Louisiana state flag to hereafter display three drops of blood, a number Louviere had settled on as historically correct. With significant news coverage, Louviere presented his report in person to the Legislature. The legislature agreed with him, and passed the bill. Governor Kathleen Blanco signed it into law that year.



Since the Secretary of State is by law and tradition the keeper of the state seal and flag, it fell to the current secretary, Jay Dardenne, to carry out the letter of the law by adding three drops of blood to the state flag. It seemed easy at first.

What a mess

In the summer of 2009, a colleague asked if I could help him locate a Louisiana flag to be used in a parachuting demonstration on the campus where I was employed. I had a vague sense that flags may be slightly different depending on manufacturers, so not wanting to disappoint, I sought out likely persons in state government to help me find an official flag. I found one through a friend in the Governor's office who gladly donated it from the state closet. *

I had followed the news from a few years earlier and out of sheer curiosity opened the box containing the flag to see the mandated three drops of blood. Alas, the Pelican's bosom was bare, no sign of the required self-injury.

* As a state employee who is to know something about the legal handling of state property, I am compelled to offer back-up to my friend by telling you that we believed this donation was a legal act, an acceptable transfer of state property from one agency to another to allow a sanctioned event on a state campus to fly an official flag.

Wondering why, I logged onto the website offered up on the box's label, the Annin flag company. I learned it was the oldest and most prestigious flag manufacturer in the country, and it posted brief histories of each state flag. The history of the Louisiana flag stopped at the action by the legislature to include three drops of blood, and then offered a note that the company was awaiting some official instructions from the good state of Louisiana so that it could correctly wound the pelican.

At this point, professional curiosity and instincts took over. I was in the marketing and public relations profession and held strong opinions and some expertise in branding, logo-making and messaging. I viewed the flag as a brand; the state's most important brand. That our brand was unclear or unavailable or simply not circulated was, in short, surprising. I wondered if someone was working on it, so I called a colleague at the Secretary of State's office. I learned that the new flag was on their minds, but they had no staff to create the new image up to modern reproduction standards.

I called a professional associate and friend who also knew a good deal about branding, publishing and printing, Curtis Vann. I asked Curtis if we could offer professional help to our state, and he liked the idea. The good news was that Curtis was a wonderful and accomplished wildlife artist as well as the former governor of District 7 of the American Advertising Federation. I asked him if he could draw a pelican. The fates were with us; he had already studied pelicans and had recently sculpted one for public display.

In the summer of 2009, we approached the Secretary of State's office with an idea. Because the change in law was driven by a citizen's action, we thought it would be appropriate for citizens to voluntarily provide a solution. We offered our combined professional experience to create the necessary digital images, files and specifications to meet modern flag reproduction standards and to ensure the new flag could be reproduced exactly by all manufacturers. We would also assist in any research necessary to determine the proper placement and representation of three drops of blood.

Secretary Jay Dardenne liked the idea; it helped him finally resolve the matter. He said "yes" and "thank you," and off we went, unknowingly but joyfully stepping off a short pier to plunge into the murky waters of Louisiana flag history.

As in all good branding, we set out to understand the reason for the brand, its history, purpose, emotional response and correct depiction, feeling certain we'd have a nice body of literature from which to draw. Well, as the previous chapters outlined, what we discovered was more fog than clear skies. We could identify no single flag or seal image on which to add the blood or from which to create new digital files. We therefore looked to the totality of law, history and tradition to guide us and soon learned it offered little practical help.

You've already seen the relevant history, law and directives we discovered, but a closer examination reveals that we uncovered more questions than answers. We had to specify colors, size, proportions, and font, then add drops of blood. But to which flag? Which image was the correct one? What was the official state motto anyway, and exactly which way did the pelican turn its head?

Can a picture be law?

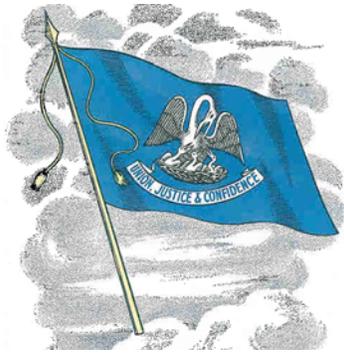
Both the directive by Governor Heard to create a seal and the later flag law had accompanying illustrations, presumably to clearly depict the intent of the orders. Yet neither provides an indisputable, accurate representation. Tradition also varies, as we have seen, providing a variety of images of the flag. We had to examine each aspect of the flag and seal to gain any sense of what to do.

Pelican Image

We discovered four distinct flags flying over our capital city, bearing pelican images ranging from the grotesque vulture-like image of the original art to a more childish image more closely resembling a Saturday morning cartoon character.



The law clearly specifies states the brown pelican is the state bird and is to be displayed on the state seal and "other insignia." However, we believed neither the 1912 image nor other images faithfully depicted the brown pelican. Also, the published images in the Secretary of State's report and the original 1912 law were noticeably different in detail. Further, with no explanation we could find, the image reproduced as part of the law dramatically changed at some point in time. Sometime after 1912 and before 1950 (the oldest copy of West's Revised Louisiana Statutes in the LSU Law Library), the image was redrawn again and reversed, with noticeable differences.



Traditionally, the pelican's pose on the flag mimicked the pelican on the seal, and Heard's order creating the seal called for its head to be turned to the left. The order, however, does not state whether this is to the pelican's left or the viewer's. The image provided by Gov. Heard depicts a raptor-like pelican with its head turned to the viewer's left. The original flag art mimics this pose. When the flag illustration in the Louisiana Revised Statutes was mysteriously re-drawn sometime before 1950, it became more vulture-like and underwent such contortion that its neck bends to the viewer's right while its head looks left. The vast majority of seals and flags in use during our search, however, displayed the pelican clearly turned to the viewer's right.

Early flag tradition was built on the belief that pelicans laid eggs and raised chicks in clusters of three, despite ornithologists' statements that this was not true. Some literature states the brown pelican lays a minimum of two eggs, and one Louisiana historian and former head of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Stanley Clisby Arthur, made his own personal observations in a paper he wrote about the pelican as a symbol of Louisiana. "I have seen nests that contained one, two, three, four, five and six eggs," he said. He went on to say that the average egg count appeared to be four, and, since not all chicks survived, the average family was a mother and two chicks. So, more by tradition than ornithological correctness, the prevalent chick count on our seal and flag is three.

Other than the number in the brood of chicks, which has been consistent on the flag and seal for a century, in the nearly 200 years since the first pelican image appeared on a state seal, too many distinct images have been accepted to represent the state on various flags and seals to be able to determine the single image that was the official one.

The Motto

Quick - what is the state motto? You read it earlier in Governor Heard's order for the seal and in the flag law. *Union, Justice, Confidence*, right? Once again we saw a discrepancy in law, illustration and tradition. Unlike other state symbols, the motto is not specifically stated or captured by legislation. It is

captured indirectly by Governor Heard's early order describing the seal and in the 1912 flag law.

The first version of this motto appeared on a state seal in 1813 as "Justice, Union & Confidence." A strict reading of Gov. Heard's 1902 order, the first to clearly state the modern motto, presented a different word order: "Union, Justice, Confidence." However, the image illustrating the order swapped a comma for an ampersand: "Union, Justice & Confidence." The illustration of the 1912 flag law contains the ampersand as well, although the text of the law used a conjunction: "Union, Justice *and* Confidence." Other flags omit the ampersand and conjunction entirely, and our state capital building, built long after we landed on our supposedly final motto, displays "Union Confidence Justice" with a new word order and no punctuation or conjunctions. Once again, we believe the law and tradition are not precise. However, a previous historian, Milledge L. Bonham, Jr. wrote in 1919, "The motto: *Union, Justice, Confidence*, speaks for itself." Perhaps the writer of the flag law felt bound by grammatical and punctuation rules to insert a simple, three-word motto into law, whereas author Bonham knew how to use a colon to precede a list.

We should also add that the text of both Governor Heard's order and the flag law used upper and lower case letters for the motto, yet both accompanying images used upper case only. Picky, perhaps, to point that out, but important in the world of branding and image. Early images use a sans-serif typeface of unknown font, but we have also seen serif typefaces. We believe makers of those first flags merely hand-rendered the motto in no particular font.

The banner (or "ribbon" as the law stated) on which the motto appeared also differed substantially from flag to flag. The number of folds, length, width, curvature, and style of terminations all varied.

Colors

Modern printing methods use a precise means of identifying color. One is called the Pantone Matching System, or PMS, which assigns alphanumeric codes to allow exact duplication. No such system existed in 1902, and an order for blue dye or paint might have simply yielded the blue ink or paint that was currently in stock, or an argument over the correct hue of Prussian or Royal blue. Our state colors were not entered into law until 1972, and even with a PMS code available, the law merely stated "Blue, white and gold."

The flag law, of course, calls for a blue field, a white pelican, a white ribbon and blue typeface. The law doesn't state whether the blues or whites should match one another. It also doesn't appear to prohibit other colors to create details of the mother, chicks or nest. The image in the 1902 report displays a fairly vivid dark blue. It remains that way today, and one flag historian, Milledge L. Bonham, Jr., noted in 1912 that "Blue, deep blue, like the

skies of Louisiana” was a continual theme in flags over Louisiana at that time. However, the image displayed in the 1912 law was rather washed out with a greenish hue. That was pointed out by author W.O. Hart in a 1921 historical article on early flag law, who stated, “the coloring is defective, the blue being too light, as the proper blue of the flag is dark.” Current images display a range of colors, but most consistently sport a rich blue and a bright white.

New Law

The earliest laws calling for an official state seal required the use of a public seal with a design “as the governor may direct.” That has been law for nearly 200 years and allowed governors to change the seal at will. In 2006, the legislature removed that generous provision. While amending the flag law to mandate three drops of blood, the legislature did the same for the seal, removing old language to replace with this:

“There shall be a public seal, which shall include the pelican tearing its breast to feed its young ...”

The 2006 law later states:

“[the seal] shall include an appropriate display of three drops of blood.”

It took nearly two centuries, but Louisiana finally got a binding description of its seal that future governors may not tamper with absent legislative action. The trouble is, the new law does not include a motto or how many chicks the mother must feed, or what pose she should strike. Nor does it state that the seal should bear the text “State of Louisiana.” No illustration accompanies the new law, however, the law does continue to hold that the Secretary of State is the keeper of the seal.

Decisions

During a series of meetings in the summer of 2010, we presented to the Secretary of State Jay Dardenne the history, tradition and legal requirements of the flag and seal, and preliminary style samples along with one or more options at each design point. He reviewed all of our research, the law and all of our preliminary drawings, paintings and digitized images. He invited his legal advisors, staff members Jacques Berry and Cathy Berry, and state archivist Dr. Florent Hardy to review our research, our drawings and our recommendations. The final products contain many of their suggestions. At the same time, we learned the correct specifications for modern flag design, obtained an acceptable color pallet for flags (the preferred PMS color codes used on flags), and approached the Annin Flag company to ask if we could obtain sample flags of the new design.

Secretary Dardenne made his decisions in October, 2010. After that, we began to finalize all the artwork and digital files for an act of donation to the state and for the Secretary to distribute as he saw fit.



Final Solutions

The looming questions we faced were these: Was the image of the seal published in the 1902 Governor’s order and the image of the flag published in the 1912 law the only legally acceptable images? Did an illustration carry the weight of law? Did the images depict the intent of the law or did the text? How did we manage the differences in text and illustration? Does a hundred years of tradition trump poorly written and illustrated law? Did we have the freedom or mandate or responsibility to create wholly new images to ensure exact duplication by anyone producing a seal or flag?

So, what to do? The Secretary of State had four options: He could do nothing and let the law speak for itself. (That was exactly the state of events at this writing. Some manufacturers had begun to create their own designs to comply with the new law. Some were ignoring it.) The Secretary could issue a statement to all flag and seal producers that henceforth they should depict three drops of blood. That move would simply perpetuate and make permanent the current confusion; He could pick an existing flag, slap three drops of blood on it and call it “official.” That move may well have inadvertently resulted in his choosing a design which was copyrighted, registered or otherwise protected, thus disallowing other manufacturers to freely duplicate it. Worse, he ran the risk of copyright or other infringement himself. The final option was to create a wholly new design, which we believed to be the best means of protecting the state’s most important brand. In early meetings, the Secretary agreed, indicating he would not settle for a quick fix or a do-nothing approach.

The main goal, of course, was a flag and seal that met the letter and spirit of the law. That was the easier task. The more difficult was to enhance the image to meet modern reproduction methods while preserving the richness, emotion and cultural significance of the important features and staying true to the history and tradition of each, especially the flag. Here are the suggestions we incorporated in preliminary drawings and offered to Secretary Dardenne and his staff:

Consistency: The seal law and flag law are separate sections within the revised statutes and have different histories. They had been managed separately until 2006, when the Legislature ensured both were altered to include the drops of blood. Our position was that a brand demands consistency between both items, so we designed the seal and the flag to maximize their similarities.

Motto: UNION JUSTICE CONFIDENCE

We used three words only with no punctuation or conjunction and hand-rendered them in all caps with a strong typeface reminiscent of traditional, etched fonts. We believe this to be the most acceptable and traditional form for our state's motto on both the seal and flag. Punctuation is necessary for correct grammar in standard written English or in legislation; it is not necessary in graphic illustration when design, placement, spacing or other features are more powerful and fulfill the letter and spirit of the law.

On the flag, the motto is the same blue as the field and placed on a ribbon or banner of the same white as the pelicans. The banner's length, width, curvature and separation from the nest carefully define the base of the crest and are an integral part of the final digital file, not a separate element. We chose simple terminations with a slight inward curve. The short double fold on each end is most consistent with existing images.

The Pelican and its chicks: Modern printing and flag-making technology allow realism in the brown pelican mother and chicks. Shading and detail create dimension and depth. The mother pelican's head turns to its own left in a correct posture to tear its own breast and to feed three chicks. The image depicts the strength, majesty and self-sacrifice of a state willing to protect and nourish its citizens. The three drops of blood are stylized rather than a realistic representation of blood seeping from a wound beneath feathers. The drops are correctly placed on the arc defined by the pelican's bill and grouped in a triangle to create the center and focal point of the entire image.

For the flag and a color version of the seal, the Pelican and its chicks are rendered predominately in white and all other colors are exactly specified using the PMS system. The color image can be accurately reproduced by four-color,

silk-screen or other color-matching reproduction using the digital files made available by the Secretary of State.

Field:

Louisiana historical authors and the traditions of heraldry place great emphasis on the meaning of color. The Louisiana blue has been held in separate writings as the color of the sky or the ocean or representative of loyalty of the Pelican mother for its chicks (or of the state for its citizens.) Traditional heraldry holds that blue is the color of loyalty, hope and honor.

Size, Proportion, Decoration:

The new digital files group the elements of the crest as a single image, so the pelican and banner must be scaled as a unit. Specifications call for a placement on a field that is 11 units wide by 7 units high. The image is to be centered by the blood drop triangle. The Pelican is 5 ¼ units tall by 6 units wide. The proportions and placement are most consistent with early pelican flags. Although the illustration of the original flag law displayed a gold fringe on the flag, subsequent images in later printings of the law display no gold fringe. The text of the law is silent on this point. Our specifications do not call for a fringe.

A word from the Artist – Curtis J. Vann, Jr.

My cell phone rang one afternoon in the summer of 2009. Glen was calling to tell me a discovery he had made. A few years earlier, a new law had altered the description of the Louisiana state flag, but no official artwork or specifications existed to allow manufacturers to accurately produce the new image. I was shocked and baffled that this issue hadn't come up before. Glen told me the circumstances and his desire to create this brand as a gift to our state. He believed members of the professional advertising and public relations community should rise to the occasion and offer to create the new Louisiana brand. I agreed to this wonderful opportunity.

As any wildlife artist will tell you, the subject must be researched and depicted accurately. My experience with pelicans was minimal. Several years earlier I had participated in a Lafayette, Louisiana art event called "Pelicans on Parade." That event allowed me the opportunity to study this magnificent bird as well as its characteristics and features. The brown pelican is a majestic creature and displays great character. I could see why our first governor chose it to represent the state of Louisiana. The challenge I had was to incorporate realism into the design of the flag while staying within the boundaries of the written law - i.e. a white-colored pelican instead of a true image of a brown pelican; the words Union, Justice, Confidence; three pelican chicks; and three drops of blood.

After discussing with Glen on several occasions the historical meaning of each of the above symbols, I was able to tighten my illustration and come up with what was given to the Secretary of State's office. I'm honored to have the opportunity to be a part of this distinctive date in our state's history. I would like to thank my son Trey Vann for helping with the digital rendering of our new flag and seal.

My hope is this project will allow the State to protect its brand by providing a means long into the future to faithfully duplicate the images to any size or any medium.

A note from Jay Dardenne, Secretary of State, Louisiana

In my last official act as Secretary of State, I was honored to introduce the new design for Louisiana's state flag. I mentioned during my inaugural address as Lieutenant Governor that multiple previous versions of the flag were not very "pelicanesque." The new design not only captures the appropriate features of our state bird, but also offers long-needed continuity to our state's most recognizable symbol.

Although it was David Joseph Louviere who gave birth to the concept of adding three drops of blood to the state flag, it was Glen and Curtis who painstakingly researched the history of our flag and provided options for me and my staff to consider in approving the new look. Most Louisianians probably do not realize the interesting, though confusing, evolution of our state flag, but hopefully now that a new design has been adopted, this new flag will fly proudly throughout the pelican state.

Jay Dardenne
Lieutenant Governor

Prologue

On Monday afternoon, November 22, 2010, former Secretary of State Jay Dardenne was sworn in as Louisiana's new Lieutenant Governor, and Tom Schelder became the new Secretary of State. At that ceremony, in the House Chamber of the Old State Capitol, Lt. Gov. Dardenne offered the citizens of Louisiana their new flag and seal, the first to be exactly specified and captured in digital files for accurate reproduction.



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Flag Law

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Captions

The first pelican seal

Many seals used in history

Flag illustration from 1902

Illustration for flag law 1912

David Joseph Louviere presenting to House Judiciary Committee, 2006

Illustration of seal ordered by Gov. Heard

Illustration of current flag law, re-drawn sometime before 1950

Flags flying over capital city in 2010

Sec. of State Jay Dardenne approves flag

New flag revealed Nov. 22, 2010