

PLJH teacher and students play a part in flag raising at historic Great Britain Mayflower memorial

Barbara Moore, American history teacher at Pleasant Lea Junior High School, is participating in an international occasion for the second time in approximately 10 years.

Along with all students in her American history classes, Mrs. Moore is sending 10 American flags to Great Britain. These flags will be flown over the Mayflower Stone, a memorial commemorating the Sept. 6, 1620, departure of the Pilgrims from Plymouth, Great Britain.

This is the second time Mrs. Moore has initiated the sending of flags to the Mayflower Stone. The first set of flags went from PLJH to Plymouth officials in 1982. Although the flags arrived and were raised amidst much fanfare and ceremony, the idea for the gift did not begin quite so formally, according to Mrs. Moore.

During 1981, Mrs. Moore's daughter, Kathy Moore, and Lee's Summit High School English teacher Mildred Mitchell spent the summer studying Shakespeare in England. During a stop at Mayflower Stone in Plymouth, the two noticed that the American flag flying over the memorial was old and torn.

"Kathy said she told Mildred, 'Wait until I tell Mom and Mr. Stokes about this. They'll do something about it,'" Mrs. Moore said. She was talking about Russell Stokes, who was then principal at Pleasant Lea Junior High School. (Kathy Moore is now Kathy Giangreco and teaches American history at Lee's Summit High School Division I.)

After talking to Mr. Stokes, Mrs. Moore wrote a letter to the mayor of Plymouth asking if she could send him a flag to fly over the Mayflower Stone. In this letter, she did not mention the sorry condition of the existing American flag at the memorial. She had also asked U.S. Rep. Ike Skelton to obtain a flag flown over the U.S. capitol on May 10, 1982, the 42nd anniversary of



United States Ambassador J.J. Louis (right), assisted by Plymouth Lord Mayor Reg Scott, hoists an American flag at the Mayflower memorial in Plymouth, Great Britain. This flag was donated by Pleasant Lea Junior High students and was raised during a 1982 ceremony. A similar flag donation was sent from PLJH to Plymouth officials in early February by Barbara Moore and her American history students.

Sir Winston Churchill's first day as England's prime minister.

"They wrote back and said they were so honored that they had planned to build a trophy case in the city hall for this American flag," Mrs. Moore said. "Of course, this didn't take care of the flag flying over the memorial!"

To ensure a presentable flag at Plymouth Stone, Mrs. Moore sent the flag from Rep. Skelton for the trophy case along with five other flags for the memorial. She also involved her American history students in the adventure and enclosed photographs of her students.

In July of 1982, one of these five flags was raised in a special ceremony that

included the United States ambassador to Great Britain and the lord mayor of Plymouth. Both the ceremony itself and English newspaper accounts of the special flag-raising ceremony mentioned the gift of flags from Pleasant Lea Junior High School in Lee's Summit, Missouri.

Since it has now been almost 10 years, Mrs. Moore said she decided to see if the town officials would accept 10 more flags. With the cooperation of Dr. Carl (Skip) Grigsby, PLJH principal, she was able to use money raised through the school's magazine sales to purchase the flags. Before writing to the Plymouth mayor, she asked her 110 American history students if they would be interested in being a part of this.

"The students were also enthusiastic about this," Mrs. Moore said, "and it gives them a personal connection to something that happened long ago."

Luckily, Mrs. Moore was able to contact the same city clerk at Plymouth about the gift. He remembered the first flag-raising and was happy to cooperate. Ten flags were mailed this year in early February along with photos of Mrs. Moore's students and information about Lee's Summit. Plans called for the new flags to be raised by the lord mayor again, and photographs will be sent back to PLJH.

Mrs. Moore said she would like to see this flag tradition go on between Lee's Summit and Plymouth. After she retires, she hopes her daughter will continue the flag gifts through her classes at Lee's Summit High School.

The overwhelming reaction to the flags from Plymouth officials has been especially exciting, Mrs. Moore said.

"I'd have thought they would have been besieged by schoolchildren all over the United States wanting to send them flags," she said. "Apparently, we were the first."