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Revered Gay Flag at World Gay Rodeo Finals®

A segment of the original 1.25-mile-long rainbow flag, regarded by LGBTQ men & women as the “Sacred Cloth”, will be on display at the World Gay Rodeo Finals® October 25-28th, 2018, at Mesquite Arena in Mesquite, Texas.



Section #93 is a piece of the mile-long “Sea to Sea” flag, which was cut into sections and distributed to cities globally following the 2003 public unfurling at Key West, Florida, where ends were immersed simultaneously in the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico. Hence, it’s “Sea to Sea” moniker. Section 93 has been featured at celebrations in Manchester, England; Vancouver and Toronto, Canada; Stockholm, Sweden, as well as many major cities in states across America. Additionally, it was displayed at the 2010 winter Olympics in Vancouver, BC. “The rainbow flag is loved and cherished all over the world.” creator Gilbert Baker said. “It represents an idea of equality and justice for everyone.” And that justice and equality is *exactly* what this twenty-five foot section

has been witness to. Carried to Washington, it was unfurled on the steps in front of the Supreme Court the morning of oral arguments in the Obergefell v. Hodges marriage equality case, attracting massive international media attention. Plaintiffs from thirty-three states and the District of Columbia were present. Hundreds joined in support of much needed change in civil rights. Walking by in confidence with their symbol of equality and justice, the crowds went wild. The entire world watched live as the polychromatic banner galvanized a nation. Since the 2015 US Supreme Court ruling in the Obergefell v. Hodges case, Section 93 has been seen, touched and photographed more than any other worldwide. “We’re deeply moved to have a historic icon such as this on public display at the World Gay Rodeo Finals® this October in Mesquite.” says WGRF® public relations director, Buck Beal. “Its story is inspiring.”

Section 93 traveled to Australia at the invitation of LGBTQ leaders for their Pride celebration, and, importantly, as a tangible inspiration in support of that country’s marriage equality movement. Ceremonies were attended by Australian Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, and his wife. Before a crowd of over one-half million spectators, it was carried the entire length of the parade route by none other than US Ambassador, John Berry, and the ambassador from France, Christophe Lecoutrie – a monumentally historic event.

“Section 93 is the healing cloth.” says Wes Givens, a founding member of the Diamond State Rodeo Association and the man responsible for bringing Section 93 to the World Gay Rodeo Finals® in Mesquite. “Bringing it to LGBT communities and seeing what it does to lift the spirits of those affected by hate and hopelessness is beautiful.” The flag has been present at innumerable civic and social events throughout the land, and witness to enactment of legislation in support of LGBTQ equality not just here in the US; but *internationally* as well. Truly, it has become the symbolic banner for universal LGBTQ justice and equality. And Wes should know. Wes has been omnipresent during the Marriage Equality campaign. No stranger to Washington, Wes received an invitation from the White House to attend a reception hosted by former president Barack Obama. “It is a symbol of our community,” Wes says, “and a reminder none of us is alone in our struggles as members of the LGBTQ community.”

Section 93 was requested by the Obama Administration to be displayed at the White House on June 9, 2016 at the last LGBTQ presidential reception during the Obama presidency. In a moment of bad luck, the White House carpentry staff was unable to complete the planned frame in time; however, it was hung at the Democratic National Headquarters immediately following President Obama’s reception.

“For many in America and around the world, Section 93 is a tangible symbol of strength in the quest for equality.” says Buck Beal, public relations director for the World Gay Rodeo Finals®. He adds: “It is a rallying point for justice. A beacon of hope in the face of the darkness of repression, and the evil of ignorance. Just as a star-spangled banner flying over Ft. McHenry rallied a young nation in defense of liberty, so Section 93 unites people here at home and around the world in defense of *civil liberties* and equality. It inspires the awe of many. And the courage of all.”