



THE

DETROIT RISE

A NEW FLAG FOR THE CITY OF DETROIT

BY
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Overview

The *Detroit Rise* is the official name of the new flag created for the city of Detroit, MI. This redesign is a response to the fact that the city's current flag doesn't follow basic principles of good flag design. The current design is too complex, it uses too many colors, and the city seal shouldn't be on it.

Not only did the city flag need some attention, but the city's people needed some enlightenment as well. Many Detroiters don't know their city has a flag, and those who do don't quite resonate with it. This project aims to encourage citizens, leaders, and officials of Detroit to embrace, adopt, and fly the new flag and, especially, to reassert the city's image.

Within this booklet are key details on the city's current flag and history, the new flag's symbolism and design, and a vision of how the flag's various applications will embody the aesthetics of a new Detroit.

THE 313

A Third of History

Detroit was founded on July 24, 1701 as *Fort Pontchartrain du Détroit* by the French explorer, Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac. It was named after his colonial sponsor, Louis Phélypeaux, comte de Pontchartrain—the Chancellor of France at the time—and after the Detroit River—*Détroit* (pronounced *Day-twah*) being French for "the strait."

The name of Cadillac's post was shortened to *Detroit* after the British took control of it in 1760 during the French and Indian War. The United States then gained control in 1796 following the American Revolutionary War.

In 1802, the settlement of Detroit was incorporated as a town, but on June 11, 1805 an accidental fire destroyed most of the establishment. In rebuilding Detroit, a monumental urban

street plan was designed by Chief Justice Augustus B. Woodward to emulate that of Washington D.C. and, more particularly, allude to the avenues and boulevards of Paris.

The Michigan Territory was soon established and designated Detroit as its capital. With a substantial expansion and increased population, Detroit officially became incorporated as a city in 1815. It remained the capital of the Michigan Territory and then the Michigan State from 1805 to 1847.

The decades that followed after were the critical periods of Detroit's first ascension. It began as a successful agricultural and fur-trading center and then became an industrial powerhouse through the mastery of smelting and manufacturing, earning its notoriety as one of the greatest and most invaluable cities of the 20th century.

Heritage over Destiny?

Detroit's first and current flag was adopted in 1948, but was designed many years prior by a resident named David E. Heineman in 1907.

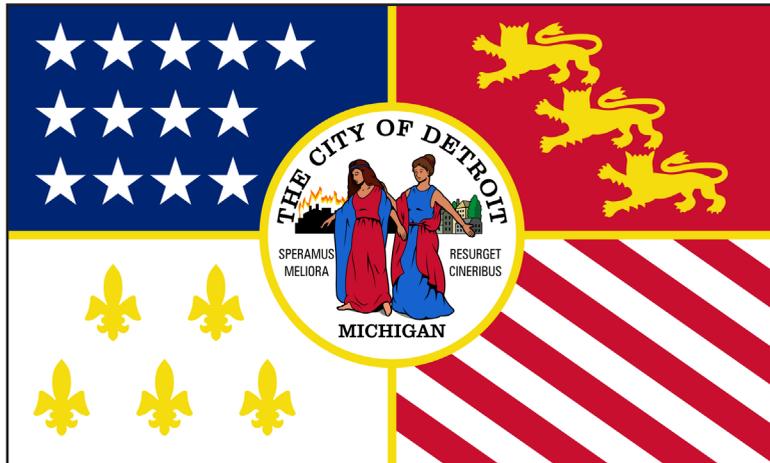
The design consists of a quartered orientation with the city seal set in the center. Each quarter contains elements representing the three nations that once occupied the city.

The bottom-left quarter holds five golden fleurs-de-lis on a white field representing France's founding of Detroit. The top-right quarter holds three gold lions on a red field representing Great Britain's control. In the top-left quarter are thirteen white stars on a blue field representing American control from 1796 to 1812, and in the bottom-

elements that commemorate the fire of 1805, which together essentially symbolize the spirit of Detroit.

The first group is of two women beholding a condition of the city. The woman on the left weeps over the city destroyed and in ruins while the woman on the right comforts her, showing her the city built anew and in greater standing.

The second group of elements is of two Latin phrases positioned beneath the versions of the city. The phrase to the left, *Speramus Meliora*, means "We hope for better things" and the one to the right, *Resurget Cineribus*, means "It will rise from the ashes." These two phrases, penned by



right quarter are thirteen red and white stripes representing the American re-occupation of Detroit in 1813 during the War of 1812.

The seal, which was adopted in 1827 and designed by American painter James Otto Lewis, is comprised of two groups of

the French priest Gabriel Richard, make up the city's motto.

The spirit of Detroit, then, is defined as the amassed entity of resilience that both the city and the city's people exhibit as they pursue and achieve, through any adversity, a state of amelioration.

As a seal and one that anchors all four quarters to its core, the city seal reads as the primary symbol of meaning for Detroit. The content of heritage in the quarters then become secondary in the flag's symbolic hierarchy. Because the connection of Detroit's colonial heritage is so distant from the city's origin of identity, the flag would be better without the four quarters and their points.

The current flag of Detroit has its honorable parts of homage

but these parts make the design crowded, and they aren't very relevant nor special to the city's people and their cultures today. The dozen colors used are admirable, but they make the design overwhelming and too related to American patriotism. Lastly, since seals are meant to be printed on official documents and can hardly be read from a distance on a hanging or flapping flag, the seal of Detroit should have no place in the design.





A NEW DETROIT

A
NEW
DETROIT

For the Better Things

In spite of the various declines Detroit experienced in the second half and first quarter of the 20th and 21st century, respectively, it always managed to maintain a firm footing necessary to enter revival mode.

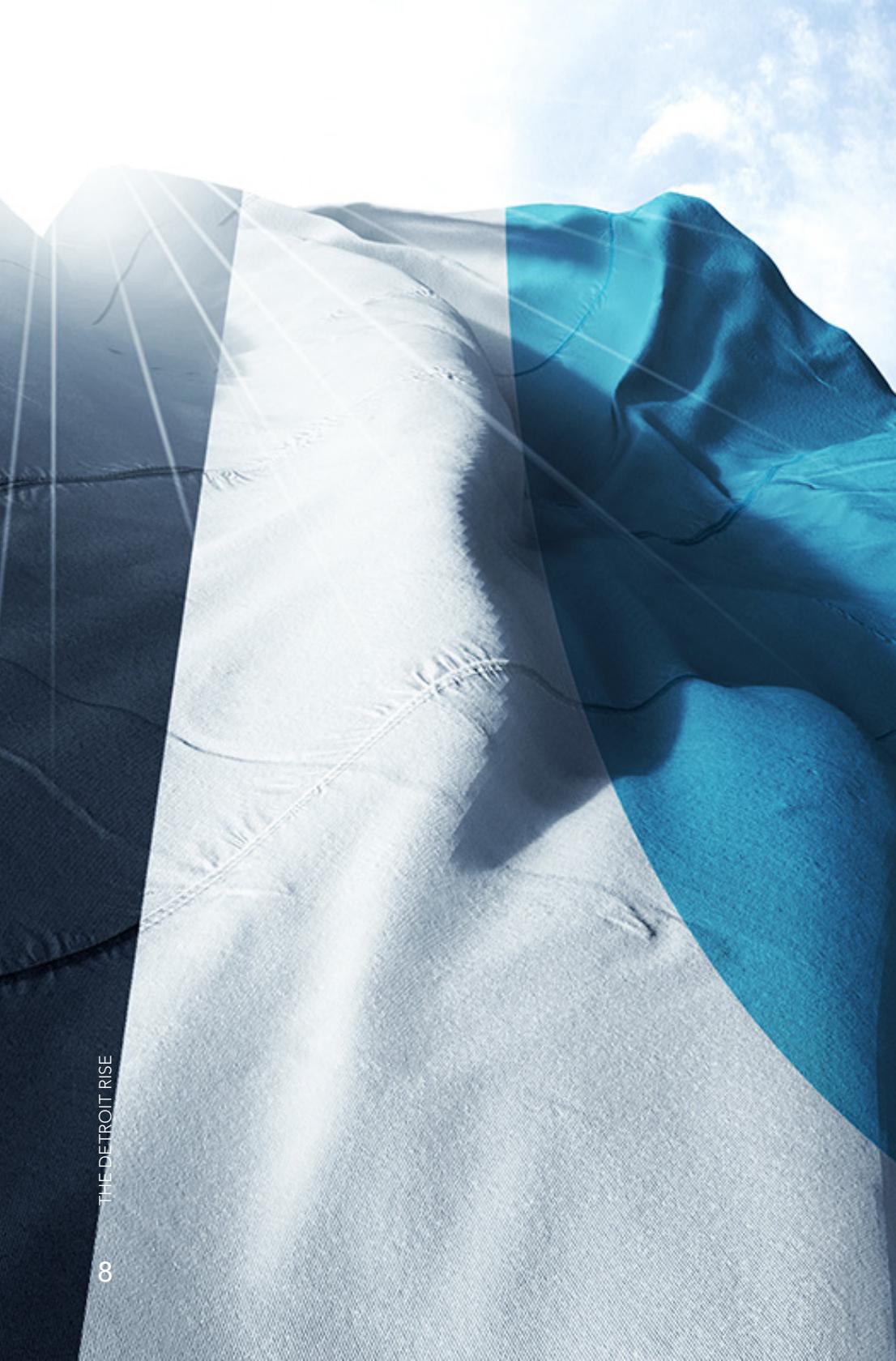
Today, for all its great effort to renovate itself once more, and actually like never before, Detroit deserves a symbol of rebirth just as new as the ash it is gradually rising from.

When thinking about the characteristics Detroit expresses most, it is clear that Detroit's knack to bounce back with finesse is its greatest quality—

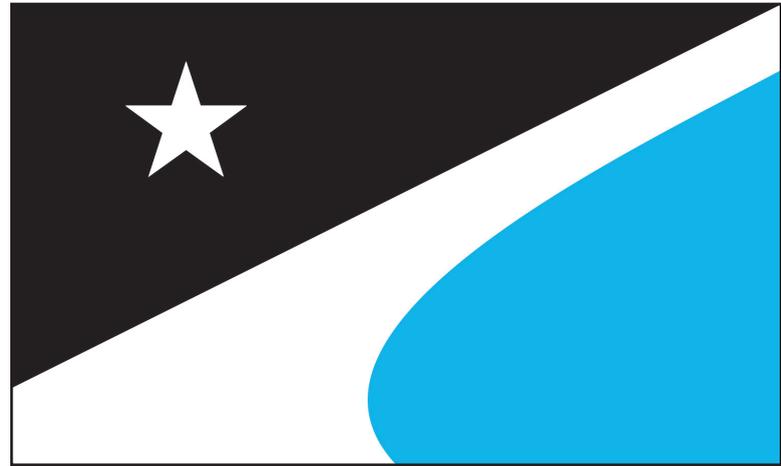
one that never fails to be seen, acknowledged, and noted. This attribute directly relates to the meaning behind Detroit's seal, and the evidence of renaissance it produces certainly attests for why it is more than mandatory to be a component in Detroit's flag.

So, in preserving the true identity of Detroit and removing what are ultimately unessential aspects of its profile, the new design features a well-resolved set of elements that both reinforces and reimagines Detroit's character accurately and effectively.





The Banner of the Strait



Symbolism

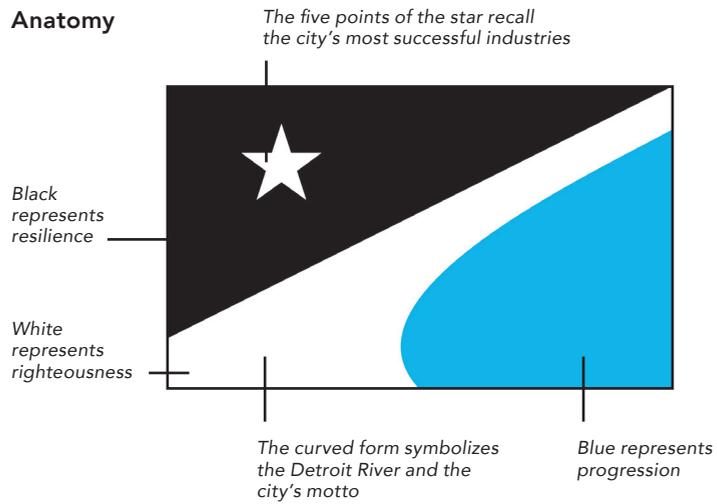
The colors black, white, and blue represent the city's strongest quality, resilience, the righteousness of the people, and the city's progressive spirit. The five points of the star represent the industries the city excels in most: the automotive industry, music, art and design, life science, and high technology. The white form symbolizes the river for its significance as a historical and critical waterway and to which the city owes its name—"the strait" that connects Lake St. Clair to Lake Erie. It represents a rising from struggles the city endures and a path toward the better things the city hopes for and shall attain.

Design

The black field is a triangle created by one diagonal line and the blue field is a curved shape created by one curved line that straightens. The resulting negative space is the form of a stylized Detroit River—a simplified translation of the river's geography.

The black field denotes the U.S. and the blue field denotes Canada. This juxtaposition recalls the city's geographical value as a key asset for the two nations. Aside from being in what's known as the *position of honor*, the placement of the star denotes the location of the city.

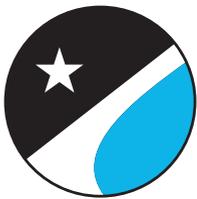
Anatomy



Variation

In the event that this design is subject to change form to fulfill nonstandard proportions, the design should be reduced to its three colors and its *industrial star*. However, some shapes may allow for all elements to exist, in particular the river, so any variant created should be designed with reasonable

discretion. If including the river in unconventional canvases, the river's curve should be adjusted accordingly to prevent drastic disproportion. Lastly, in any setting, the industrial star should always be upright. Among all variations, the *Detroit Tricolor* is the official variant of the Detroit Rise.

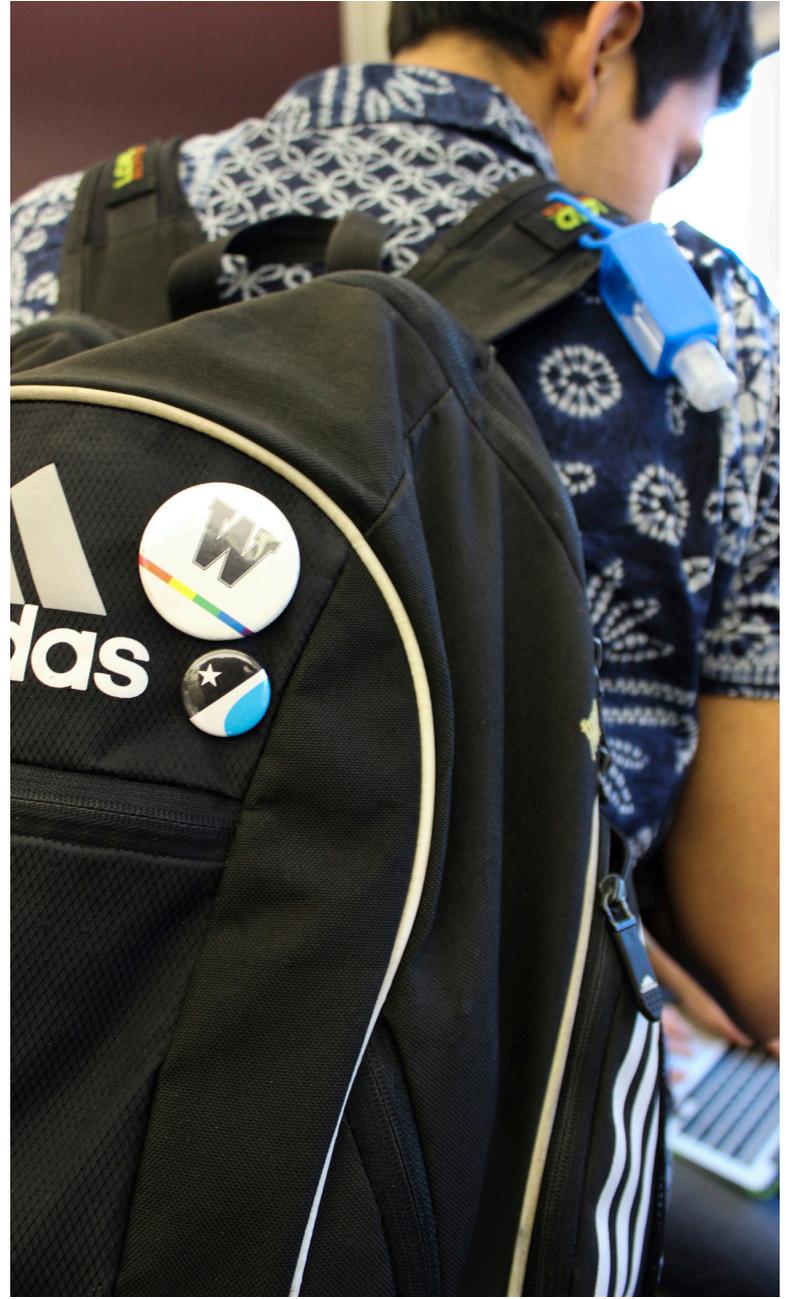
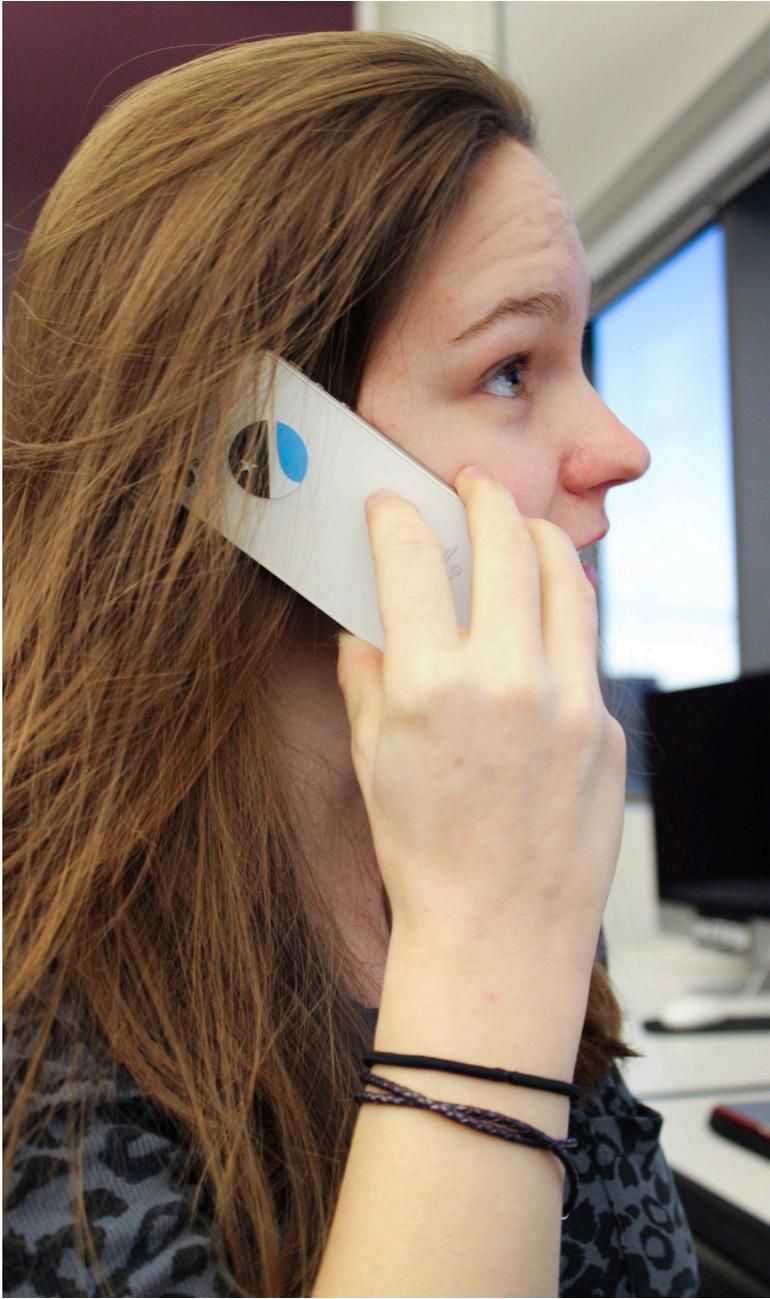


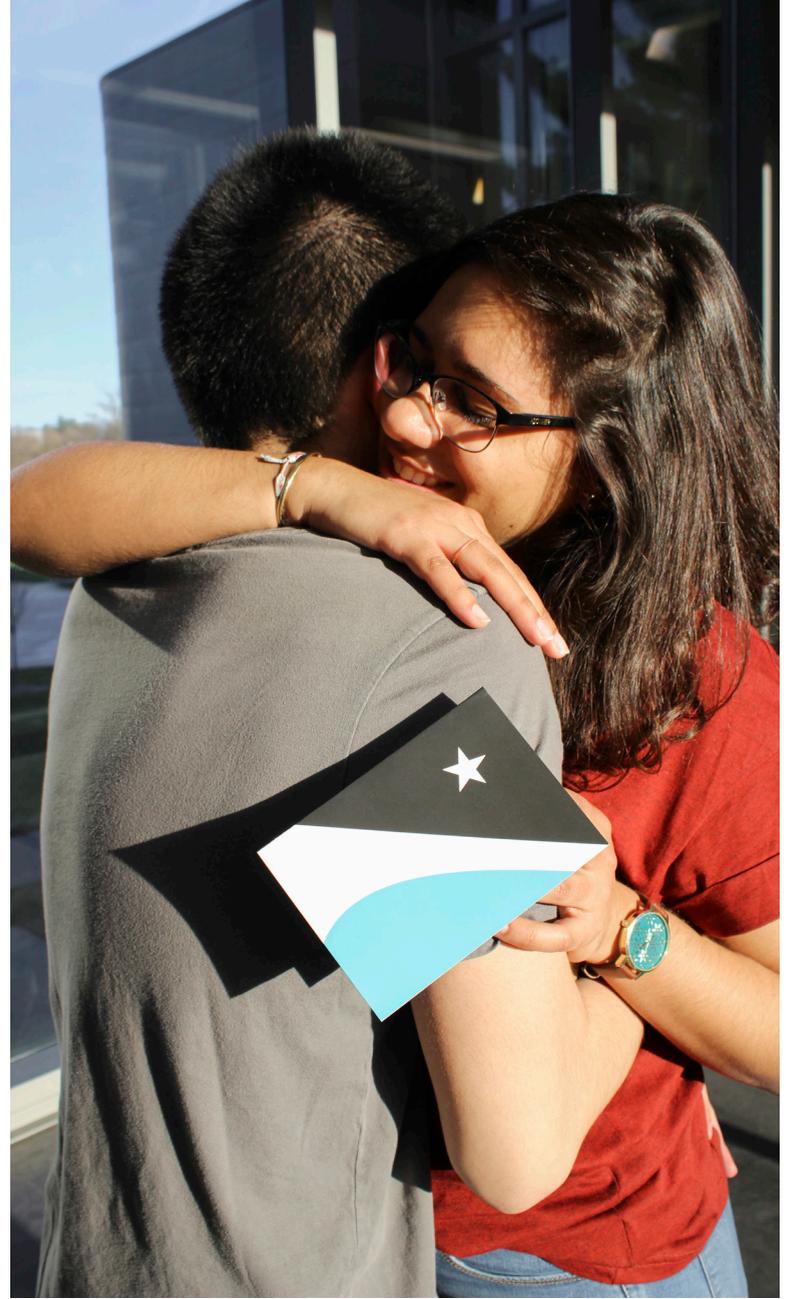


A NEW DETROIT









RISEN

No More Ashes

As a city that never gives up and is quick to ascend from deep falls, Detroit is sure to remain on high grounds and in good standing. Its industrial expertise and artistic attitude make it a place of seamless innovation and decorative excellence.

Detroit has a mighty voice uttered by its colorful cultures and prideful people. The word it speaks is of confidence and courage, advancement and novelty, and optimism and betterment.

The Detroit Rise is the synthesis of these truths. It isn't just a flag of indication but is a banner of profound values, histories, and visions. The spirit of the city dwells within it and the aura of the people who have contributed to making Detroit one of the world's most precious cities pervades its design. It is the new badge of a Detroiter, the new mark of Michigan's most important metropolis, and the new image of America's finest capital of

renaissance. The Detroit Rise simply is the quintessence of Detroit.



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For more information, visit deonmixon.com