

# News and stories

## Gold Star Families Monument to be dedicated

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Terry Brown | [LMTOnline](#)

Hershel "Woody" Williams, who earned a Medal of Honor, the nation's highest award for combat heroism, on Iwo Jima in World War II, will speak during the dedication of a Gold Star Families Memorial Monument at 10 a.m. Saturday in LaFayette Park, Albany.

Retired Congressman Michael McNulty of Green Island, a Gold Star brother, and Albany Mayor Kathy Sheehan also will speak. McNulty's brother, William, a Marine, was killed in the Vietnam War.

Frank Currey of Selkirk, a former Army sergeant who earned a Medal of Honor in World War II, also is expected to participate.

The family of Army Capt. Timothy Moshier of Bethlehem, who was killed when his helicopter crashed in Iraq, will lay a wreath.

The Rev. Charlene Robbins will give the invocation. Her son Army Staff Sgt. Thomas Robbins of Delmar died in an accidental explosion in Iraq.

Last year, Gold Star Families of the Greater Capital District and the Tri-County Council of Vietnam Era Veterans launched a successful campaign to raise \$75,000 for the project.

Generally, monuments honor those killed in combat but not their families. The new monument also preserves the memory of the fallen and stands as a reminder that freedom is not free, Williams said.

One side of the black granite monument bears the words "Gold Star Families Memorial Monument, a tribute to Gold Star Mothers, Fathers, and Relatives who have sacrificed a Loved One for our Freedom."

A second side tells a story through the four granite panels: Homeland, Family, Patriot and Sacrifice. At the center of this tribute is the cutout that represents the loved one who paid the ultimate sacrifice.

Williams originated the idea of Gold Star Families monuments. Before he enlisted in the Marines, he was a cab driver and one of his duties was to deliver Western Union telegram death notices to families who had lost a loved one in World War II. The experience prompted him to think of a way to honor and pay tribute to the families.

He founded the Hershel "Woody" Williams Medal of Honor Foundation, which helped launch an effort to build at least one Gold Star Families Monument in every state. To date, 18 monuments have been dedicated and 44 are in progress.

Last year, Joe Pollicino of Latham, president of the Tri-County Council of Vietnam Era Veterans, suggested the monument to Carrie Farley of Nassau, president of the State of New York American Gold Star Mothers.

Pollicino, Farley and others formed a committee, chaired by John McKenna III of Clifton Park, for construction and fundraising for the monument.

Farley's son Army Staff Sgt. Derek Farley was killed Aug. 17, 2009, in the Afghanistan war. McKenna's son Marine Reserve Capt. John McKenna IV of Clifton Park was killed in 2006 in Fallujah, Iraq.

"The sacrifices of our families are inseparable from the sacrifices of our sons and daughters who have fallen in service to our country," McKenna said at the start of the fund drive.

Gold Star Mothers include moms who have lost a son or daughter in combat, accidents, sickness and suicides while on active duty. Gold Star Families include immediate family as well as grandparents, uncles, aunts, nieces and nephews.