

News and stories

Gold Star Families monument dedicated in Albany

Relatives of fallen troops help unveil memorial at LaFayette Park

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Staff Report | [TimesUnion](#)

ALBANY — The Gold Star Families Memorial Monument was dedicated Saturday morning in Albany's LaFayette Park.

It honors the surviving family of military service members who have died while on active duty.

Hershel "Woody" Williams, who earned a Medal of Honor, the nation's highest award for combat heroism, on Iwo Jima in World War II, spoke during the dedication. Retired congressman Michael McNulty of Green Island, a Gold Star brother, and Albany Mayor Kathy Sheehan also spoke. McNulty's brother, William, a Marine, was killed in the Vietnam War.

Francis S. Currey of Selkirk, a former Army sergeant who earned a Medal of Honor in World War II, was also in attendance.

The family of Army Capt. Timothy Moshier of Bethlehem, who was killed in 2006 when his helicopter crashed in Iraq, participated in a wreath-laying ceremony, while the Rev. Charlene Robbins gave the invocation. Her son, Army Staff Sgt. Thomas Robbins of Delmar,

died in an accidental explosion in Iraq in 2004.

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.

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 building the local 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 in 2009, in the Afghanistan war. McKenna's son Marine Reserve Capt. John McKenna IV of Clifton Park was killed in 2006 in Fallujah, Iraq.

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