

# News and stories

## Gold Star Memorial fundraising kicks off

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Megan Gray-Hatfield | [Gainesville Daily Register](#)

Medal of Honor recipients Hershel “Woody” Williams, Hiroshi “Hershey” Miyamura and Donald “Doc” Ballard arrived in Gainesville this week to help kick off the fundraising efforts for the Gold Star Families Memorial Monument.

During a V.I.P. luncheon Friday at the Santa Fe Depot, Williams told the crowd that the monument is not just for one particular individual in a family who has lost someone serving in the military but for everyone. Because “they grieve too,” he said.

Williams’ mission through his nonprofit — the Hershel Woody Williams Medal of Honor Foundation — is to have at least one monument in all 50 states.

He said the first Gold Star Families Memorial Monument was erected in West Virginia and there are now 32 monuments completed across the country.

“Thank God for other people in other communities just like this one,” Williams said.

Bobby Balthrop, an honorary board member of the Hershel Woody Williams Medal of Honor Foundation, said it will cost about \$50,000

to \$60,000 for the monument.

The black granite monument features two sides. One side bears the words: "Gold Star Families Memorial Monument, a tribute to Gold Star Families and Relatives who have sacrificed a Loved One for our Freedom."

The other side tells a story through four granite panels: Homeland, family, patriot and sacrifice. The scenes on each panel are a reflection of each community's Gold Star Families and their fallen Heroes, according to a description on the nonprofit's website.

At the center of the tribute is a cutout which represents the "Loved One who paid the ultimate sacrifice in the name of Freedom."

"It's important to me that our community stand up and support Woody's dream," said Cliff Yow, an honorary board member of the Hershel Woody Williams Medal of Honor Foundation.

In December, Gainesville City Council members unanimously approved placement of a Gold Star Families Memorial Monument at Leonard Park, 1000 W. California St.

A groundbreaking ceremony for the monument is scheduled for 10 a.m. Saturday at the park.

Donations can be made online by visiting <https://tinyurl.com/ycb4norz>.

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