

# News and stories

## COFO Breaks Ground on Gold Star Families Memorial

Nov. 17, 2016

Grant Sloan | [Ozarks First](#)

POINT LOOKOUT, Mo. – A Medal Of Honor recipient made a stop in the Ozarks Thursday.

Hershel “Woody” Williams made the trip to College of the Ozarks, not to talk about his service in World War Two, but to discuss the sacrifice of those who have lost loved ones in war.

Williams has a goal to put up “Gold Star” Family Memorials across the nation. When C of O heard about Williams’ mission, it wanted to be the site of the first “Gold Star” Families memorial in Missouri.

"I think part of it is it just gives you a place to come and remember, that's important to us," says Gold Star family member, Donn Russell, who lost a brother in Vietnam.

The future location of the new memorial will be next to the newly-built Missouri Vietnam Veterans Memorial on the college’s campus.

The setting will allow a cut out of a soldier's silhouette in the new monument, to frame the names of Vietnam soldiers on the wall behind it.

"If you're a member of a family that's lost someone... you're just appreciative that someone remembers them," he says.

"Even in our national capital, with 1,100 memorials and monuments, not one pays tribute to Gold Star families," says Williams.

Williams started his mission with one Gold Star memorial in West Virginia, now they are spreading across the country.

"Communities are realizing, here are folks living among us, who gave a loved one so we could be free," he says, "and we have never even thanked them in any way."

The memorial at College of the Ozarks will have a local touch, with four panels designed by two seniors at the college.

"We take some patriotic travel trips, here at the college, where students assist veterans back to the ground that they fought in," says art major, Katherine Yung.

"So an image for that is from the Normandy trip we took a couple years ago at the Arlington Cemetery," she says.

The panel Yung is describing represents "sacrifice." There are also pictures symbolizing "family," "patriot" and "homeland."

"What we tried to do was capture the essence of the college and the essence of Missouri," says graphic design major, Emma Carter. "But also make it non-representational enough that... someone who was visiting the memorial, would be able to put their own experiences and their own feelings into the images themselves."

The memorial will be built with funds raised by the Bass Pro Legends of Golf tournament and is expected to be complete in April.