

# News and stories

## Aiming for October completion of Gold Star monument

Mar 12 2018

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

A ground-breaking ceremony for the Gold Star Families Memorial Monument on Saturday at Leonard Park brought together loved ones of people killed serving the nation.

Medal of Honor recipient Hershel "Woody" Williams said he suggested Gainesville "would be a wonderful place" to have a Gold Star Families Memorial about five years ago.

"I thought this would be a tremendous city with its history and what they are doing in the way of honoring Medal of Honor recipients. It would be a great place to have a memorial," Williams said.

Officials said the monument will cost about \$50,000 to \$60,000.

"We are very close to being fully funded," said Cliff Yow, an honorary board member of Williams' nonprofit. "The people that came out last night (Friday) really gave and gave."

Yow said his goal is to have the monument built in time for Williams' birthday in October.

“Wouldn’t it be great to have a dedication on his birthday?” Yow asked.

In December, Gainesville City Council members approved placement of a Gold Star Families Memorial Monument at the park.

Williams has made it his mission through the Hershel Woody Williams Medal of Honor Foundation to have at least one monument in all 50 states.

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

The black granite monument represents someone who was killed serving in the military while paying tribute to the Gold Star Families.

“I’m just a guy that’s trying to promote it and get it going,” Williams said. “The people in the community, they’re the ones that do all the work. They’re the ones that must decide it’s going to happen so they can honor their own.”

He said he’s had families walk up and touch a memorial as if their loved ones were a part of it.

“That’s a very emotional impact, not only on me but on them,” Williams said. “And my goodness, the sacrifice they made was greater than whatever we made. We served, but we also got to come home. Their loved one didn’t.”

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