

News and stories

North Canton to break ground on Gold Star Monument in spring

Mar 12 2018

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NORTH CANTON North Canton will break ground in the spring on the first Gold Star Monument in the county. It will be one of a few in the state of Ohio. The monument honors Gold Star families, preserves the memory of the fallen and is a reminder that freedom is not free. The monument will be placed on the Glenwood Street side of Price Park.

Dr. Timothy P. Novelli, founder of the Patriot Project in North Canton, sits on the monument board. He also has a good relationship with Woody Williams, co-founder of the Hershel “Woody” Williams Medal of Honor Foundation.

Williams, who is 94 years old, is a USMC retired Medal of Honor recipient for acts of bravery during the battle of Iwo Jima in on Feb. 23, 1945. He received his Medal of Honor in October of that year from President Harry Truman. He’s also been awarded the Purple Heart.

Part of the mission of the Hershel “Woody” Williams Medal of Honor Foundation is to honor Gold Star families, relatives and children by building Gold Star Family Memorial Monuments throughout the United States. The organization also offers

scholarships and sponsors many outreach programs and events to educate communities about Gold Star Families and the sacrifice they have endured.

“Woody comes to my Patriot Ball fundraiser every year and we’ve been discussing putting up a Gold Star Monument in North Canton,” Novelli said. “I have 12 Medal of Honor recipients on my board of directors which is meaningful and unprecedented because only 71 recipients are still living and only 35 still travel.”

Novelli started the Patriot Project six years ago to provide free chiropractic services to military veterans and their families. Today, there are 8,000 doctors in the U.S. providing more than \$1 million in free care.

“We are non-political, we are patriots and encourage others to be patriotic. We can find common ground by honoring and respecting our military,” Novelli said.

The Gold Star Monument will be on a 25-foot cement pad. There will be three flags, the U.S. Gold Star Honor and a POW/MIA flag. The monument itself will be 16 feet across with four panels. Each panel will display one of the four virtues including Patriot, Sacrifice, Family and Homeland.

For the North Canton memorial, the panels will include:

- Patriot panel honoring Woody Williams with the image of soldiers raising the flag over Iwo Jima.
- The Sacrifice panel will have an image of a crying eagle behind a soldier’s gun, boots and helmet.
- The Family panel will display an image of a soldier holding his young child laying her head over his shoulder. It’s symbolic for one who is leaving for service or returning home from service in the military.
- The Homeland panel will honor North Canton and the Hoover

Company during wartime. It will include a photo from the North Canton Heritage Society of Operation Pied Piper when the Hoover Company helped bring 84 children to the area from England to escape the bombings of World War II.

“We are planning six benches, three on each side of the monument for people to sit and view the monument. We are still raising money for three of the benches,” Novelli said.

There is a dedication planned for July 7 that will include Woody Williams with a motorcycle escort, the Patriot Guard Riders.

“These are the real heroes,” Novelli said. “We need to start telling our youth the reason why they are the real heroes. The people who serve our country in the military exhibit selflessness, a sense of duty and patriotism and a deep sense of gratitude for living in the United States.”

Those interested in donating to the project can visit <http://hwwmohf.org/canton-oh.html> for complete details.

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