

# News and stories

## North Canton breaks ground on Gold Star monument

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Jessica Holbrook | [IndeOnline](#)

**The monument, which honors the loved ones of those who died serving in the military, is the first of its kind in Stark County.**

NORTH CANTON By summer, Price Park will offer the community a place to remember and reflect on those who've made the ultimate sacrifice.

North Canton broke ground Thursday on the Gold Star Families Memorial Monument. The monument, which honors the loved ones of those who died serving in the military, is the first of its kind in Stark County.

Timothy P. Novelli, a North Canton chiropractor and founder of the Patriot Project, and Medal of Honor Recipient Hershel "Woody" Williams, did the honors, gripping silver shovels while backed by a crowd of community leaders, veterans and military families.

"It is groundbreaking ceremonies like this, in this community, that are an example of what needs to be done in many communities all over this country," Williams said. "So that people can really appreciate and realize that what I have, the privileges that I'm privileged to enjoy every day, were made possible by somebody

making a sacrifice.”

Williams, 94, is a Marine veteran who earned the Medal of Honor in 1945 for acts of bravery during the Battle of Iwo Jima. He established the Hershel Woody Williams Medal of Honor Foundation in 2012, with a goal of placing a monument in every state.

So far, 45 states either have a monument or are committed to having one, Novelli said, who’s leading the North Canton project alongside City Administrator Patrick DeOrio.

It’s a honor to have a monument in North Canton, he said.

It’s a boon to the project that Williams, who has an extensive travel schedule, came to groundbreaking and plans to be at the monument dedication July 7, Novelli said. “It’s just so humbling to have his support and friendship.”

The memorial is set to be dedicated 10 a.m. Saturday, July 7. To view a rendering of the project’s master plan, see [CantonRep.com](http://CantonRep.com).

### **Gold Star**

Williams spoke about the need for every community to honor not just Gold Star mothers, but fathers, siblings and entire families.

“There are many, many Americans who do not know or understand what a Gold Star family really is,” he said.

Those who join the military commit to offering their lives to protect the U.S., its Constitution and its people, he said.

“From the time we became a nation, there have always been those individuals who were willing to put their life on the line so that others following could have the great privilege of just being in a free country, in the greatest country on the face of this earth,” Williams said.

It’s an honor to have Williams in North Canton, said Mayor David J.

Held.

“It truly is inspiring that we have people who are willing to give their very own life for those of us here,” he said.

“All those small freedoms we have and appreciate on a daily basis, we have those because of men and women just like you,” he added.

There are many Gold Star families in the area, but most people don’t realize who they are, said Sue Simmons, president of Chapter Two of the Blue Star Mothers of America. “It’s time the Gold Star families get recognized for the sacrifice they gave this country.”

### **Volunteers**

North Canton donated the land in Price Park, near the Blue Star marker and walking path, to the project. City Council on Monday approved putting \$15,500 toward flagpoles, lighting and other needed improvements on the site.

The rest of the project, including the monument itself, is paid for by donations.

“North Canton is a first-class, middle-class town. Those who live here, we really try to strive ourselves to be that kind of thing. We’re really excited to have this event today,” said Councilman Mark Cerreta, at-large.

He thanked those who donated to the project so far, including local contractors, engineers and architects who’ve agreed to donate materials and labor.

“Being a small town, it is so vital for us to rely on people that step up and volunteer. When you’re a small town .... we don’t always have the resources to do the things that are cool,” he said.

The project is still seeking donations, which are tax deductible. For more information, or to get involved, see the project page at [hwwmohf.org/canton-oh.html](http://hwwmohf.org/canton-oh.html).