

News and stories

Gold Star Families Monument at State Capitol Close to Fundraising Goal

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LITTLE ROCK, Ark. - Many monuments across the country honor the men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom, but a first-of-its-kind memorial to honor their families will soon cement itself on the Arkansas capitol grounds.

The secretary of state's Capitol Arts and Grounds Commission got an update Thursday on the progress of the Gold Star Family Monument.

The process has been moving slower than some would like, but the Arkansas Gold Star Family Monument Committee does have a completion date now. The group is hoping the ribbon cutting for the memorial will happen the week before the Fourth of July.

A law passed during the 2017 legislative session made the monument possible, followed by meetings with the secretary of state's office and fundraising efforts.

Eddie Joe Williams, a former state senator who left the legislature last year for the Trump administration, said the committee is down to the last \$100,000 it needs.

Williams helped pass the legislation because he has his own Gold Star family story. His first cousin was killed in Vietnam.

"Long after the taps is blown and the flag is folded, the family goes home to an empty chair or plate," he said. "This is just to say Arkansas really says 'thank you' to those families who have made the ultimate sacrifice."

The nearly 80-foot wide by 40-foot deep memorial will sit at the back entrance of the capitol near the Purple Heart parking spots.

Williams said if done right, visitors at sunset will see the shadow of the missing soldier cast over the monument.