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Ceremony to rename V-A for Williams set for Sunday

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Chris Lawrence | [WV Metro News](#)

HUNTINGTON, W.Va. — West Virginia's only living Medal of Honor recipient will receive yet another rare honor Sunday. The Huntington V-A Medical Center will from now on be known as the Hershel "Woody" Williams V-A Medical Center. Congress approved the resolution pushed by Congressman Evan Jenkins and U.S. Senator Joe Manchin for the renaming. Williams credits the honor to his grandson's persistence.

"It certainly was a surprise," said Williams. "One of my grandsons really started the movement a couple of years ago with Senator Manchin. It started gathering momentum and eventually Congress agreed with the resolution that was put in."

It's the second time Congress has suspended major rules for Williams' name. Typically ships and V-A hospitals are only named for people after they are dead. Williams has managed to live to see his name on both.

"They had to suspend the rules and pass that for someone living and they've only done it a few times," said Brian Nimmo, Director of the V-A Medical Center. "The John S. McCain and the George Bush are a couple of other exceptions...they don't do this frequently."

It's a fitting tribute for Williams who started his post World War II activities working for the same V-A hospital which now bears his name.

"I came there in January 1946 to start my training with the V-A from Fairmont, West Virginia," said Williams. "It took me seven hours to drive it."

"He's seen so much of the change both on the benefits side and out here at the hospital," Nimmo explained. "He's really seen the medical center evolve."

Several hundred are expected to be on hand for the naming ceremony on Sunday. Nimmo believed it would be a boost to morale of employees as well as veterans to see Williams' name on the building.

"It's hard to put into words how much this means to us," said Nimmo. "He's got such a legacy of service, this is something we can use forever as motivation to our staff. We've got a pretty big name to live up to."

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