

News and stories

South Carolina Gold Star Families monument unveiled

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Zach Giroux | [Moultrie News](#)

The South Carolina Gold Star Families organization is now a permanent fixture in the Lowcountry thanks to a memorial monument unveiled at Patriots Point by keynote speaker Hershel 'Woody' Williams, Medal of Honor recipient. Lowcountry loved ones of fallen freedom fighters gathered to witness this recognition.

It pays tribute to the families who have lost a loved one in support of America's freedom throughout every conflict since World War I. The 'Gold Star' symbolizes life lost in the line of duty.

At the dedication ceremony, Medal of Honor recipient Hershel "Woody" Williams and dignitaries from the America and South Carolina Gold Star Mothers spoke of the mission of their cross-country crusade.

"I keep trying to convince people this is not about me. This is about them," Williams said. "The number of people who sacrificed their lives kept us free people. Had none of them been willing to go into the military and sacrifice their life we wouldn't be the country that we are. The families have never had any recognition as a relative of that person."

The black granite monument features two sides. One side bears the words: Gold Star Families Memorial Monument, a tribute to Gold Star Families and relatives who have sacrificed a Loved One for our Freedom. The other side tells a story through the four granite panels: Homeland, Family, Patriot, and Sacrifice. At the center of this tribute is the most distinct feature of the monument, the cut out which represents the 'Loved One' who paid the ultimate sacrifice in the name of freedom, according to the foundation.

"American Gold Star Mothers has been in existence for 90 years and no one knows who we are. Our children paid the ultimate sacrifice and yet know one knows that our organization even exists," said Sue Pollard, president of American Gold Star Mothers. "It's not for us. It's for the families who have paid the ultimate sacrifice for this great country of ours."

The monument was designed by Blackwood and Associates, Inc. at the cost upwards of \$65,000. But for Williams and families of South Carolina the cause for which it stands is priceless.

"When in living a left hook comes from the blind spot you didn't know you had and it knocks you to your knees and you lie emotionally prostrate wondering how in the world can your heart survive or you brain accept the reality of what just happened," said Debby Whitsitt, president of South Carolina Gold Star Mothers, speaking to the loss of her son. "And your tears flow mercilessly and your head throbs and your body aches for the not physical beating. And your soul longs for something unreachable and you want back what you once had but the decision has been made for it to not be anymore."

"Since becoming one [Gold Star Mother] I've told other Gold Star Mothers, 'let your tears flow whenever, wherever, for as long as ever.'"

The state of South Carolina is the 31st state to be memorialized nationwide. There are currently 10 other states currently in the process of constructing monuments bringing that number to 41.

"What a bitter but sweet but exciting time this is for all of us. Too all of those who dreamed a dream and made this monument possible, thank you. As we're here today to celebrate this momentous occasion of unveiling and dedicating this monument, take heart, because this is another new beginning."