

Governor Quinn Honors Families of Fallen Illinois Heroes with Gold Star Mothers Ceremony

Written by Grant Klinzman

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Three Mothers of Fallen Servicemembers Presented with Gold Star Banners

CHICAGO – Governor Pat Quinn today presented Gold Star banners to three Illinois mothers whose sons died while serving their country in the Global War on Terror. Governor Quinn signed legislation to formally designate Gold Star Mothers Day in Illinois starting in 2009, and today’s action is part of his agenda to honor and support the men and women who have served our nation.

“It is very important that we honor our Gold Star mothers, whose sons and daughters answered the call to duty and made the ultimate sacrifice on behalf of our nation,” Governor Quinn said. “We must remember these brave individuals who lost their purposeful lives while fighting for democracy. I thank each of our Gold Star mothers for instilling the ethic of service in their children, whose legacies live on in each of you gathered here today.”

The three mothers honored today are:

Colleen Stevens, mother of U.S. Army Sergeant Schuyler B. Patch of Kewanee.

Eva Hawking, mother of U.S. Marine Corps Lance Corporal Nickolas A. Daniels of Elmwood

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Park.

Deborah Cyr, mother of U.S. Air Force Captain Brandon L. Cyr of Oswego.

“Supporting the families of our fallen is a deeply important part of what we do at the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs,” Illinois Department of Veterans’ Affairs Director Erica Borggren said. “Today, we stand with our Gold Star Mothers, remembering and honoring their loss and keeping alive the memory of their sons and daughters.”

The ceremony, which was co-sponsored by the USO of Illinois, marked Gold Star Mother’s Day. The day has been commemorated on the last Sunday in September since President Franklin Roosevelt declared the first Gold Star Mother’s Day in 1936.

American Airlines and Verizon Wireless again sponsored the Illinois 2013 Gold Star ceremony for the seventh straight year along with the American Legion. Starwood Hotels, Vendor Assistance Program and Union League Club of Chicago provided the accommodations for the out-of-town guests.

Governor Quinn has made our veterans, servicemembers and their families one of his top priorities throughout his career in public service. He has led programs including the Illinois Warrior Assistance Program and the Veterans Cash lottery ticket, which has awarded more than \$10 million to not-for-profit organizations across the state that provide health care and post-traumatic stress disorder treatment, housing assistance, disability benefits and other services to Illinois Veterans. He also championed numerous veterans’ causes during his service as Lieutenant Governor and Illinois Treasurer. In 2011, Governor Quinn launched the Welcome Home Heroes program to support Illinois servicemembers seeking homeownership.

Presenting Gold Stars to mothers is an American tradition dating back to 1918, at the end of World War I. At that time, President Woodrow Wilson suggested that instead of wearing conventional mourning black from head to toe, families of men and women who had died in service to their country should wear a black armband with a gold star to signify their loss and their pride. Bereaved families also displayed Gold Star banners – gold stars on a white background with a wide red border – in the windows of their homes.

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For more information, please visit OperationHomefront.org

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