

Couple's 9/11 flag will continue to fly

Until last week, North Rose woman had hoped it would be adopted by state

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NORTH ROSE — Joanne Galvin hoped a flag she and her late husband designed to commemorate the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11 would someday fly at the World Trade Center site.

Earlier this year, it seemed her dream might come true: Sen. Michael Nozzolio, R-54 of Fayette, supported a bill that would have made the Galvins' creation the official Sept. 11 remembrance flag of New York state.



Galvin

However, while the state Senate approved the measure 59-2, it died in the Assembly before the legislative season ended.

"That was pretty sad, especially with this year being the 10-year anniversary," remarked Galvin, who lives in North Rose. "It would have been significant."

Still, she vowed to lobby lawmakers when they return to Albany for the January session — until she got a phone call early this past week from Nozzolio's office.

One of Nozzolio's aides informed Galvin that Gov. Andrew Cuomo had unveiled the state's official Sept. 11 flag at a press conference Tuesday in Albany. It was not the Galvins' flag.

Galvin knew nothing about it until getting the phone call. She believes Nozzolio's office was unaware of Cuomo's plans, too.

"They were just letting me know because they had found out about it and wanted to make sure I heard about it from them before I heard it one of the news, which was very kind," Galvin said. "I don't think there's much we can do, but it's certainly not going to stop my efforts."

The official flag, to be raised at the Capitol in Albany and Trade Center site in lower Manhattan, shows the Twin Towers in white on a navy blue background. A five-sided figure represents the Pentagon, and 40 yellow stars represent those



The Galvins' 9/11 flag is displayed in 2003 at Ground Zero. It was dedicated on Jan. 31, 2004, to the town of Wolcott (right). From left are Joanne Galvin, Steve Galvin, state Sen. Michael Nozzolio and Town Supervisor Marvin Decker.

More on the flag

To learn more about the Sept. 11 remembrance flag designed by Wayne County resident Joanne Galvin and her late husband, Steve, visit <http://911remembranceflag.com>. Proceeds from the sale of the \$40 flags go to charity, minus the cost to produce the flags.



who died when Flight 93 crashed in Shanksville, Pa.

The banner says "We Remember."

Nozzolio said the flag was not adopted by way of legislative vote, as was the plan for the Galvins' design.

The governor's office didn't respond to a request for comment Thursday.

Cuomo said Tuesday the flag is meant to serve as a symbol of respect for those who died and for New Yorkers' resilience. Replicas will be sold for \$25 by the National September 11 Memorial and Museum, set to open to the public at the Trade Center site in September 2012.

In contrast, the Galvins' flag has four stars, each representing one of the planes that crashed on Sept. 11. The stars touch each other, symbolic of the unity of the United States. A black panel in the center symbolizes sorrow for the innocent lives lost, while the color blue on opposite sides was chosen in homage to the three states where planes crashed: New York, Pennsylvania and Virginia.

Steve Galvin, who lost his battle with cancer in June 2005, envisioned the flag on

his way home from his construction job on Sept. 11, 2001.

He wanted to not only honor those who died but also help their loved ones for years to come. A flag, he and Joanne decided, would do just that since they could continue to sell it for years to come and donate the proceeds to Sept. 11 charities.

Part of Steve's idea was born from another, long-past tragedy on U.S. soil. Joanne recalled her husband telling her he was horrified that so many people didn't know the date Pearl Harbor was attacked.

"He was overwhelmed with the fact that something so huge would be forgotten," she said.

Armed with their design, the Galvins filed a copyright and, through the Veterans Outreach Center in Rochester, located a manufacturer in South Carolina.

The first flag was made just before the one-year anniversary. Since then, more than 3,000 have been sold for \$40 apiece or donated to charitable organizations. After production costs are subtracted, the proceeds are donated to charities helping families affected by

Sept. 11 or the subsequent war. One such charity is the American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund; it helps defray tuition costs for children of soldiers killed in war.

Joanne has tirelessly promoted the flag, using her computer each night after getting home from her day job at Xerox. She scours the Internet for word of Sept. 11-related memorials and subscribes to a service that sends her copies of any newspaper or magazine articles on the topic. If she learns a community is planning a special service, for instance, she mails organizers a letter and brochure about the flag.

"I sent out almost 3,000 letters since April of this year, and I have received a lot of feedback in response," she said. "It is very busy, but very rewarding."

Joanne said it's a way to honor her late husband's legacy as well as those lost in the attacks.

"He was very sincere about this," she said, "and he knew it was going to be hard — it was hard when it was just the two of us doing it."

Nozzolio said the couple "demonstrated true patriotism and deeply heartfelt commit-

ment" to ensure those who died in the attacks won't be forgotten.

"After Steve Galvin passed away, Joanne's outstanding courage and conviction to continue the work they started together has been truly inspiring," he said.

The city of Geneva purchased one of the Galvins' remembrance flags. It's raised near the lakefront pier.

"I think it's well done. It's a very nice flag," Deputy Mayor and 6th Ward City Councilor John Greco said. "It has been flying all week long."

Greco said the city has no plans to replace the Galvins' flag with the one unveiled by Cuomo.

"It's the flag we started off with and it's the flag we're going to continue with," he said.

That kind of support has lifted Joanne's spirits since the disheartening news earlier this week.

"As far as I'm concerned, mine is official [for] the people that support it and purchased it," she said. "It's all for remembrance. As long as people still want to buy this flag, I will still be here to provide it."