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## State 9/11 flag overshadows Joanne Galvin's memorial flag

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Joanne Galvin of North Rose stands with the 9/11 memorial flag she designed with her late husband, Stephen, soon after the terrorist attacks. The flag seemed to be on its way to being adopted as New York's official flag marking the tragedy. That changed Tuesday. / Annette Lein/staff photographer

Written by  
Bennett J. Loudon  
Staff Writer

considered the bill.

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Nozzolio's office called her Tuesday "to let me know what they had found out and it was a total surprise to them," said Galvin, 56, of North Rose, Wayne County.

"He was trying to call the governor to find out how this came about," she said.

Cuomo's office said Wednesday that the state came up with its own flag design and was satisfied that it had made a good choice.

Attempts to reach Nozzolio for comment Wednesday were unsuccessful.



After the Senate vote, Galvin said she called Cuomo's office several times to try to get the Assembly to vote, but she never got a response.

"I was hurt. I was angry. I was confused. It was just very, very surprising. After I thought about it for a while I thought, 'what can I do?'" she said.



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"I would like to understand how this came about because my understanding was that anything that becomes an official flag needs to go through a certain set of procedures. One would certainly think that Sen. Nozzolio would know. I can't imagine they would have gone through this process if it didn't need to be done," she said.

Although the flag she created with her husband Stephen has never been officially recognized, that hasn't stopped its popularity.

In addition to about 3,000 3-by-5-foot flags that have been sold or donated nationwide, another 20,000 index-card sized stickers have been sold or given away, said Galvin.

Although a fundraising operation associated with the flag is not a registered nonprofit organization or charity, it has donated \$15,000 in money and free flags to organizations such as American Legion posts and fire departments, Galvin said.

With a blue and black background, Galvin's flag has four stars, two representing the planes that flew into the World Trade Center towers, one for Flight 93 that crashed in Shanksville, Pa., and one for the plane that hit the Pentagon.

The Galvins' flag flew for eight years at the temporary memorial in Shanksville, Pa. But it will not fly at the official, permanent memorial.

Galvin gives her husband most of the credit for the design. He died of cancer in 2005 and now she continues to promote and distribute the flag in his memory.

"It's something my late husband and I started together. It was more his design than mine and he had a deep passion for it," she said.

"It's a combination of a promise to him to keep doing something we started together and patriotism," she said.

Richard Bamberger, a spokesman for Gov. Andrew Cuomo, said Tuesday that the flag chosen as the official state 9/11 flag wasn't designed by any one individual. The Governor's Office worked with the National September 11 Memorial & Museum on it.

"We consulted with many different people and many different designs, and we had books and books of different designs, until we finally came to one that folks from all realms agreed upon and liked, and we find it very powerful."

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Originally the Galvins donated all proceeds from sales of their flag to charity, but that meant they had to use their own money to order more flags and other items.

Now Galvin uses money from sales to order more products. When she has extra funds, they are donated to support the memorials at the three 9/11 sites.

The idea of the flag came to Stephen Galvin when he saw a prisoner of war flag hanging as he drove his car. By the first anniversary of the tragedy they were selling the flags on the Internet. During the ensuing years they attended dedication ceremonies for memorials, remembrance services for the victims, and raised money for related organizations.

Galvin checks an email list with information about 9/11-related memorials and events. She sends out brochures about the flag in case the organizers want to use it in their event. The effort is organized through the website 911remembranceflag.com.

The flags, stickers, patches and lapel pins all are made in the United States, she said.

As the 10th anniversary approaches, Galvin spends most evenings filling orders after she comes home from her job as a buyer for Xerox Corp.

"If I can show in some small way the family members of the victims of 9/11 that they're not forgotten, I feel good about doing that," she said.

BLOUDON@DemocratandChronicle.com

*Includes reporting by Cara Matthews of the Gannett Albany bureau.*



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