

Hawaii police memorial grows from thought hatched far away

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The idea came from a tiny town far away. When the Aiu family lived in Florida, they traveled with one of their children on a school excursion. They found themselves with time on their hands in a little town called Titusville outside a building that said "police museum." Inside was a memorial to law enforcement officers from around the country who had died in the line of duty. There among the names was Tiffany Bayne-Aiu's father.

"We were so shocked to see a memorial in this little town in Florida with his name on it," Joan Gribbin-Aiu said. "And then we thought, if they can do it, why can't we? Those names don't have the same meaning here as they would in Hawaii."

Tiffany Bayne-Aiu was only 7 years old when her father died. Honolulu police Officer Bryant Bayne was on a rescue mission in 1995 when he and Officer Tate Kahakai died in a helicopter crash. Tiffany's mother, Joan Gribbin-Aiu, had married federal drug enforcement agent Thomas Aiu when Tiffany was a preschooler.

Aiu, who later legally adopted Tiffany, took it upon himself to lobby for a memorial to Tiffany's father and all the Hawaii law enforcement officers who died serving the community.

"This isn't just for us. This is for all the families," Aiu says. There are 60 names on what is called the "end of watch roll call," people who died while serving in Hawaii, whether city or county police, state agencies, military police and federal agencies. "Almost every other state has a law enforcement memorial except Hawaii," Aiu said.

Aiu called Sen. Blake Oshiro, his classmate from the University of Hawaii law school, to help him with the wording for a resolution that was submitted in the last legislative session. Gribbin-Aiu testified at every

hearing in the House and Senate.

"Not one lawmaker voted against it," Aiu said.

"We asked for the moon and the stars so we figured we might as well ask for land," Gribbin-Aiu said. They got it. House Concurrent Resolution 139 calls for a Hawaii law enforcement memorial to be build on the grounds of the state Capitol.

A fundraiser for the memorial is planned for Dec. 11 at the Sheraton Waikiki Grand Ballroom. The event will be like police balls on the mainland, and those who attend will help select the design for the memorial. Aiu already has enlisted the help of the UH School of Architecture to come up with designs. This month, the police union SHOPO kicked off the efforts with a \$50,000 donation.

"My daughter talks about how she measured her progress through grief by her three visits to the National Law Enforcement Memorial in D.C.," Gribbin-Aiu said. "The last time she went, she said she found closure. She said her father died a hero and only heroes got to be on the memorial. But some families in Hawaii may never get to go to D.C."

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