

Veterans group pays homage to Filippis

■ Flag from Pontiac memorial given to son of activist who was dedicated to helping the disabled

By JERRY WOLFFE
Of The Oakland Press

The first flag flown over the Pontiac Veterans Memorial — under construction in Pontiac — was presented Monday to the son of the late Tony Filippis Sr., who spent his life and personal fortune helping the disabled, including hundreds of veterans.

The flag was given to A.J. Filippis, the president of Wright & Filippis, a durable medical equipment company. His father died Jan. 23 at age 91. Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson donated the mahogany case the flag will be displayed in at Wright & Filippis in Rochester Hills, said Jack Bressler, 72, of Pontiac, president of the Oakland County Veterans Group.

The memorial, expected to be fin-



Tony Filippis Sr.



A.J. Filippis

ished this summer, is being built inside the Perry Mount Park Cemetery, on Perry Street, northeast of Martin Luther King Boulevard, Bressler said. The case in which the flag was placed is inscribed "To Tony with Thanks and Gratitude from the Oakland County Veterans Group."

Bressler, a veteran of the Korean and Vietnam wars, said his organization wanted to honor the late Filippis because of the work he had done on behalf of the disabled and veterans. Filippis lost both legs in a

How to help

For information about the Pontiac Veterans Memorial, call (248) 373-5281. Contributions can be sent to the Pontiac Veterans Memorial Corp., 1631 Giddings Road, Pontiac, MI 48340.

train accident when he was 12.

Others among the group who presented the flag to A.J. Filippis were Maurice Morton of Waterford Township, a helicopter pilot during the Vietnam War; the Rev. Boyce Knight of Pontiac, a Marine who served in Korea; the Rev. Leland Matlock of Waterford Township, a Korean War veteran; James Reid of Pontiac, a World War II Navy veteran who was in the invasion of Iwo Jima and Okinawa; the Rev. Archie Mosley of Pontiac, a Marine who served in WWII; and Richard Hummel of Pontiac, a 23-year Navy veteran.

"I thought he (Filippis) was a great man," said Morton, a former chief warrant officer and retired General Motors Corp. employee.

"We admired him," Bressler said about Tony Filippis, who was the co-founder of the company in 1944. "He was a great supporter of the memorial and veterans."

When finished, the \$280,000 "living memorial" will have the names of 6,000 military veterans from Pontiac inscribed on it, he said.

"The memorial is dedicated to all veterans in Pontiac," Bressler said. It is expected to be completed in June or July.

A.J. Filippis said the flag will be placed in a room at the company's headquarters in Rochester Hills with other awards his father received during his life.

"The flag will be here in a place of honor as long as we are here doing business," he said.

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