

Shawano County's 305th Barn Quilt Honors Conservationist and World War II Veteran

Shawano County's 305th barn quilt, called Let Freedom Ring, has been sponsored in memory of Herb Behnke by his wife, Lenore, son and daughter-in-law Chris and Kelly, and granddaughters Julia and Laura. The quilt pattern has a Bald Eagle in the center and is on display on a barn owned by Donnie and Melodee Gretzinger at N3888 County CC, Shawano.

The nearly 100-acre farm was purchased by Donnie's parents, Marge and Frank Gretzinger, from Frank Hammond about 50 years ago. It was always a dairy farm but today is only used for growing crops for the Gretzinger dairy herd.

The quilt also honors Frank Gretzinger, a World War II veteran who died in 2011. He was a medic on the front lines and was awarded three battle stars. He and Marge were married for 67 years and raised nine sons and two daughters. "He was very proud of his time in the Army serving our country," Marge said.

Commenting on sponsoring the barn quilt in memory of her husband, Lenore Behnke said, "Herb was actively involved in conservation work throughout his lifetime. Living on the beautiful Wolf River west of the city of Shawano, he particularly enjoyed watching Bald Eagles flying overhead. So it is fitting that the barn quilt we are sponsoring in his memory has a Bald Eagle on it. We also have an eagles nest on some hunting land we own that has been very special for us."

"We see eagles here on the farm quite often as well," Donnie said. "When we were talking about getting a barn quilt, we really wanted a Bald Eagle on it and think it looks just great. We couldn't be happier with how it turned out."

The Gretzinger barn quilt was painted by the Shawano County barn quilt committee and was put on display by LeRoy Raddant and Bruce Teetzen of Raddant Electric in Shawano.

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