



Robert Rankin Chapter #62 America 250

*Columbus City Veterans Park
Saturday, April 30, 2026*



Robert Rankin joined the Daughters of American Revolution, John Everett Chapter and Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 1127 for the dedication of a Liberty Tree at the Columbus City Veterans Park in Columbus, Texas on April 30, 2026, in celebration of the founding of America and the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.

The live oak tree is estimated to be 250 years in age.

On behalf of the Robert Rankin Chapter, Compatriot David Zachmeyer, worked alongside his wife, DAR member Judy Zachmeyer, as Team Leads along with others to bring everything together for the dedication: approval from the Columbus City Council, coordinating with the shop teacher at Columbus High School on the fabrication of the plaque, meeting with the crew who would dig the hole to place the plaque, and inviting the dignitaries and special guests who helped make the dedication memorable.



Robert Rankin Compatriots (L-R) Color Guard Commander Ralph Reed, Chaplain Don Andress, Norm Strey, Columbus Liberty Tree Project Team Lead David Zachmeyer, Jack Muggli, and Key Note Speaker Tom Jackson.



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Program of Events



May this tree stand as a living reminder
that freedom was not given—it was
chosen, defended, and preserved.
— Unknown

April 30th | 4:00 PM
Columbus City Veterans Park
120 Veterans Drive
Columbus, TX 78934



Dedication Ceremony of the

LIBERTY TREE

Honoring the 250th Anniversary of the
American Revolution

Sponsored By:



Roger Moyers

Order of Service

Master of Ceremonies

David Zachmeyer – Sons of the American Revolution
Robert Rankin, Chapter 62 (RRC 62, TX SAR) &
Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 1127 (VVA)

Posting of Colors

National Anthem by Columbus High School
Band; Colors presented by VVA, Chapter 1127
& RRC 62, TX SAR

Pledge of Allegiance

Judy Zachmeyer – Daughters of the
American Revolution, John Everett, Chapter
6049 (JEC 6049, TX DAR)

God Bless America

Sung by Steve Gunt

Invocation

Presented by Roger Moyers – Pres VVA, Chapter 1127

Fun Facts of George Washington

Connie Dittich – TX DAR

Key Note Speaker

Tom Jackson – TX SAR Pres 2018-19

Unveiling the Monument

Presented by VVA, Chapter 1127; RRC 62, TX
SAR; and JEC 6049, TX DAR

Honors of Recognition

Presented by TX DAR Chapter Regent – Marti Herring
on behalf of the TX DAR & Tom Jackson on behalf of
the TX SAR

Musical Performance

Columbus High School Band

Reading of the Proclamation

Read by Lori An Gobert – Mayor of Columbus

Closing Ceremonies

David Zachmeyer – TX SAR & VVA





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Columbus City, TX local paper The Colorado County Citizen reported on the Liberty Tree plaque from approval to the formal ceremony, including a front-page article advising the time and place of the formal ceremony.

You can read the online reports here:

[LIBERTY TREE PLAQUE APPROVED](#)

[Dedication of Liberty Tree Columbus set for April 30](#)

[Columbus designates Liberty tree](#)



David Zachmeyer and Paige Sciba unveil the plaque.
Photo by Jimmy Galvan of The Colorado County Citizen

LIBERTY TREE PLAQUE APPROVED



Per Compatriot David Zachmeyer, pictured above with (L-R) wife Judy, Columbus Mayor Lori An Gobert, Wanda Anglin, Donna Pustejovsky. "We took our project before the Columbus City Council tonight. The entire council smiled."



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Invocation

Presented by Roger Moyers – Pres. VVA, Chapter 1127

**OUR MOST GRACIOUS HEAVENLY FATHER,
CREATOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH, AND ALL THAT IS IN IT.**

**WE GATHER IN YOUR PRESENCE THIS AFTERNOON TO DEDICATE
THIS MAJESTIC OAK TREE AS OUR COMMUNITY LIBERTY TREE.
WE ASK THAT YOU POUR OUT YOUR BLESSINGS ON THIS EVENT
AND ALL IN ATTENDANCE HERE TODAY.**

**FATHER AS WE DEDICATE THIS MAGNIFICENT OLD OAK TREE AS
OUR LIBERTY TREE, WE ARE REMINDED OF THE FREEDOMS AND
LIBERTY YOU HAVE BLESSED THIS GREAT NATION WITH. WE ARE
REMINDED OF THE MEN AND WOMEN THAT INSPIRED A
REVOLUTION TO BUILD A NATION WITH JUDEO/CHRISTIAN
VALUES AND BIBLICAL GUIDANCE. WE ARE REMINDED THAT JUST
AS THE ROOTS OF THIS OAK TREE HAVE SUPPORTED THE LIFE OF
THIS TREE FOR OVER 250 YEARS, SO OUR ROOTS OF THIS NATION
HAVE SUPPORTED US ON THIS 250 YEAR CELEBRATION OF
AMERICA. WE SEE THE BRANCHES OF THIS GREAT TREE SPREAD
OUT IN SPLENDER JUST AS YOUR MIGHTY ARMS SPREAD OUT TO
LOVE AND PROTECT THIS NATION AND YOUR CHILDREN.**

**FATHER, WE THANK YOU FOR SPREADING YOUR GRACE ON
AMERICA. WE THANK YOU FOR ALL THE VETERANS THAT HAVE
SERVED THIS NATION FROM ITS INCEPTION, THOSE THAT ARE
SERVING TODAY, AND THOSE THAT WILL SERVE IN THE FUTURE.
MAY YOU DIRECT THEIR PATHS AND KEEP THEM SAFE.**

**FATHER, WE REMAIN TO THIS DAY, ONE NATION UNDER GOD, AND
OUR FAITH IS STRONG BECAUSE “IN GOD WE TRUST!”**

THESE THINGS I PRAY IN YOUR HOLY NAME – AMEN.



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Top:

Local notable Steve Girndt sang God Bless America for the crowd. Steve sings in the church, opening ceremonies, anytime a flag is being raised in Columbus, TX.

Bottom Left:

Members of the Columbus High School Band performed the National Anthem as colors were presented by the VVA, Chapter 1127 and Rober Rankin Color Guard and later in the program provided a musical performance before the reading of the proclamation.



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Top Left:

The Veteran's Memorial Center, which sits opposite the Columbus City Veterans Park and a perfect view of the Liberty Tree.

Bottom Left:

Judy and David Zachmeyer stand in front of the tree they worked to have established as a Liberty Tree.

Bottom Right:

Marti Herring, Judy Zachmeyer, David Zachmeyer and Tom Jackson.





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LIBERTY TREE
CELEBRATING AMERICA'S 250TH
ANNIVERSARY

Whereas, the City of Columbus, Texas, proudly joins communities across the nation in commemorating the 250th anniversary of the United States of America—a milestone that honors our shared history, enduring freedoms, and the generations who have safeguarded them; and

Whereas, the Liberty Tree stands as a powerful symbol of the courage, unity, and resolve that ignited the American spirit during the founding of our nation, reminding us that liberty is both a gift and a responsibility; and

Whereas, the installation of the Liberty Tree marker in Columbus represents our community's commitment to preserving the legacy of American independence for future generations; and

Whereas, the Columbus High School Agriculture students have demonstrated exceptional craftsmanship, dedication, and civic pride through the creation of the post upon which the Liberty Tree marker is placed, contributing meaningfully to this historic celebration; and

Whereas, the Columbus High School Band has enriched this occasion through their musical talent, bringing life, dignity, and patriotic spirit to this community gathering; and

Whereas, the Vietnam Veterans present today embody bravery, sacrifice, and unwavering devotion to the nation, and their presence deepens the significance of this commemoration; and

Whereas, the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Sons of the American Revolution continue to preserve the memory of our nation's founders, promote historic education, and uphold the values upon which the United States was built;

Now, Therefore, I, Lori An Gobert, Mayor of the City of Columbus, Texas, along with the City Council do hereby proclaim this day as a celebration of the Liberty Tree and America's 250th Anniversary and extend heartfelt gratitude to all individuals and organizations whose contributions have strengthened our community's connection to its heritage.

Let it be known that the City of Columbus honors the past, celebrates the present, and looks forward with hope and unity as we continue the American story together.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the City of Columbus to be affixed on this day, the 30th of April, 2026.

Lori An Gobert, Mayor



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The Speakers



Top Left:

On behalf of City of Columbus Mayor Lori An Gobert, City Council Member Paige Sciba reads the proclamation celebrating the Liberty Tree.

Top Right:

Fun facts of George Washington presented by Connie Dittrich of the John Everett Chapter, NSDAR

Bottom Left:

Former Texas SAR President (2018-19) Tom Jackson provides the dedication address, which is presented on the following pages.



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Dedication Speech, Tom Jackson, TX SAR Pres. (2018-2019)

Presiding Officer Zachmeyer, Mayor Gobert, honored guests, and fellow and sister patriots.

We gather here today beneath the wide Texas sky and close to the generous shade of a tree that has stood for more than two and a half centuries. This great live oak we dedicate now as the Columbus Liberty Tree is more than a piece of nature's beauty—it is a living witness to history, a symbol of the endurance of liberty, and a reminder that the roots of freedom run deep in our soil.

Across America, communities large and small are marking 250 years since the founding of our nation as requested by John Adams. As we approach the semiquincentennial of the Declaration of Independence in 1776, citizens everywhere are planting or dedicating Liberty Trees—continuing a tradition that reaches back to the earliest days of the American Revolution.

The first Liberty Tree was an elm in Boston, planted in 1646. Under its branches, patriots like Samuel Adams and Paul Revere gathered to proclaim the ideals of freedom and self-government. When the Redcoats cut that tree down in 1775, believing they could silence the voice of liberty, they did not realize what every farmer and frontiersman knew—when you plant a seed of freedom, it grows roots that no axe



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can destroy. Soon, Liberty Trees stood in towns across the colonies, each one a beacon of courage, faith, and unity.

Today, we renew that tradition here in Columbus, Texas—a town whose founders like the Kuykendalls are known or in the case of Gilleland and John J. Tumlinson strongly thought to be descended from patriots of the Revolution. The same spirit that led their forebears to fight for liberty on the eastern seaboard brought them westward to build a new life here on the banks of the Colorado River. They brought with them conviction, perseverance, and faith in the principles of the new republic they helped to create.

This particular tree—estimated to be roughly 250 years old—was already stretching toward the sky when the news of liberty was first declared in 1776. Imagine what this live oak has seen: the birth of a nation, the long wagon trains of settlers, the struggles and triumphs that would shape Texas and America alike. Generations have come and gone, but this tree has remained—a silent witness, a steadfast sentinel.

How fitting, then, that we dedicate it today—April 30, 2026, the anniversary of George Washington's inauguration as the first President of the United States. On that day in 1789, Washington placed his hand upon the Bible and swore to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution. In that moment, the bold experiment of democracy took



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root and began to grow—strong, resilient, and, like this tree, capable of weathering every storm.

This Liberty Tree joins other monuments in our Veterans Park, honoring those who have stood guard over the freedoms first proclaimed two and a half centuries ago. It bridges past and present—the patriots who birthed a nation, the pioneers who settled this frontier, the veterans

who defended liberty in every generation, and the citizens who continue to sustain it through civic virtue, community, and love of country.

As we unveil the plaque that will mark this site, let it serve not only as a signpost of remembrance but also as a pledge—that we, too, will keep liberty alive and growing. Just as this tree draws life from the rich Texas soil, our freedom draws strength from the actions of citizens who cherish it.

Let its branches remind us that liberty reaches outward, offering shelter to all who seek peace and justice. Let its roots remind us that freedom, like a tree, must be nurtured—protected from neglect, watered with courage, and guarded by unity. And let its age remind us that time itself can be a testament—that what was planted in hope can endure in strength.



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To those who came before us, we give thanks for their vision. To those who stand here today, we offer this living memorial. And to those yet to come, we leave this Liberty Tree as a promise—that in Columbus, Texas, liberty will always find a home.

May this tree stand for another 250 years, and may the spirit of 1776, and of Washington's oath continue to inspire generations beneath its shade.

Thank you, and may God bless this Liberty Tree, Columbus, Texas, and the United States of America.