



100th Birthday: Today is a day to remember the "Gentle Giant"

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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ALTON - Throughout the Alton area, there will be several birthday cakes with candles lit in celebration of Robert Wadlow's 100th birthday, today, Feb. 22, 2018.

Robert was born on Feb. 22, 1918. It is likely the legendary Wadlow statue on College Avenue in Alton will receive several visits today. Wadlow, for some who may not know, was the world's tallest man at 8-feet-11.1 inches tall. He remains today, the world's tallest man and has been since his death in 1940.

Across the street at the Alton Museum of History and Art, a multi-tiered birthday cake and a multitude of cupcakes will be available today to the visiting public.

Alton Museum of History & Art is planning a big celebration through the day and plans to expand its hours into the evening for those who wish to stop by and visit the Wadlow display and have cake or cupcakes.

"We have the doors open a little longer to 6 p.m. instead of 4 p.m. and we will have a nice tiered cake and cupcakes ready for people. We have updated our Wadlow display," said Brian Combs, Executive Director of the Alton Museum of History & Art.

Combs said he expects people to be out through the day, but thought around the 1-2 p.m. time on Thursday people will be starting to come in through the doors in strong fashion.

The Wadlow display will have added features unveiled today, Combs said.

Combs said it is a shame the Wadlow celebration is reduced to one day when he turns 100. He said when Wadlow turned 80, it was a year-long celebration.

A few of the new items on display today will be a special edition 1985 Guinness Book of World Record that Wadlow was featured in, a likeness that was done in the 1980s, a new Wadlow shoe and more will be released on Thursday.

Robert Wadlow's name is known all over the U.S. and the world, Combs said.

"We get phone calls and visitors from England, Japan, Australia, and literally throughout the world," Combs said. "Every corner of the globe comes here to see him."

Today, there will be many who stop by the museum and throughout the Alton area as said before, there will be others in their own way celebrating the memory and the 100th birthday of Alton's favorite son - Robert Pershing Wadlow.

