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City of Morgantown, Greater Morgantown CVB, Main Street Morgantown Team Up for Don Knotts Celebration Weekend

MORGANTOWN - Throughout the weekend beginning on July 23, businesses, organizations, guests and residents in the Downtown area will celebrate a famous Morgantown native.

The Don Knotts Celebration Weekend kicks off Saturday morning with free events that are open to the public.

The City of Morgantown, Greater Morgantown Convention and Visitors Bureau and Main Street Morgantown will join Vandalia Bronze for the unveiling of the Don Knotts statue in front of the Metropolitan Theatre on High Street at 10 a.m. on July 23. Larry Nelson, local broadcaster and entertainer, will emcee the event, and Karen Knotts, comedian and daughter of the late Don Knotts, will be present to help artist Jamie Lester unveil the statue. The guest list also includes performers and friends of Don Knotts, local dignitaries and a Barney Fife impersonator.

The public is encouraged to stick around after the ceremony for a free comedic performance by Karen Knotts inside the Metropolitan Theatre at 11:30 a.m. The performance, entitled *Tied Up in Knotts*, tells her story of growing up with her legendary comedian father.

Don Knotts memorabilia from the West Virginia Regional History Collection will also be on display in the lobby, and vintage police cruisers will be parked outside.

The Celebration continues from 12-3 p.m. with a reception for an exhibit entitled *Don Knotts: MEMORIES* at the Morgantown History Museum, located at 175 Kirk Street in Downtown Morgantown. The exhibit was researched and developed by Museum director Pamela Ball.

Restaurants in the Downtown, including Morgan's High Street Diner, Playoffs Sports Bar and Sandwich U, will serve Don Knotts themed lunch specials throughout the day on Saturday.

On Sunday, July 24, Karen Knotts will be at the Morgantown History Museum from 1-3 p.m. for a meet and greet. Guests are invited to come meet the performer, get their pictures taken with her and ask for autographs. The event is free, courtesy of the History Museum and the Greater Morgantown CVB.

The media is invited to attend all events and may contact Chelsi Baker at cbaker@morgantownwv.gov or 304-685-4685 for more information. A press area will be reserved at the statue unveiling and will open at 9 a.m.

Media is also invited to take pictures and speak with Jamie Lester as he installs the Don Knotts statue outside the Metropolitan Theatre on Tuesday, July 19 from 8 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Jesse "Don" Knotts was born in Morgantown on July 21, 1924 and graduated from Morgantown High School. He served in the United States Army during WWII before attending West Virginia University, where he earned a bachelor's degree.

Knotts played Barney Fife on the Andy Griffith Show (1960-1965) and starred in films including The Incredible Mr. Limpet (1964), The Ghost and Mr. Chicken (1966) The Shakiest Gun in the West (1968) and How to Frame a Fig (1971). He also held recurring roles on the TV shows Three's Company and Matlock and made countless other television and movie appearances throughout his long career.

Knotts was honored with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 2000. In Morgantown, Don Knotts Boulevard and Fife Street are named for the actor, and he is recognized with a star in front of the Metropolitan Theatre and soon, a statue.

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