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# Phoebe unveils historic marker

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Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital starts its 100-day countdown to its centennial anniversary. - J.D. Sumner, government writer

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Surprise guest speaker Eddie McCarty portrays Phoebe founder Judge Francis Flagg Putney during the 100-Day Countdown to Phoebe's Centennial Anniversary and Historical Marker Dedication ceremony Thursday at Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital.

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ALBANY, Ga. — Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital officials launched a 100-day countdown celebration to the hospital's 100th anniversary Thursday with the unveiling of a historic marker at the site of the original hospital building.

Phoebe founder Judge Francis Flagg Putney (portrayed by Eddie McCarty) made a surprise appearance and was among the dignitaries who unveiled a Georgia Historical Society marker at the site.

The event officially started the clock on Phoebe's 100-day countdown to its Centennial Anniversary on July 31.

Before the unveiling, Phoebe CEO Joel Wernick said, "I stand in awe of 100 years of outstanding health care and service to the community. And most of the credit goes to our legions of patient care-givers."

Dougherty County Commission Chairman Jeff "Bodine" Sinyard read a proclamation from the commission, and Albany Mayor Willie Adams, a medical doctor, recalled his arrival in Albany more that 40 years ago.

"When I left Emory in 1973 and arrived in Albany, this facility had just 200 doctors, seven operating rooms and just a handful of nurses," Adams recalled. "Now look around us. Phoebe has become the epicenter of health care for Southwest Georgia.

"Phoebe Putney is an economic engine for the region, thanks to the visionary thinking of Joel Wernick. But everyone associated with Phoebe can be congratulated for a job well done."

The new marker faces Jefferson Street at the end of a parking lot that marked the Eastern boundary of the original hospital. The marker reads:

Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital  
Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital began operation on July 31, 1911, as one of the first public hospitals in the region. Judge Francis Flagg Putney made the founding donation of \$25,000, though other money and goods were donated by both white and black citizens. Judge Putney's endowment stipulated that the hospital serve all citizens, making Phoebe one of the first in the South to treat all races under one roof. The hospital offered twenty-five beds and one operating room. Judge Putney also stipulated that the hospital be named for his mother and that it be constructed of brick to withstand fire.

Erected by the Georgia Historical Society, The Charity League of Albany, Georgia and The Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital.

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