

Beatrice Farve

The Brunswick News; Wednesday 21 January 2009

Mama Bea has died. Ranked as the world's second oldest person, Brunswick resident Beatrice Farve passed away Monday afternoon in her home on Stonewall Street.

At 113 years old, Farve, who was more commonly known to family, friends and fans as Mama Bea, was bumped earlier this month to the No. 2 position on the Guinness Book of World Records list of oldest people, trailing behind Los Angeles resident Gertrude Baines, who is 114 years old.

Mama Bea's passing mimicked how she lived her life: quiet and peaceful, said her daughter, Joan Farve, 79, who was with her mother when she died.

It had been her mother's wish to die in her sleep at home, and that is precisely the way the end played out, Farve said.

"She was just tired, after all those years of living," Farve said. "She wasn't sick or anything. Just tired, I think."

Farve had been staying with her mother for the past several months, taking her turn between five siblings in keeping watch over Mama Bea. When Farve went to check on her mother Tuesday afternoon, she found her mother had silently passed, "moving on to a better place," she said.

"It was very quick," said Farve, who was the second youngest sibling. "She just went away."

Through her life and in her death, Mama Bea will be remembered as a friendly, if not private, person. She carried with her a strict sense of pride and warmth, always ready to lend a smile. Despite her age and small stature - a mere 81 pounds and standing 4 feet, 7 inches tall - Mama Bea held tight to a "very strong will," Farve said, noting that her mother drove until she was 106 years old, when her children finally forced her to hand over her license.

If looking for Mama Bea, she was never hard to find, Farve said. You just had to check the garden.

"She was crazy about roses," Farve recalled. "Oh, she just loved her roses. She was brilliant with them."

Throughout the years, Mama Bea had amassed a large following of fans, both locally and globally, who were curious as to how high she might creep up the records list.

In April, the Farve family held a massive celebration marking Mama Bea's 113th birthday, which is April 17, 1895. Her quaint home was filled to the brim with guests, ranging from family members and Brunswick Mayor Bryan Thompson to representatives from the Guinness Book of World Records. As admirers were so willing to celebrate her mother's birth, Farve expects as many to mourn her death, she said.

"I've been told to expect the funeral to be packed out," Farve said. "People just loved her."

Often, the Farve children field questions from individuals, asking how Mama Bea lived to such a lengthy age. Their mother had no secret recipe, though, said Lottie Albury, 85, Mama Bea's oldest child.

"Work hard and eat breakfast," Albury said. "That's all there is to it."

The funeral and memorial service for Mama Bea will be held at 10 a.m. Saturday at St. Francis Xavier Church.

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