

Sylvia Lee, Concordia Retirement Center Resident, Celebrates 100th Birthday

BELLA VISTA, Ark. (Oct. 23, 2018) – Sylvia Lee, a beloved and longtime resident of Concordia Retirement Center, recently celebrated her 100th birthday with family and friends from across the United States.

The Kansas native and granddaughter of English homesteaders has life experiences that include surviving the disastrous 1930s Dust Bowl storms which ravaged the Midwest, raising three sons, and travelling around the world with her husband, Dick.

Mrs. Lee grew up in Osborne County, mostly living under the roof of her grandparents' 13-room house, which had been built for a family of 13. Her family, which included three brothers, moved to the San Pedro/Long Beach area of California to escape the devastation caused by the Dust Bowl. There, her parents purchased an avocado farm and worked at a Van Kamp processing plant, which was located on an island and required them to travel there by ferry.

“It was a difficult time, but we survived,” Mrs. Lee said.

She went to college and became a teacher, where she taught pupils ranging from first to eighth grades in a one-room schoolhouse. Back in those days, Mrs. Lee said, the county superintendent would arrive unannounced on any given day to observe the classroom.

Mrs. Lee recalled she went to see Northwest Passage on her first date with her future husband, a high school sports coach and friend of one of her brothers. Following a courtship of two and a half years, the couple married on June 6, 1940, in Fredonia, Kansas, at a relative's apartment. They honeymooned in Rogers, Ark., driving there in the iconic Hudson automobile.

During World War II, Dick worked at an ammunition plant. They had their first son, Rick, in 1942. They moved to Kansas City in 1948 when Dick joined the research department of Farmland Industries. The city would be their home for the next 18 years.

During that time, Mrs. Lee devoted her time to raising a growing family of boys, which now included Tim and Ken, born in 1955 and 1962. She was active in Methodist Church Sunday school classes. She crafted ceramics in her home and avidly played golf with her husband.

His job gave them many opportunities to travel abroad, she said. They journeyed to England, the birthplace of her grandparents, and to Turkey, where they visited a foreign exchange student who had lived with them for a year. They also visited Wales, Scotland, China, Japan, Israel, the Greek Isles, the Panama Canal and most of the states in the U.S.

Her husband, aged 85, passed away in 2000, shortly after the couple moved into Concordia Retirement Center. He had suffered from myasthenia gravis, an autoimmune neuromuscular disease, since 1979.

“It is traumatic losing a loved one, but the many memories sustain me,” Mrs. Lee said.

Her sons, who live in Arkansas, Arizona and Colorado, visit often and have tried to convince her to come live in their home cities. Sylvia always turns them down, adding she is thankful she and Dick had the foresight to choose Concordia as their home.

“Ms. Sylvia Lee is truly a gem! She is one of the sweetest people I have ever met, and has been a Concordia resident for 18 years. We are so happy to celebrate her 100th birthday and are extremely honored to serve Ms. Lee every day. She is an inspiration to us all,” Louis Suski, executive director of Concordia, said.

Most evenings, you will find Mrs. Lee visiting with her close friends in the dining hall and playing bridge.

About Concordia Retirement Center

Situated on 26 beautiful acres at 1 Concordia Drive, Concordia Retirement Center is a premier senior living community in Bella Vista, Ark., that offers independent living and assisted living services in a safe, attentive, homelike atmosphere. The facility, which is located in the beautiful Ozarks of Northwest Arkansas, is committed to serving the greatest generation with honor, respect, faith and integrity. More information is available at concordiaretirement.com or by calling (479) 855-3714.

Concordia Retirement Center is part of a family of senior living communities throughout the Southeast owned and/or operated by Legacy Senior Living, of Cleveland, Tenn. Legacy Senior Living specializes in offering independent living, assisted living, and Alzheimer’s care services. More information is available at legacysl.net.

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ABOUT CONCORDIA RETIREMENT CENTER - BELLA VISTA, AR

Located on 28 beautiful acres of rolling woodlands, Concordia offers a full range of social activities and helpful services in a secure, attentive, homelike atmosphere. Our [independent living](#) and [assisted living facilities](#) included seamless access to on-campus skilled nursing and memory care.

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