

Sun Journal

Nellie Anderson awarded the Boston Post Cane as Jay's oldest resident

By **Donna M. Perry**, Staff Writer

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FARMINGTON - At 99, Nellie Anderson still takes pride in her appearance.

It was apparent Wednesday as she made her way around the dining area of Pine Wood Terrace in Farmington, an assisted living center where she has resided for the past year.

Anderson, a petite woman, wore a light-blue top and beige skirt along with a string of pearls, earrings and a keepsake necklace with small figurines, each with a dangling birthstone representing a great-grandchild.

It was the perfect outfit in which to be recognized as the town of Jay's oldest resident.

Jay Board of Selectmen Chairman Steve McCourt presented Anderson with the Boston Post Cane. Town Manager Ruth Marden added another touch to Anderson's attire as she attached a pin to her top that also recognized her seniority.

Members of Anderson's family and other residents at the center looked on.

Asked what her secret to longevity is, she answered, "I don't think He wanted me yet," Anderson said, referring to God.

"I've tried to live a good life," she said, before she took a bite of a jelly Munchkin-type pastry and sipped her coffee.

"She likes to look good. She still puts on her lipstick three times a day," her granddaughter Sandy Nemi said. Her grandmother only wanted one of the pastries but once Nemi explained that it would take four to make a doughnut, she ate a second.

"She is a very proud woman," Anderson's friend, Anne Marie Veilleux said. Both women lived in Jay but never knew each other until they met at the center.

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After her husband died, Anderson lived alone until she was 97. She drove until she was 92, her only child, Sally Nemi, said.

Nellie Anderson was born Aug. 7, 1909, in Lamoine. She lived in Mount Vernon while married to her husband, Victor, and has been a widow since 1963. She moved to Jay in the 1960s.

"I was born on the same day as her," Anderson's grandson, Dick Nemi of Jay, said. "A nice birthday present."

It was her mother's 50th birthday when he was born, Sally Nemi said.

"She has always been a very kind, loving person. She loved sports," Dick Nemi said.

She was always a hard-working woman holding jobs as clerks at grocery stores in Mount Vernon and Winthrop, Foss Jewelry and Wilson's Dollar Store, both in Livermore Falls, and as a waitress at Lake Shore Restaurant in Livermore, he said.

But she wasn't all work and no play.

She was able to spend time with family, look for bargains and play cards with her grandchildren. She also volunteered for a decade or more at Franklin Memorial Hospital.

"We always went to yard sales," Sandy Nemi said. "She loved to go to yard sales."

Anderson also loved to bake pies and was known for her lemon meringue.

As the special time wound down, Anderson's great-grandson, David, 28, of Jay, knelt down to give her a kiss.

"I'm the blue one," he said, as she touched her keepsake necklace.