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- Willia Minton

Photo by Lindsey Shelburne

Meet Katy Centenarian

Willia Minton

104-year-old shares how life has changed over the past century

Written by Rina C. John

The world Willia Minton grew up in is much different than the one we know now. Franklin D. Roosevelt was president, and there were no cars or fridges. “A man used to come in a wagon, and they had great big chunks of ice covered in burlap that they would cut to fit into our box,” says Minton, born in 1909. The 104-year-old now lives at Comfy Home in Katy.

HARD WORK

Minton easily rattles off memories of her childhood growing up on a farm in Missouri with her four brothers and five sisters where she loved to ride horses and take care of the animals. The kids would pump water from the 100-foot well their dad dug. “We didn’t call that work,” says Minton, grandmother of eight and great-grandmother of 11.

One of her first jobs was teaching in a one-room school house for grades one through eight. She left that to manage a shoe and dress factory, climbing up five flights of stairs every day.

A LIFETIME OF LOVE

She chuckles as she remembers the time when she first met her husband Robert. “There was no letting up,” says Minton. “He said the first time he saw me he knew that I was the girl he wanted to marry.”

When she was 21 and he was 20, they did just that - and enjoyed 70 wonderful years of marital bliss. “We both just fell in love, stayed in love, and were good to each other,” says Minton. “I was happy for all those years with the best man that ever lived. He was good looking,” she says with a



Willia and her husband Robert Minton were married for 70 years

chuckle. “He said he married me for my looks and I said, ‘You mean to tell me you didn’t marry me for my money?’”

All jokes aside, things were pretty tough financially for the couple. There weren’t many jobs in Missouri during the Great Depression, so in 1932 the Mintons headed to New York. Minton even recalls the address they shared at 612 W. 135th St. “That was fun. I loved being there, but my husband didn’t because he didn’t like big cities,” she says.

The couple went on to have two sons, Jim and Robert and moved back to Missouri. “They were both good boys,” says Minton. “I can just picture them coming home from school together.” Minton’s husband died in 2000. “He kept telling everyone he was ready to go, but he didn’t want to leave me,” says Minton. Five weeks before, her son Jim died from colon cancer.

EARLY TO BED, EARLY TO RISE

Minton is a firm believer in giving back to others. She often gave food to the little boy next door whose family didn’t have much. “If you have a little, you still have something to give to people,” says Minton. “If I was going to do something I would stop and ask ‘Is that what God wants?’ I never mistreated anybody.”

Minton isn’t sure how she was able to live this long, but her son Robert Jr. says it is his mother’s simple lifestyle. “She lived a low-key, stress-free life,” says Robert Jr. “Early to bed, early to rise.” **KM**



Robert and Willia Minton photographed in 1940 with their children, Robert Jr. and Jim



RINA CHANDARANA JOHN enjoys meeting interesting people and telling their stories.