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102nd birthday celebrated



Grace McDonald smiles and waves from behind the table holding the cake that is decorated to herald her 102nd birthday.

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GILCHRIST COUNTY -- Family, friends and fellow residents at Tri-County Nursing Home (Wilcox curve, Gilchrist County) celebrated Friday afternoon (March 23) the 102nd birthday of Grace McDonald.



The cake captures the theme of the party that Grace is the star. The other theme is movies.

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(from left) Tommie Landrum, a family friend; Krista Campbell, Grace's daughter-in-law; Capt. Ron Campbell, Grace McDonald's son; Nancy Curley, Grace's niece; and Michael Shea, Nancy's boyfriend; stand behind Grace McDonald for a group photo at the event.

The main dining room was full of residents of the nursing home who celebrated as well, but they have an expectation of privacy and are in a facility where they are being taken care of. Therefore, they are not in this picture.



The Ice Cream

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The Punch - The cups say 'Movie Night - VIP Access Only.'

Born on March 24, 1916, this woman has experienced several changes over the years. She has seen the prohibition of alcoholic beverages come and go.

While she always had the right to vote as an adult woman in America, her mother did not. On Aug. 18, 1920, Tennessee narrowly ratified The Nineteenth Amendment, making it the law throughout the United States of America for women to be allowed to vote. Thus, the 1920 election became the first United States presidential election in which women were permitted to vote in every state.

Grace McDonald was a 2-year-old at the end of WWI. World War I was also known as the First World War, the Great War, or the War to End All Wars. That war originated in Europe and lasted from July 28, 1914 until Nov. 11, 1918. As everyone knows, that really was not “the War to End All Wars.”

World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War are other points in history she experienced as an American.

From a more local perspective on Friday afternoon, her family and friends enjoyed cake, ice cream and punch as they remembered the incredible and full life McDonald has had. The theme of the party this year centered on movies, and "Miss Grace" was the star of the movie.

Miss Grace McDonald's son Capt. Ron Campbell and his wife Krista Campbell were among the guests at the party.

"Miss Grace has had long ties with Dixie County," Krista Campbell said. "She came to Dixie County in the late 1950s and she has kept busy selling all types of sundries. One of her ventures was owning the Old Town Jewelry and Pawn Shop in the late 1960s."

After her husband Frank McDonald died, she ran "Capt. Ron's" (Restaurant) in the Town of Suwannee from 1979 - 1987. That eatery later became known as the Salt Creek Restaurant.

Frank McDonald is buried in Old Town Cemetery, and Krista Campbell makes sure there is an attractive American flag next to his gravesite.

Besides traveling to various venues as a "Carney" (running carnival midway games with her husband), “Miss Grace” has resided mostly in Palm Beach and Dixie counties, Krista Campbell said.