

Ormond Beach centenarian enjoys bike rides through Central Park

By Linda Weaver / Correspondent

Published: Thursday, September 17, 2015 at 5:30 a.m.

Last Modified: Thursday, September 17, 2015 at 9:48 a.m.

ORMOND BEACH – On any given Saturday Ester Cox and her son, Tom, may be spotted riding a bike in and around Central Park in the city. Tom ordered a Vanraam bicycle from Holland about a year and a half ago, which allows his mother to ride along in her wheelchair.

“It's very energizing, we go out literally every single weekend we can,” Tom said.

Ester joined a revered group Sept. 9 when she observed her 100th birthday and became a centenarian.

In observance of the big day, Ester has received letters from Rep. John Mica, Sen. Marco Rubio, Sen. Bill Nelson and President and Michelle Obama. Also, her alma mater, Purdue University, where she was a Chi Omega, sent a letter and a blanket.

Ester is a longtime resident of Volusia County. She married William Robert “Bob” Cox in 1949 in Daytona Beach and then traveled the globe with Cox's U.S. Navy career. The couple spent time in Japan; Adak, Alaska; Germany; New Port, Rhode Island; Norfolk, Virginia and Washington, D.C. before returning home to Ormond Beach in 1974 upon Cox's retirement.

“We locked the door, got on a train and took the auto train to Sanford and had our house built in 1974,” Ester said. “I've been here ever since.”

The couple had two children, Ted and Tom, both of whom graduated from Stetson University in DeLand and live locally.

After nearly 52 years of marriage, Bob died in 2002. Ester continues taking care of their home.

One of Ester's favorite memories through her 100 years of living includes the time her husband proposed to her under the cherry blossoms in Washington, D.C.

“I was happy,” she said.

Another episode that brings a smile to her face is when she recalls driving in Japan.

“Someone was trying to signal me to the side of the road. I thought they were waving at me and I just waved back,” she said. “They were trying to signal me to move over because the emperor was behind me. I hadn't been driving that long either.”

Ester believes that faith, healthy eating, taking supplements and independence has attributed to her long and happy life.

“You need to take care of yourself. You don't depend on your husband for everything,” she said. “My husband had told me, 'If you're going to be a Navy wife, you have to be independent.' ”

In addition to Ester's two sons, she has three grandchildren and five great grandchildren. Ester attends church every Saturday night at Tomoka Christian Church, where she sits in the front row.