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***STILL PLAYING HER SONG
100 Years & Counting!***

**HEATH VILLAGE RESIDENT
CELEBRATES 100th BIRTHDAY!!**



Lena having fun at a February 2019 ice cream social at Heath Village



Lena on her honeymoon in 1947

Washington Township -- Heath Village resident Mgalina "Lena" Rowe celebrates her 100th birthday on April 6, 2019. A life-long resident of Rockaway Borough, Lena has lived at Heath Village since November 2013.

The daughter of John and Martha Amato, Lena was born in her home on Maple Avenue in Rockaway. She is the youngest of three girls.

Some of Lena's earliest memories growing up in Rockaway include the night in 1926 when lightning struck Picatinny Arsenal, "the sky was lit up and it sounded like bombs exploding." Borough officials, fearful for residents' safety had everyone transported by firetrucks to the Morristown Armory for the night. Lena also remembers living through the depression in 1929, "there were no jobs available, no money. We survived, as all others, on our fresh gardens and fruit trees."

Lena is a graduate of Rockaway High School class of 1937. During WWII, Lena worked at Picatinny Arsenal in one of their manufacturing areas. She met Donald, her future husband and love of her life, while working at the cosmetic counter at Newberry's in Dover. He had just returned home from the War and would stop at her counter to buy toothpaste. They were married for 64 years and had two children and four grandchildren. Sadly, Donald passed away in 2012.

Lena and her husband owned a Hershey's Ice Cream Parlor in Rockaway. It had a soda fountain, jukebox, and penny candy. It was the place the kids would go to after school. They owned it for about eight years. Once her children were in school, Lena took a job at APW Co. in Rockaway where she worked for many years.

An interest in and willingness to help people and her community has always been important to Lena. She also loves to stay busy. She and her husband could always be found cheering on their beloved grandchildren at one of their many extracurricular activities.

One of the first things she and her husband did when they retired was seek out the town's Senior Club. When they did, they were surprised to find that there wasn't a dedicated meeting place for the club. In response, they, along with other seniors, were instrumental in working with the governing body to create the Rockaway Senior Center. Lena served as President of the Club for an amazing 21 years.

With respect to technology – Lena credits being able to drive and own her own car (her first one was a pink Ford) as having a major impact on the quality of her and her family's life.

Lena attributes her longevity to “always keep moving, eating a small piece of chocolate every day and eating lots of fresh fruit and vegetables.” She made dinner every night and ate few, if any, processed foods.

Like so many of her “Greatest Generation” peers, Lena is exceedingly humble and doesn't have a lot of advice for others, “I just did what needed to be done and went right on living; a sense of humor is important too.”

Anne, her friend and fellow resident really described Lena best when she said this about her, “Lena is always smiling, always open and ready for a walk and if you knock on her door, she always welcomes you.”

For additional information about Lena or to arrange an interview, please contact Heath Village Community Relations Coordinator at 908-684-5006.

Heath Village is a full-service, not-for-profit, retirement community located at 430 Schooley's Mountain Road in Washington Township, Morris County. For further information, please call 908-852-4801 or visit us on our website at www.heathvillage.com. Like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/heathvillage.

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