

CENTENARIAN CELEBRATION



Not one, but two magnificent parties were held, during a week-long celebration to honor centenarian, Verna Lewis, born in Livingston, Texas, August 31, 1917.

The first party, hosted by the Sacramento Diamonds Duplicate Bridge Club (SDDBC) August 29, at the wonderful Plates Restaurant, held a special meaning. It was a dual celebration to honor Verna's one-hundredth birthday, and her role as one of the founders of the SDDBC.

Every member of the club (except for one out of the city) came to the celebratory luncheon. One member, Carrienell Bailey, who now lives in Southern California, flew in to spend several days in Sacramento, in order to attend other celebrations for Mrs. Lewis. The club's newest members, who had not met Verna, also attended.

The restaurant provided a special room for the celebration, and the events planner, Vicky Robertson, did a wonderful job to help make the party a success. She and her staff provided beautiful name plates for the guest, and a special gold plate setting for the honoree.

Several SDDBC members; Jackie Carley, Gloria Stiner, Rosemary Braxton and Patricia Walker, arrived early to decorate the room and to help get the party started.

Although Western Section VP, Margaret Ware, had just returned from an extended honeymoon trip, she was there to take her seat beside the queen. Wearing an ornamental, silver crown, perched on her silver hair, and sporting the latest fingernail adornment "Happy B.D. 100," the queen was the picture of centenarian royalty.

After lunch was served, club president, Sam Jones, a long time friend of the honoree, praised her as a founder of the SDDBC and spoke of a founder's day celebration to be held each year. As a "Mason," he presented Verna with a sash from the organization's sister club, the "Eastern Star," and a special gift from the Sacramento Diamonds Duplicate Bridge Club.

A congratulatory letter from Governor, Jerry Brown, was read to the group and presented to Verna, by Gloria Parker (party chair). Gertrude Wright, a former president of the SDDBC and the only other, living club founder, also sent a letter to be read and presented to Verna. Although Ms. Wright has lived in Detroit, MI, for several years; she is still a Sacramento Diamond member. In her letter, she thanked Verna for teaching her to play better bridge and for being a special friend for many decades.

After testimonials from other members, a scrumptious cake ritual, and a happy rendition of the birthday song, Verna's long awaited part of the program began...a game of duplicate bridge.

Several members had to depart early, but the fun continued with five tables of bridge. To bring the party to a glorious end, Queen Verna and her partner, the party chair, took first place. There were a few, humorous comments that the scores were rigged in favor of the honoree, but Verna's bridge game belies her age. She has always been a good player and now at the age of one-hundred, her game is awesome.

Later that same day, Verna was a dinner guest at Thunder Valley Casino in Roseville, CA. After a delicious meal, the queen played her favorite game of poker until 12:00 AM. The next morning, she was honored with a birthday celebration by her Health Support Team. Verna's energy, stamina, and acuity is amazing.

On Saturday, September 2, over seventy-five friends and relatives from near and far; gathered at Verna's house for a joyous and memorable party. Family members, including; six nieces, two nephews, one great nephew and a sister-in-law, flew in from; New York, Texas, Tacoma, WA, and San Diego, CA. Four out-of-town friends also flew or drove to take part in the festivities.

Several relatives stayed at various hotels in the city, but were at Verna's house early each day to help prepare for the party. Verna was able to play many of her favorite games; dominos and pinochle, with family and friends the entire week.

The menu for the party consisted of; baby-back ribs, chicken salad, potato salad, baked beans, green beans, garlic bread, sliced watermelon, snow-cones and chocolate cake. Several games were played and a good time was had by all.

On Tuesday, September 5, three special friends and bridge club members, Theresa Lilly, Carriennell Bailey and Gloria Parker, had a wonderful lunch at Verna's house, and spent several hours playing bridge and eating cake and other birthday goodies. The winner of the game was Queen Verna. !!!!!

The outpouring of love and respect, shown to Mrs. Lewis, during her birthday week, could not have happened to a more deserving person.

She is kind, she is good, and she is beautiful.