

Madelyn Watts 103
Battle Creek, MI

Madelyn Watts says she has had a wonderful life. She was born in 1918 to Carl and Dorothy Moore in Battle Creek, Michigan. Her parents owned a grocery store where her father baked delicious breads and her mother kept the books. She was raised with her younger brother Carlton and had an idyllic childhood.

Madelyn fondly remembers being part of the Chi Delta Chi sorority in high school. The group would gather at a different home every Friday night before their dates would arrive to whisk them away. Around Christmastime, a big dance was held at the Post Tavern that she looked forward to each year. She recalls one year she and her mother traveled all the way to Detroit to find the perfect dress, a red taffeta number. Sadly though, the year she became president of Chi Delta Chi, Lakeview Schools banned all sororities and expelled her for being sorority president. Fortunately, she did eventually get to return to graduate.

The following year, Madelyn wed her high school sweetheart, Howard Watts, who had been her family's paperboy. When she was younger, she used to wait on the steps for him to come by each day, and says *I picked him out and he never had a chance!* They were married in the First Congregational Church with the reception held in her family's backyard, and it was the social event of the year. They soon moved to St. Joseph, Michigan after Howard took a job with the Sinclair Refining Company. Madelyn worked as a substitute teacher on and off while tending to their daughter, Susan, who came along in 1941.

Madelyn missed everyone they left behind in Battle Creek, and one day, while visiting friends and family, she saw a model home that she fell in love with. She vowed she would one day live in that house and told her mother to call her as soon as it came up for sale. Eventually her mother called, and Madelyn and Howard drove over to see the house. The family living there was getting ready to leave for California the next day, so Madelyn and Howard offered them cash on the spot, which the family gladly accepted. The very next morning Madelyn had the keys to her dream home where she continues to live to this day.

As a younger woman Madelyn was very athletic. She enjoyed swimming, bicycling, roller skating, horseback riding, and ice skating. She also enjoyed gardening and cooking, and her favorite meal is rump roast in her crockpot with brown potatoes.

Her advice on how to live to be 100 is to live a healthy lifestyle. She used to be a prolific smoker, but eventually decided to quit and has never looked back. Reflecting on her life, Madelyn says *I danced every dance, and went to every party* and she would recommend we all do the same so we can also say we have had a wonderful life.