

Holden's Oldest Resident Receives Boston Post Cane

by Daniel Castro Neighbors 04/06/12 Comment



Selectman Anthony Renzoni presents Harriet Flury with the Boston Post Cane in recognition of her being the town's oldest citizen at 105 years old Photo Credit: *Daniel Castro*

HOLDEN, Mass. — At 105 years old, Holden resident Harriet Flury is officially the town's oldest resident, and on Thursday four generations of her family members along with friends and local officials came together at Holden Rehab and Nursing Center to see Flury be honored with the Boston Post Cane.

To celebrate Flury's long and happy years, her friends at Holden Rehab threw her a birthday party, and while Flury's only request for the day was to have a red dress to wear, there was much more in store for the Holden native.

The Town of Holden is one of 700 New England towns that were given a Boston Post Cane by Edwin A. Grozier, who was publisher of the Boston Post in 1909. The gold-headed ebony canes were forwarded to Boards of Selectmen from each town, and were to be presented to the oldest male citizen.

"In about 1930, after a whole bunch of controversy, they decided to include females, which is fortunate for us today," said Selectman Anthony Renzoni, who had the honor of bestowing Holden's cane to Flury.

One of about 500 known canes that are still known to remain, the cane sits in the Holden Senior Center, and the town ensures to recognize the eldest town citizen with its presentation as often as possible.

Though the cane will not stay with Flury and will instead return to its home at the senior center, the town did present her with a miniature version of the cane — which was pinned to her red dress — as well as a certificate of recognition from the Board of Selectmen.

Furthermore, State Rep. Kimberly Ferguson also visited Holden Rehab for the celebration, and brought with her a certificate from the Massachusetts House of Representatives, offering congratulations to Flury in recognition of her 105th birthday.

"She is one of the most joyful women I know," said Setanya Cook, a CNA at Holden Rehab and Nursing Center who has come to know Flury well — though she has yet to get her name right.

"I see Harriett everyday, and everyday she calls me Lasagna," said Cook, who has learned to live with the new moniker. "Now I have other people who call me Lasagna, because that's what Harriett calls me."

Her sense of humor still sharp as ever, when Cook asked Flury what her secret to living long was, she joked, 'stay away from men.'

A hardworking woman, when Flury was young she went to work in a shoe factory on Grove St. in Worcester. Later she became a housewife brought up her children mostly in Jefferson.

While she lived in Florida for a time when she was older, Flury was able to move back to the town of her youth when she entered Holden Rehab.

"She was in Holden when they had horses," said her son, Paul Flury. "She loved Holden, my father did, too."

Furthermore, even as she advances in age, Flury has been able to thrive at Holden Rehab and Nursing Center, an 100 bed skilled nursing facility owned and operated by the Oriol family

"it's pretty good to live till 105 and be alert, and have the care that she gets," said her son. "The nursing home is what keeps her going. They are very good to her."