

Indianapolis residents celebrate milestone birthdays

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Sarah Wilson turned 104 years old March 14 and celebrated with friends and family at Community Nursing and Rehabilitation. (Photo/Tyler Fenwick)

Two Indianapolis residents recently celebrated milestone birthdays that carried them even further into their 100s. Elmon Myers turned 105 on March 12, and Sarah Wilson turned 104 on March 14.

When it comes to the secret for living such a long life, if Wilson knows, she wouldn't share.

"That's my business," she said at her birthday party at Community Nursing and Rehabilitation.

Wilson, who used to be a nursing assistant at Wishard Memorial Hospital, gathered that day with her friends and family to reminisce on a life well lived. Her family said she loved dancing growing up and was even better at it than those who were supposedly trained and coached. At her 103rd birthday party last year, Wilson stuck out her tongue for a photo, showing the vibrant woman everyone knew was just turning a year older, not changing.

"She'll tell you what she's thinking," Wilson's daughter, Barbara Jones, said. "She don't bite her tongue about anything."

While waiting for the nursing home staff to serve the cupcakes, Wilson's other daughter, Norma Harris, arrived and she sat by her mother to hand her a card.

"How you doin', mama?" she asked through tears.

Wilson, known to speak her mind, said how she was doing: "Hungry."

"I just thank God that she's still in her life," Jones said, "although it's not the way I would like it. [I'd like] for all of us to be together, but at least we're still here and can still see each other."

Myers, a former construction worker who helped his father build the family home, was not as coy as Wilson when asked how he's managed to live so long.

"The lord Jesus Christ," he said. "The best you can get. I don't care where you're going, he's better than anyone."

Myers, one of 15 children, grew up in a poor family and attended Crispus Attucks High School, where he graduated in 1936. He would sometimes have to wear his mother's shoes to walk to school because "we didn't have nothin'." One day, he didn't wear any shoes in the morning, but he had to run home when school got out because it had started snowing. Myers was featured in the documentary, "Attucks: The School That Opened a City," but said he was the worst among his siblings in school.

"I was about the dumbest one in the bunch," he said. "I couldn't spell worth a dime."

What Myers could do was math, and he was also good in shop class. He enjoyed making stools and chairs and tables. Myers went into construction with his father and built 28 homes in the city.

Myers' daughter, Elinor Nelson, said she remembered her father always doing his best to provide for the family, and said one of her favorite memories is when he would wake up her and her siblings in the morning to appreciate life.

"He would always make us get up certainly for school, but on a Saturday," she said. "Get up. If you don't do anything, get up and see the sun rise. Get up and do something."