

# Trudy's 100<sup>th</sup>

## Birthday Wish: *Mowing the Lawn.*

What is your greatest unfulfilled wish?  
Is it something grand? Is it impressive? Is it a little bit dangerous?

### An Unlikely Wish

Brookdale has partnered with the Wish of a Lifetime organization to fulfill meaningful dreams, wishes and desires for our senior residents – such as skydiving, taking laps around a NASCAR racetrack or reconnecting with long lost friends. The ambitious wishes we usually hear about made Trudy Price's wish surprising.

At 100 years of age, Trudy just wanted to mow the lawn.

With so many more interesting options out there in the world, why would anyone harbor a desire to perform such a mundane task, and spend their wish on it?

This is a tale of a story behind a story, laced with the association of sweet memories.

### A Family Outing – Close to Home

If you were to replay scenes of the Price's family life like vintage home movie clips from the 1940s and 50s, you would see yard work at their home in Youngstown, Ohio was not a dreaded chore or a consequence of drawing the short straw.

Instead, Yard Day each Saturday was like an outdoor recreational event. It was a weekly date for everyone to be together, cooperate, and even have fun on this "family outing."

Each person had their own job – cutting the grass, raking, pulling weeds, watering, planting and tending to the gardens. Patriarch Howard used the big motorized mower while Trudy used the old-fashioned rotating reel push blade mower. Her son John, nicknamed "Buzz," recalled, "Our yard always looked like a golf course."

The day always ended with a family reward of going out to eat. Each week they chose a different restaurant. For Trudy, it was a day she looked forward to.

© PHOTO BY JEFF SHARPE



Time brought inevitable changes to Trudy's life. After her husband Howard passed away prematurely at age 55 and her two sons grew up and moved away, Trudy was left to care for her yard alone. But she didn't consider it a hardship. Instead, it was an occasion to take a reminiscent trip to the past. The warmth of the sun and the scent of freshly cut grass flooded her senses with memories.

She would remember moments like the Saturday morning when her sons woke her early to give her a "bouquet" of dandelions they had pulled from the yard – or the day the boys were banned from gardening duties because they pulled out un-bloomed rose plants, mistaking them for weeds.

Trudy found herself varying the grass-cutting pattern she used in her yard from one week to the next – circular, to left-right, to diagonal – just as Howard did. Whenever she was outside in her yard, it was almost like she could still hear the voices of her sons and husband and feel the comforting presence of her family.

### Half a Century Later, the Lawn Beckons

As her physical strength decreased and her vision worsened, Trudy was eventually unable to keep up her weekly nostalgic tasks of yard care. When the time

came to move, she chose Brookdale's Sterling House community in Bowling Green, Ohio because she already knew what it was really like from the inside. Her grandson Jake worked there almost three years while completing nursing school.

Whenever she can, Trudy goes outside there on the community walkway, especially on days when the scent of freshly cut grass lingers in the air.

After spending nearly half her life as a widow, as Trudy approached her 100th birthday, the Resident Programs Assistant Christine Burger asked what she would like to do on her special day. Trudy had a ready answer. She wanted to mow a lawn.

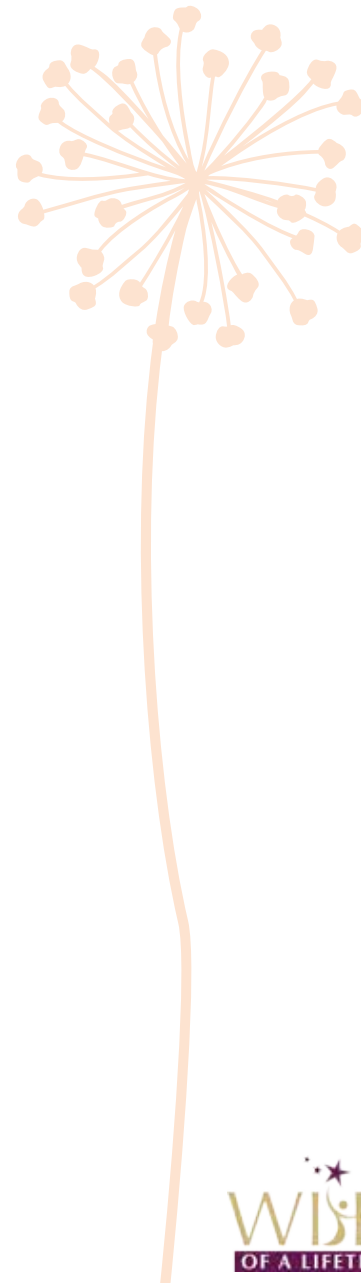
### Turning Trudy's Birthday Green

Residents and associates at Trudy's Brookdale's community knew faculty and administrative staff members at Bowling Green State University, which just happens to sit on a lush green landscape. So Burger and her colleagues began coordinating a plan to fulfill her modest wish in a big way.

At the university campus on June 9th, Trudy's 100th birthday, she joined nearly 40 family members and friends among the residents and associates at her Brookdale community.



© PHOTOS BY JEFF SHARPE



It was time to mow the lawn. She began by first using a riding mower. But that was too easy. A staffer then brought her a manual push mower, announcing, "We have a new walker for you," which Trudy diligently used to complete her task.

The day's celebration culminated with a rendition of "Happy Birthday" sung for Trudy by the a cappella chorale Ten40. Dignitaries there included Ohio state senator Randy Gardner, Bowling Green Mayor Richard Edwards and university president Mary Ellen Mazey who presented Trudy with a certificate dedicating June 9, 2014 as Trudy Price Day. Her event also drew reporters from radio station WBGU and ABC TV affiliate WBKO.

### Finding Family on the Lawn

Trudy enjoyed the warmth of the sun and the gentle breeze that stirred the scent of freshly cut grass, just as she did more than half a century ago. But for her, it was about more than yard work. The most beautiful result she crafted wasn't a well-manicured lawn. Instead, the most meaningful element she cultivated over those years was the bond of time with loved ones sharing the work of perfecting a home for one another.

Now, more than half a century later, 100-year-old Trudy Price was again tending to greenery springing from the earth and celebrating the memories of her life with her Brookdale friends. Her joy gave those around her a fresh look at what time spent together really means.

As before, she was not working for the sake of the leaves of grass or blooms of roses below her. She was actually cultivating a fresh landscape of a new family of friends now growing around her.



© PHOTO BY JEFF SHARPE