

Heritage Resident Receives Recognition from Mattel Fisher-Price

Lucybelle, resident at The Village, a Heritage rehabilitation and skilled nursing community in Gerry, NY was so excited to receive special birthday gifts from her former employer, Mattel Fisher-Price, including an "Inspiring Women" themed collectable set, in honor of her 105th birthday! When opening her gifts, Lucybelle recognized the brand name immediately and said, "Fisher-Price! That's where I worked! It was so cute working there. All of those nice toys."

About LucyBelle and her life (originally published by the Jamestown Post-Journal):

Lucybelle (Bennett) Johnson was born to Cora and Hiram Bennett on March 11, 1917, in Arkwright during a major blizzard. While the labor was progressing, her father set off for Dunkirk to bring Doctor Beardsley to their home, but wasn't able to get past Laona, so he turned back and hitched up a team of horses for the round trip through the snow. Who would have guessed that little baby would live for over 100 years (and counting).

In the early 20s the family moved to Deer Street in Dunkirk where Lucybelle and her older siblings, Bonita and Gordan Bennett, went through the Dunkirk school system. Following high school, her plan was to get a job at Allegheny Ludlum Steel Corporation, but since she wasn't yet 18, she decided to use the time to build a resume and began working in the office of Graf's Furniture Store in Dunkirk – \$9 for a 48-hour week (typical for that era), followed by employment at the Skelton Shovel Company that later became True Temper, then for a family trucking company. When she turned 18, as hoped, she was hired at Allegheny Ludlum Steel Company's office and worked there until 1951.

Roy Johnson came into Lucybelle's life in the mid-40s. She met him through family members who lived in East Aurora. Her first memories of him were his nice voice, and his 1935 Ford Coupe that took the couple to Letchworth Park, Watkins Glen, and several other scenic day trips. They dated for three years while she was living in Dunkirk, and Roy in East Aurora. They became engaged on Christmas Day in 1947, married the following September, and lived with her parents in Dunkirk while a new home was being built for them on Adamwood Drive in East Aurora. Lucybelle continued working at Allegheny Ludlum while Roy commuted to his job at the Fisher Price plant. Eventually the home was completed, and Lucybelle also got a job at Fisher Price, from which they both retired in 1971.

At this point, the couple decided to move to Fredonia, on Berry Road, into a home where her sister Bonita, husband George Grant and their four children had lived. The Grants had recently moved next door to the family farm when George's mother died. The two sisters experienced the joy of living beside each other for many years. During that time Lucybelle accepted a part-time job as bookkeeper at Hillview Golf Course (very close to their home) during the golfing season.

Sadly, Roy passed away in 1979. Living next to her sister and family was a wonderful source of comfort to Lucybelle. She enjoyed traveling and participating in numerous activities with family, friends from church and many others she knew from living in this area during her youth.

After her sister and brother-in-law passed away, taking care of her home became burdensome and she made the decision in 1999 to move into a cottage at The Homestead, a Heritage community in Gerry, later moving The Village, where she still resides today.

When asked to what she attributes her long and healthy life, Lucybelle reflected for a moment, and then stated: "I learned much from my mother's supervision through my early years, eating healthy (always had a garden with fresh vegetables), and just the good Lord's plan for my life!"



Lucybelle Johnson