



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Ministry of Social Development and Family Services



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“Do what is right because it is the right thing to do” says centenarian Tanty Thelma

On August 7th, Thelma Clarke celebrated her 100th birthday and the country’s latest centenarian has not one but several secrets to living a long life. According to Ms. Clarke, the secrets to longevity are *“fear of God, good food and ground provisions such as dasheen, cassava, tannia, sweet potatoes, eddoes, and yam, callaloo, coo-coo, fish, lettuce and cressels (watercress), and peace of mind.”*

Ms. Clarke eager to celebrate her 100th birthday credited the Father indicating that it is God’s mercy, faithfulness, and goodness that has kept her for all these years. To help her celebrate the milestone, Ms. Clarke known to many as Moms, Aunty Thelma, Tanty Thelma, Miss Thelma, Ms. Clarke, and Sister Clarke was visited by the Minister of Social Development and Family Services, Senator the Honourable Donna Cox.

Ms. Clarke told the Minister that her favourite verses are from Psalm 34 verses 1- 4, her favourite scripture is Psalm 23 and her favourite saying is *“Do what is right because it is the right thing to do”*.

Ms. Clarke was born in Pitman Lane, Gonzales, and distinctly recalled some of her favourite memories of some of the places she has lived. *“I grew up at 62 Duncan Street, Port-of-Spain, then moved to 3rd Avenue, Barataria as a teenager from the age of 15 years. Barataria was dirt roads, with no street lights, and I had to go to the stand pipe in the road for water. I used to bathe in San Juan River; we would catch crayfish there. At Duncan Street, the neighbours were kind to one another, lived like a family, and shared what they had with each other. They looked out for one another. It was a very nice area at that time”* she said.

She further stated that the best advice she has for this generation is *“Obey your parents. Obedience is an important virtue. Respect yourself and respect the elderly, follow your dreams, and do not give up. Put God first in everything that you do.”*

She also indicated that her days are usually spent having devotions, reading the Bible and newspapers, listening to the news, doing crossword puzzles and word searches, and watching Nigerian movies and Beyond the Tape but for her very special day, she will be sharing it with family and friends.

Following the visit, Minister Cox presented the new Centenarian with her Certificate of Honour and Achievement, a fruit hamper, and a birthday cake sponsored by the Kiss Baking Company and in turn, Ms. Clarke thanked Minister Cox and all persons who contributed and participated to make her birthday day an extremely special one.

The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services was pleased to honour our latest centenarian and encourage family and loved ones, Members of Parliament, Local Government representatives, friends, and neighbours to salute our nation's centenarians by registering for the National Centenarian Programme. Persons may visit the Ministry's website at www.social.gov.tt and complete the online form or print a downloadable form for completion.

Completed forms may be dropped off at the nearest Social Welfare Office or emailed to the Division of Ageing at opic@social.gov.tt. For more information, persons may contact the Division of Ageing at 623 – 2608; Ext 2001 to 2009 or 800-OPIC (6742).



Minister Donna Cox presents a cake sponsored by Kiss Baking Company to an elated Thelma Clarke.



Senator the Honourable Donna Cox shares a moment with centenarian Thelma Clarke



Ms Thelma Clarke celebrates with her loved ones.