



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Ministry of Social Development and Family Services



MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Only God Deserves the Credit, Says New Centenarian Myrtle Gomes

Plant: Anthurium; Dance: Foxtrot; Reading: Fashion magazines and romance novels. These are a few of the favorite things of new centenarian Myrtle Gomes, who joined the celebrated centenarian club on September 18, 2024. According to Ms. Gomes, “God. All the way. Only God” is the secret to her longevity.

Reflecting on her early days, Ms. Gomes indicated that although there has been significant progress in today’s society, basic foundational values are missing.

“I lived through the time of rations in World War II when you had to line up very early in the morning to get rice, flour, coals, pitch oil, etc. So what I experience now is a far cry from that. On the other hand, back then, a neighbourhood was more of a community. Less money and ‘things’ but more love. Neighbourly love flowed like family. We had a saying: ‘When one head hurt, everybody (in the community) head hurt too.’ If one person didn’t have food, a neighbor was sure to send something for them. Today, people don’t even say *good morning* when they pass you outside your house. So we have more of everything now—cars, food, and such. Plenty of progress, but basic decency and manners are lacking,” said Ms. Gomes.

The former salon owner also shared the story of how she met her husband, Cecil. Most of her children were born at 47 Oxford Street, where she resides to this day.

“I met my husband, Cecil Gomes, on the February 18, 1947. It was a Carnival Tuesday, and I was at a friend’s home on Henry Street with my two boys, looking at the parade of bands. He worked at Furness Withy at the time, delivering blocks of ice to the bands. Once he realized that we knew the same people, he said he finished his route, returned home to change his clothes, and made his way back to Henry Street for an introduction. We married later that year on October 26 and stayed together until his death in 1989. We have eleven children and thirty-two grandchildren.”

Despite minor age-related issues that hinder her ability to stay active, she strives to maintain a routine by doing light exercises, reading the newspaper and tending to her plants. She also looks forward to the early morning and midday Mass on the Living Water Community television station, as well as watching her favorite soap operas, *The Young and the Restless* and *The Bold and the Beautiful*, and westerns.

An intimate celebration was hosted at the Hyatt Trinidad to mark the milestone. Ms. Lauren Stoute, Social Research Assistant, and Ms. Giselle Alexander, Project Officer of the Division of Ageing,

attended the celebration on behalf of the Minister of Social Development and Family Services, Senator the Honourable Donna Cox.

To register for the National Centenarian Programme, persons are encouraged to visit the Ministry's website at www.social.gov.tt to complete the online form. For more information, please contact the Division of Ageing at 623-2608, Ext. 2001 to 2009, or 800-OPIC (6742).

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Ms Myrtle Gomes displays her certificate of Honour and Achievement at her 100th birthday celebration at the Hyatt Regency on September 19, 2024.