

103 year-old resident makes a splash in the Parkshore community

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Sep 12, 2024 Updated Sep 23, 2024

A World War, child paralysis, and total blindness* never stopped Elaine Anderson from exploring her athletic potential, even at 103 years old.

Anderson, a resident at Parkshore Senior Living Community, has been consistently practicing water calisthenics at the pool. This dedication led her to win the Parkshore Olympic Triathlon, a three-week event where residents competed to report the most time spent swimming, biking and walking.

Around 50 residents participated, and Anderson won the gold medal with 100 hours in the pool; a whopping five to six hours per day, according to wellness coordinator Jane Plumhoff.

When Anderson heard about the challenge, she threw herself in; but participating meant more than going for gold.

"I have a competitive nature," she said, "and it helped me through the years because we were absolutely dirt poor," as a child growing up in Douglas County where every day was a challenge to get proper resources for a growing family.

Competing is also a way to honor the opportunities she once did not have. In her youth and into adulthood, "women really didn't have a chance to exercise," she said. They were often being made to focus on working and homemaking. Her father even protested her attending college.

She also recalls gym class where girls, standing in line, took turns to shoot one basket at a time. The boys, however, got to have their own team.

Anderson now has 28 grandchildren, and their involvement in sports is particularly special to her. For kids and adults of all ages, she marvels at all the new possibilities offered.

"When opportunities come, you have to act on it," she said. "We're in this world, I think, to do things that are worthwhile and also to enjoy life."

And enjoying life, she is.

The revitalizing powers of water and exercise keep her mind sharp and body strong. Socializing with friends and family while finding her Parkshore community of over two decades has contributed greatly to her happiness and overall health.

Every day, "I'll get ready to go again and feel lucky for the life I have," Anderson said.

She is confident she will outlive her cousin who lived to be 108, so she has plenty of time to reach new heights. When it comes to reaching goals, her advice is this: "Be stubborn, keep at it, aim high! If you don't obtain it, you will at least have tried. Don't give up."

*Parkshore note: Elaine is legally blind.



Winning team Bonnie Janda, left, Elaine Anderson, center, and Judy Wendt.
(Submitted photo by Jane Plumhoff)