

‘Faith Kept Her Moving’: Oldest American, Hester Ford, Dies at 116

After living through “real life experience” of two pandemics; both world wars; and raising 12 children, 48 grandchildren, 108 great-grandchildren and approximately 120 great-great-grandchildren, the longest living American, Hester McCardell Ford, died Saturday in her home, surrounded by loved ones.

“She not only represented the advancement of our family but of the Black African American race and culture in our country. She was a reminder of how far we have come as people on this earth,” the family said in a statement released on Facebook.

Official Family Statement for Hester McCardell Ford Greetings Family, Friends & the Global Community: It is with...

Posted by Tya Monte Powe on Saturday, April 17, 2021

In sharing her secret to longevity, Ford credited her faith in the Lord: “I’m living for the Lord, hun,” she said after celebrating her 116th birthday in August 2020.

During her 115th birthday celebration, the community of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, proclaimed Sept. 1 as “Mother Hester McCardell Ford Day”.

Certainly dancing with Jesus, her family rejoiced that Ford would now be in heaven with her late husband, John, who died in 1963, just three years after moving to the house in Charlotte, where Ford would live without in-home assistance until the age of 108.

“Although she has passed, her legacy and memory will continue to live on through her family and everyone she has touched to

make the world a better place for generations to come,” the statement continues.

“She wanted people to have the type of faith that she had; to be able to believe that anything is possible,” great-granddaughter Tanisha Patterson-Powe said.

Ford was born August 15, 1904, in Lancaster, South Carolina, during Theodore Roosevelt’s second term as president, worked in the cotton fields and then as a nanny for 20 years, and was a longstanding member of Macedonia Baptist Church.

“In times that were troublesome, when there were so many injustices taking place, it was her faith that kept her moving,” Patterson-Powe said.

Details for funeral arrangements are forthcoming, and the family asks for those remembering Ford to “reflect on how far we have come and where we are aspiring to go” in her name and legacy. {eoa}

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