



PRESS RELEASE

**Mrs. Sarah May Celebrates 100th Birthday
July 14, 2010**

Bailey, NC – Mrs. Sarah May celebrated her 100th birthday at a reception hosted by The Heritage Bank on July 14th. Mrs. May has been a customer of The Heritage Bank's Bailey Branch for 75 years. She said that she and her husband, T. C. May, bought their first house with a loan from what was then known as Lucama-Kenly Bank.

Mrs. May was born in 1910 in Edgecombe County between Tarboro and Pinetops. As a young child, when not in school, her days were filled with country tasks such as hog killings and stuffing featherbeds.

"We had a big apple orchard, a big peach orchard and a big grape vineyard. My father, Wright Lawrence Stallings, made his own scuppernong wine," she said. She still drinks three tablespoons of sweet scuppernong wine, a gift from a friend, almost daily. Her father was a prosperous landowner and former Edgecombe County sheriff.

A retired school teacher, Mrs. May was salutatorian of the first graduating class of South Edgecombe High School near Pinetops. She graduated from the two-year teaching program at East Carolina Teachers' College in 1929. Her first teaching job was at what is now known as Coopers Elementary School near Nashville. She was a member of the first faculty, teaching seventh grade.

She attended summer school at Atlantic Christian College in Wilson (now Barton College) for three years to get her bachelor's degree in elementary education and she continued teaching seventh grade for six more years. After that, she began teaching fifth grade and continued doing so until she retired in 1985. Mrs. May taught for a total of 35 years.

Mrs. May believes in staying active in her community. She has been a member of the Virginia Dare Book Club, which founded the Privette Library, on whose board she proudly serves. She is an active member of the Golden Years Club, Bailey United Methodist Church and the bridge club. She has also served on the board of the Nash County Cultural Center, which is now known as Nash Arts.

After she retired, she wanted “something to do,” so she took art classes once a week for 25 years entering art exhibits and painting hundreds of pictures. She painted until “she got tired of it.”

Even though Mrs. May is a bit slower and needs help getting up, her mind is still sharp. She reads at least one book a week and enjoys walking outside twice a day, if the weather cooperates. She checks on her three tomato plants and enjoys the fresh air. She recently canned three quarts of tomato juice from her vines, which is a family tradition. She treats her family with them at Christmas. She also spent a day freezing 150 ears of corn.

She is comfortable in retirement. Loved by many, Mrs. May has frequent visits from former students, friends and family, many whom bring gifts, such as the first fruit of the season and flowers.

She doesn't have nor want a computer. She says, “it's too late now.” Small town Bailey is the greatest place to live. “Everybody knows your joys and heartaches and they stick by one another.” Even though Bailey has grown over the last 75 years, thankfully the character of the town has not changed.

“My happiest times were with my husband and my two daughters, and those two daughters are the greatest pleasure of my life. I'd be in a rest home now if it wasn't for my two daughters.” Mrs. May has two grandchildren, three great-grandsons and a great-granddaughter. Husband T. C. May died in 1978 after 43 years of marriage.

Her words of wisdom are to “Take each day at a time, because we can't control tomorrow. Take each day and give the best to your Master and the best will come back to you.” She says that she has been very fortunate in her life. “I'm very blessed, very blessed.”

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