

Montclair's Bob Perdue celebrates 100th



Bob Perdue receives a present at the Montclair YMCA on Park Street on Friday, Feb. 22. Purdue turned 100 on Feb. 23. DEBORAH ANN TRIPOLDI/STAFF

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Good friends and a five o'clock scotch and soda are centenarian Bob Perdue's secret to long and celebrated life, he says. On Feb. 22, Perdue's 100th birthday was feted with friends and a fudge layer cake at the Montclair YMCA, which holds a special place in his heart.



Bob Perdue celebrated his 100th at the Montclair YMCA on Park Street. With him is Lisy Espindola, health and wellness director. DEBORAH ANN TRIPOLDI/STAFF

Born Feb. 23, 1918 in Orange, Perdue began going to the Montclair YMCA when he was 5 years old.

"I would bicycle to Montclair, we had a store on South Park Street," he said.

In his childhood, the family moved to Montclair where they owned and operated the Perdue Radio Company originally on Bloomfield Avenue and later at 10 S. Park St. They also had an office in Caldwell. The store sold phonographs and recorded music to churches for 72 years.

"I loved going out to the churches and looking at the churches

and meeting the people. It was so much fun. I climbed to the roof of Immaculate [Conception]," Perdue said.

Perdue said he once crossed paths with Thomas Edison. "I was a cub scout protecting Thomas Edison, along with a couple other scouts, when he was visiting the YMCA," he said.

After he retired from Perdue Radio Company, he opened an antique repair shop in his house. "I was repairing everything for everyone and I loved it," he said.

Perdue still lives in the house he and his wife Connie have called home for 66 years. They raised son Joe and daughter Renny there. Due to a stroke his wife is currently staying in a nursing home next door.

Perdue and his wife have two grandchildren, Alexandra and Ian Perdue.

Perdue contends the most important thing in life is friendship and recalls the friends he first made at the YMCA, the "Yise Guys." Although those friendships have faded away, he has fond memories of the group.

"I have a wonderful feeling of these people on each others' sides. I had a couple of my friends the Yise Guys fade away. They don't seem to die, just fade away. I'm a little miffed that they faded away, I wish the world could have friendships, real friendships, they are sustainable; they make you feel more than good," said Perdue, adding that he still has his scotch and soda everyday at 5 p.m.