

# “Trudy” 100 Years young

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- Trudy was born in Long Branch, New Jersey, on June 18, 1915, a Friday (“Friday’s Child is Loving and Giving”). It was the day before her parents 9th Wedding Anniversary. She is the fifth of 6 children born to William Frederick Berger Sr. and Wilhelmina Rose Vogt-Berger. Trudy’s brothers and sisters were: Vincent Paul, Mary Agnes, Dorothy Wilhelmina, Richard Edward, and William Frederick Jr. Trudy is the last surviving sibling.
- Trudy’s father was a civilian engineer for the Army. He was stationed in Washington D.C. when her older brothers and sisters were born. The family moved to Long Branch, New Jersey when he was assigned to the Sandy Hook Army Base. They moved to Aberdeen Proving Ground in Aberdeen, Maryland shortly after Trudy’s youngest brother was born. She lived in Aberdeen until she married Capt. Jerome Francis Borrell on October 2, 1948 (Feast of the Guardian Angels).
- Trudy met her future husband through her youngest brother, Bill. The couple had three children: Frederick Jerome, Mary Frances, and Mary Barbara. After their wedding, Trudy moved to her husband’s town of Havre de Grace, Maryland where they remained until 1951, when the family moved to Wheaton, MD. She lived in Wheaton until she entered Abbey Manor Assisted Living in 2003 and Sage Point Senior Services in 2009 where she is today.

Trudy has been known to say she was born at the right time in history. She remembers when there were very few airplanes or cars around. Ice was delivered daily by horse cart. Train tracks were placed over the frozen Susquehanna River at Havre de Grace, MD during the winter. She marveled at all the changes that came her way and was humbled and grateful for the experiences she encountered throughout her life, such as:

- Learning to drive on Aberdeen Proving Ground at age 14;
- Riding in a dirigible at age 15;
- Surviving the Great Depression, WWII, and Korea;
- Attending the 1939-1940 and 1964-1965 World Fairs;
- Television, first black and white, then color;
- Landing a man on the Moon;
- Walking the Appalachian Trail with 6 of her college friends, from Bryn Mawr PA to Harpers Ferry WV;
- Making a three week trip to the Holy Land, Egypt, Greece and Rome when she turned 60.

## Trudy’s Early Years

Trudy recalls a very happy childhood. Her father grew a garden to supplement the family meals during the Depression. She ate brussel sprouts right from the garden and found them delicious!!! Her mother fed the hobos who came into town along the railroad. The family also made dandelion wine and root beer and stored the bottles in the cellar. If it got too warm, they could hear the corks popping! Her mother made the best pound cake in town which was sought after at church bake sales. People would sometimes stop by the house to buy a cake before it made it to church.

Trudy’s father was an inventor and engineer who led his children to explore life. Trudy took an early interest in photography and astronomy. She had a telescope mounted on a ladder so she could quickly go out and observe the constellations. Reading was one of Trudy’s passions. She also developed a love of poetry and would often recite many stanzas of her favorites such as “The Wreck of the Hesperus”, “Great, Wide, Wonderful, Beautiful World”, and “Children’s Hour”. She was an avid swimmer, and enjoyed playing tennis.

When Trudy was 5 years old and her little brother was 3, the older brothers and sisters would come home from school and teach her everything they learned in school. Trudy was a quick learner. This made her very bored at home when she only had a 3 year old to play with during the day. Her mother approached the teacher and requested that Trudy be allowed to “audit” class. The teacher tested Trudy and found she was already at the second grade level in reading, writing, and arithmetic and moved her next to her 7 year old brother, Richard. She loved school and excelled, graduating from high school the day before her 16th birthday!!! The only regret she had about all this was that she felt she was not as mature as she would have liked to have been.

This school experience ignited her desire to become a teacher. She assisted her older sisters in the town kindergarten. She and her sister, Aggie, were hired to teach at Franz Liszt Academy in Pennsylvania for a while until Aggie applied and was accepted by Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore where she won a three year scholarship (students were required to pay their first year). Aggie graduated with a degree in Fine Arts in 1939. She won a trip to Europe for her four year display of student art.

Trudy followed Aggie to Maryland Institute at the age of 24 (1939) and obtained her teaching Certificate in 1943. She also won a three year scholarship just like Aggie. However, she was 3 credits shy of her fine arts degree because she could not attain a higher level of Spanish. She had enough credits to graduate and she also won for her 4 years of display of her student artwork, but since it was 1943 and during the war, she traveled by train across the U.S. instead of visiting

Europe.

### **Trudy's Later Years**

Trudy's husband knew that one of Trudy's regrets was not getting her Fine Arts Degree... just 3 credits shy. He called Maryland Institute to see if she could still get this degree. He was told that she could take Art History at a local community college and get her degree...so 40 years ago, she went back to school at age 60 and got an "A" in Art History and became a member of the Maryland Institute College of Art Class of 1975!!!! Jerry now had 4 college graduates in the family: Fred- U of MD Class-'72; Mary Frances- U of MD Class of '74; Barbara- U of MD Class of '75; and Trudy- Maryland Institute College of Art, Class of '75. This made him feel very proud, since he did not get to go to college himself due to the war and need to work to raise his family.

After her graduation in 1943, Trudy's first assignment was to teach Junior High boys at a public school in Baltimore. She asked the boys to stand when she entered the room and realized that they towered over her 5' 1" frame. When she was asked later to teach at her parish school, she found she was taller than the 4th graders, whom she taught for 14 and a half years until Jerry became seriously ill with cancer. He died March 12, 1977.

Trudy has always had an independent streak, so she continued to be active in her community. She attended Steubenville University and Trinity College to further her knowledge of her Catholic faith. She was in the Sodality, Sanctuary Club, an Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist, Fun Bunch, and Sew & Sews. She made posters for church events and judged student art shows. Trudy was devoted to helping the homeless and the poor. She continued to sketch until arthritis crippled her hands. Yet she has remained cheerful...loves to hear jokes, family stories, poetry, having family and friends visit, flowers, vanilla ice cream, and her Russell Stover Chocolates!

... then there were the two grandchildren ...

Trudy's son Fred married Marilyn Louise Miller on October 21, 1972. Their first daughter, Catherine Rebecca, was born February 7, 1975, and Trudy was delighted. After her husband died in March of 1977, Trudy found out that soon she would be a grandmother again. Fred and Marilyn announced their second child was due around Thanksgiving. On November 25, 1977, Emily Louise was born. Emily lived to be 22 years old; she went to heaven on February 4, 2000.

... and four great-grandchildren

Rebecca married Commander Ted Voltz on September 21, 1996 and they have four children:

- Christopher Michael, born September 22, 1997
- Twin girls: Michaela Emily-Grace and Kaitlyn Louise-Grace, born January 14, 2004
- Matthew Jude, born June 12, 2008.

### **And the latest news:**

Trudy's oldest great-grandson, Christopher, graduated high school with honors on June 12, 2015. He won a full four year appointment to the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs and will be inducted as a cadet later this June! What wonderful news as Trudy celebrates her 100 years!!!

Trudy has lived a long and richly rewarding life. Her motto is:

"Only count the unclouded hours".

It has served her well.

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