



## 'Can't see ... can't hear ... good feet'

### Little challenges can't slow down 100-year-old

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BY **STEVE METSCH**, Staff Writer

Ann McGowan has a couple of tips if you want to live a century.

"Keep moving. Keep active. I did my own housekeeping until I couldn't. I cooked my own meals. Did my own wash. Someone called me, I'd go out," she said.

She lives in Smith Village, an assisted living home on Western Avenue in Chicago's Morgan Park community.

Until March, she lived in the 9800 block of South Pulaski Road in Oak Lawn.

"I'm OK. I feel my age, but I'm fine. I feel 100. The trouble is I can't see and I can't hear. I still have good feet," McGowan said with a laugh.

She drove until she couldn't any more.

"I couldn't see the signs very well. Then I knew I shouldn't drive any more," McGowan said.

McGowan survived two husbands.

"I was married to each one about four years. They both died. My second husband, I found him dead on the floor the day after Thanksgiving," McGowan said. "My first husband had walking pneumonia. My family was good to me. I wasn't really hungry at any time."

McGowan has one daughter, Mary Ann O'Malley, who lives in Florida.

"She wanted me to move down there. I said, 'Absolutely not.' My daughter is 78. My son-in-law is 87," McGowan said.

Daughter and son-in-law flew in for a party celebrating McGowan's birthday Oct. 18.

The years have flown past for McGowan, who worked for Illinois Bell.

"I started at 60th and Kenwood, the Hyde Park office. I ended up at the Claremont office, 63rd and Western," said McGowan, who retired 35 years ago.

What's a typical day for a 100-year-old woman?

She attends morning Mass and engages in activities such as bingo, movies and sing-alongs at Smith Village. Trivia contests are a challenge with her hearing, "but I go to get out."

One of her favorite gifts from her 100th birthday was when a Mass was said for her at St. Germaine Church in Oak Lawn.

"(As I was going out of church, one woman walked up and said, 'I've heard of people living to 100, but I've never seen one. Can I shake your hand?' So I shook her hand," McGowan said.

McGowan enjoys watching TV, especially baseball. She was born on the South Side and is a loyal White Sox fan, and didn't want to hear about SouthtownStar photographer Joseph P. Meier's love for the Cubs.

"Get out of here," she said jokingly.

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