



# Local Golfer Celebrates 100th Birthday on the Green

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter  
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ALTON - "If I'm walking, I'm golfing."

So is the motto of Rose Bensman, an Alton native who is celebrating her 100th birthday on Friday, June 23.

Bensman started playing golf when she was 17. Her father bought her first set of golf clubs for \$15 and arranged for her to take golfing lessons from Lou Miller at Rock Springs Golf Course; this was in the early 1940s.

Eighty-three years later, Bensman has had two holes-in-one and is the only woman to be inducted into the Alton Golf Hall of Fame.

"I love to golf. I will always love to golf. That's been my game," Bensman said. "It's been the biggest part of my life."

Bensman plays golf at least three times a week. When she renewed her license this month, one of her first trips was to the Rock Springs course, where she also used to work. She would play golf whenever she had time, including before and after work.

"You don't bet against her," said Fran Eagan, who has been golfing with Bensman for ten years. "She is always golfing. If you can't find her, you just know where to go."

And that's where Bensman was on Thursday morning. Bensman and her friends in the Lady Birdies Golf League had just completed their usual Thursday scramble and hurried back to Rock Springs Clubhouse for a birthday party.

A golf-themed quilt, made by Eagan, was draped over a table where people could sign a quilt square and a card. They passed around cups of Welch's sparkling grape juice and toasted to Bensman.

As the women chatted about Bensman, descriptions like “inspiration,” “good teacher and “sweetest, nicest lady I know” stood out. One golfer said Bensman taught her how to straighten her drive; another complained that Bensman always beats her on hole seven. The man behind the Clubhouse desk, who was helping the group tally their scores, laughed while announcing that she once told him to fix his penmanship.

“She finds the good in everyone,” Eagan said. “That rubs off after a while.”

The golfers echoed that, adding that her positivity is why she’s turning 100. Bensman’s number one piece of advice for a good, long life?

“Trusting in the Good Lord and the life He has given me. I’ve been grateful for that,” Bensman said.

Her friends are grateful, too. Bensman knew about the party, but they surprised her with a tree and plaque at the golf course in her honor. As they led her outside and showed her the tree, more than one person was teary-eyed, including Bensman herself.

“My dad would be so proud of me,” she told the group.

They are, too. Happy Birthday, Rose.