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## For Mary Gordon

# Age 90 doesn't mean it's time to retire

By Linda deButts  
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The spry little figure scurrying down Purcellville's sidewalks on the way to work in the mornings has been a familiar sight in this western Loudoun town for 18 years.

Mary Trussell Gordon, who turned 90 recently and celebrated with flowers, cake, cards and friends, is always quick to reassure her customers that another birthday doesn't mean retirement.

"A lot of people ask me when I'm going to retire," said Gordon with her quick little grin as she rocked slowly back and forth in the comfortable chair that was handed down through her husband's family.

"Indeed I'm not going to retire, no indeed, I plan to just keep on working as long as I can and as long as I can fool people, that's just what I tell them," Gordon said.

Work to Mary Gordon is the hard, physical toil she has done all her life—as a child growing up in Fauquier County, as a married woman working in the fields alongside her husband and since his death in 1961 as a single woman.

"Since the taxis went out of town I don't go out to work much, just to the Sam Grahams and they come pick me up," Gordon said.

Lack of taxis and a driver's license never kept Mary Gordon from her work, and when she's not helping the Grahams, Gordon leaves her comfortable second floor



Purcellville resident Mary Gordon relaxes with one of her favorite pastimes—quilting.

Times-Mirror Staff Photo/Linda deButts

apartment and walks off to her jobs doing housework for Purcellville residents.

"I do for five different ones in town and the Grahams," Gordon said. "Sure, it's hard work, but you know I love it—it's a lot more fun to do for others than yourself," said Gordon.

"I just get a lot of pleasure from helping the other fellow."

When asked the proverbial housecleaning question, "Do you do windows?", Gordon gives her quick grin again and says "Yes, I do windows, but not like I used to—I just had to quit getting out on the porch roofs."

"I used to open the window and sit on the sash to really get them clean or climb out on the roofs, but I just can't do that type of window cleaning anymore."

"You know another thing I can't do, and I never could do, was use a mop," Gordon stated in her matter-of-fact way.

"What I do is just get down on my hands and knees and scrub and I can stay on my hands and knees all day."

"When I first went to work for Mr. Charles Monroe he came in and found me on my hands and knees in the kitchen, and he told me I didn't have to do that, that he had mops in the closet."

Born one of six children of Charles William and Lula May Shipe Trussell, Mary

Gordon says she is now the last of her immediate family.

Gordon remembers moving with her family to Philomont in January, 1915 to what has in recent years been known as "Poor Hill Farm." After finishing school Gordon remained with her family, helping with chores and farm work.

"I helped my father in the fields," Gordon remembers. "We thinned corn, cut and shucked it, that was back in the days when you planted corn in hills."

"You know I liked that kind of work, I always liked being outdoors."

In the 1920s Mary Gordon attended a play at the Philomont school with her family and met a local man named Willie Trumbo Gordon.

"He walked me home after the play," Gordon recalls.

Willie Gordon and Mary Trussell were married in 1926 and from 1926-29 they farmed in the Philomont area until moving to a stone house that borders Route 734 just south of Sibott Springs. Here the couple continued farming and Gordon raised tur-

keys, chickens and calves and sold eggs.

"My husband and I did a lot of hard work and had a fine time," Gordon said.

"We did whatever we could to get along, I worked in the fields with him and helped him cut wood. We had a lot of fun together."

Later, after Gordon's husband became disabled she left for good the fields, wood lots and outdoor life she loved for housework.

In 1966 Gordon moved to Purcellville, taking with her the comfortable rocker, a clock and copper kettle which had been handed down through her husband's family.

The copper kettle now sits in her brother-in-law's home in Arlington, but Gordon lives in her spacious apartment surrounded by the familiar furnishings and photographs she grew up with and lived with during her married life.

In her "extra room" in front of the large window overlooking Purcellville's Main Street rests Gordon's quilt frame, which never sits empty. An unfinished quilt, which Gordon works on in the eve-

nings, is always stretched across its frame and by the bright light of a standing floor lamp, Gordon stitches away.

"I work, I come home, get a little something to eat and go to quilting," said Gordon.

"I'll watch the news on television, but sometimes I don't even do that, I just start quilting. It's relaxing for me."

The solid, square work worn hands that never wore gloves when Gordon worked outside because she "couldn't stand to work in gloves" seem to turn easily to the tiny stitches required to finish a quilt.

"I've been making them all my life, I guess I was 10 or 12 when my mother started me on quilting," Gordon said.

"Now what I do a lot is finish quilts for other people, they bring me the tops and the other materials and I quilt them together."

"And you know the only quilt I made that I have now is the one I did back during the war when I used feed sacks for squares," Gordon said.

"The others I just gave all away."

(See obituary page, this issue).

Mary Gordon of East Main Street tells us that she liked the feature story appearing in the *Times-Mirror* about her last week. She reminds us though that she has been a long-time helper in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Graham and not the Sam Grahams.