

# Laura Hagerman grew up in the Stirling area

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Born on December 4, 1899 on a 300-acre farm in the Stirling area, Hagerman grew up in the area before attending Ontario Business College in Toronto.

"From there I went out to the Bank of Commerce near Regina, in Saskatchewan," she recalled. "I worked out there for a number of years before coming back."

Her memories of the prairie province's atrocious weather system are still fresh in her mind, she said.

"The climate out there was something else — hot, hot in the summer, and freezing in the winter times."

When she moved back to Belleville, Hagerman owned and operated the Esquire Grill on Front Street for several years before joining the city's Welcome Wagon as a hostess — a posting she held for more than 50 years.

"I loved meeting and greeting new people and businessmen into the city,"

she said. "But my, my, how the time flies."

Hagerman still lives full-time above the downtown building — located at 188 Front St. — which she has owned and managed for more than 50 years, explained her 76-year-old daughter, Ruth Jenkins.

"She still lives on her own and rents out the property and looks after her tenants. And, she still goes up and down those 22 stairs at the back of the property to her apartment.

"My mother's quite amazing — she still has all of her marbles, and if it wasn't for the fact that she's a little hard of hearing, you'd swear she's only in her sixties."

Hagerman "drove until she broke her hip at the age of 98... she actually took her driver's test 18 times," a provincial requirement after the age of 80, Perkins noted.

Hagerman has been in the hospital for

the last month only because she broke her arm in November, Perkins added.

"She's having a really good time here, though. Everyone has treated her wonderfully on this floor."

Hagerman agreed, and thanked the staff — in particular recreational therapist Heather McKibbin, who organized the party and picked up her birthday cake, which was donated by Dewe's Independent Grocer.

"Everyone has been so nice to me," she said, admitting that she is becoming a little anxious to move out of her "temporary home" and back to Front Street.

As for advice to the younger generation, Hagerman said "young people should keep working hard — that's probably my secret — just keep working."

And, as for the possibility of living to see a great-great-grandchild, Hagerman said "Maybe, by the time I'm 104 — I guess we'll have to wait and see," she chuckled.

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*Hagerman, Laura*