

Rockford woman turns 99 on 9/9, attributes long life to ‘thinking well’

By Sarah Wolf

Staff writer

Posted Sep 9, 2017 at 12:09 AM

Updated Sep 9, 2017 at 1:20 AM

ROCKFORD — It would be easy for Margaret Keltner to attribute her long life to good fortune. After all, the Rockford resident was born Sept. 9, 1918, and turns 99 today — 9/9.

But while the longtime bridge player may rely on lady luck for a winning hand, she credits her long life to “thinking well.”

“I’m healthy and I feel good,” she said, seated on a love seat in her Rockford apartment next to her daughter, Ellen Schrader, 70. “I always feel good every day when I wake up. And I have a very positive attitude about life.”

Keltner also eats a healthy diet, exercises every day and has never smoked, but Schrader confirmed that her mother’s insistence on thinking well has produced a mind-over-matter approach to health. If she starts to feel under the weather, she convinces herself that she isn’t sick and, sure enough, feels better.

“Growing up she had no sympathy for (Schrader and her brother) when we were sick,” Schrader said, laughing.

The art of numbers

Joel Gimbel, a statistics instructor at Northern Illinois University, consulted colleagues and used the Society of Actuaries’ generational mortality table to calculate the odds that a woman born in the U.S. in 1918 would live to 99. According to their calculations, the odds are one-tenth of 1 percent.

Gimbel then calculated the likelihood that a person would turn 99 on Sept. 9. The result? Three-thousandths of 1 percent.

“(That’s) assuming that the likelihood of being born on any particular day is the same,” he said.

Keltner's birthdate is significant to Burr Ridge, Illinois-based psychic and numerologist Terri Weston because the numerals 9 and 1 are prominent in her core blueprint, a series of "vibrations," or numbers, that signify certain personality traits.

"Numerology is based on the principle that each number in our date of birth and each letter in our birth name carries a specific energy, or vibration, ranging from one to nine," Weston said. "Calculations involve adding these values and reducing (them) to a single-digit number or a number with significant digits."

Included in the core blueprint are the day, month and year of birth; "attitude number," which is the sum of the month and day; and "life path number," the sum of the month, day and year.

Keltner's day and month of birth, as well as her attitude number, are nines; her year and life path number are ones.

Weston said the nine vibration is an "assumed leadership" number where individuals find themselves in positions of authority regardless of whether or not they set out to be there. A one vibration also represents leadership and denotes a steadfast, pioneering person.

"Nines can be very direct and call others out on the carpet, Weston said. "Those with a life path number of one are like cats where they have nine lives. When it comes to illness, they're very resilient. It's no surprise (Keltner) has lived such a long life."

Road to 99

Keltner was born in Wisconsin and moved to Rockford when she was 12. She graduated from Bishop Muldoon High School and attended Rockford Female Seminary, now Rockford University, from 1936 to 1937. She and her husband, Paul, were married in 1941, and she became the office manager at New York Life Insurance from 1962 until she retired in 1985. Keltner was one of the first women in Rockford to be a certified life underwriter, Schrader said.

"That's the way I'll remember my mother when she passes away, which I'm sure will be many years yet," Schrader said. "She was a very astute businesswoman. She wasn't so much interested in being a homemaker. That was her calling, was in the business world."

And because Keltner's 99th birthday falls on 9/9, Weston would wager that Keltner continues in a leadership role among family, friends and community.

"She still has so much creativity to offer," Weston said. "People will look at her life for advice. That's where she's still a leader. ... It's a time for her to really appreciate all that she's accomplished and really take charge on things."

Guide to 'vibrations'

According to Terri Weston, a psychic and numerologist based in Burr Ridge, the numerals 1 through 9 as associated with the letters in a person's name, as well as the numbers of his or her birthday, and are considered "vibrations" that signify certain personality traits.

- 1: Leadership-oriented and steadfast
- 2: Cooperative and partnership-oriented; behind-the-scenes
- 3: Creative and moody; entertaining
- 4: Practical, pragmatic and hardworking
- 5: Fun-loving, inquisitive, sleuthlike and adventurous
- 6: Maternal/paternal, family oriented, protective and managerial
- 7: Analytical, intuitive and cautious
- 8: Business- and leadership-oriented, financially cautious
- 9: Prone to assume leadership, compassionate, humanitarian, people-pleasing and fair

MOST POPULAR STORIES

