

**METRO**

# Oldest living American woman credits belief in God for long life

By [Georgett Roberts](#) and [Alex Taylor](#)

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Alelia Murphy celebrates her 114th birthday at the Harlem State Office Building.

[Stephen Yang](#)

She was born when Theodore Roosevelt was president and Albert Einstein proposed his Theory of Relativity — and Saturday, **the oldest person in America**, Alelia Murphy of Harlem, turns a remarkable 114.

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The Post.

Murphy also never drank alcohol and grew up “down South where she used to eat homegrown food,” the nurse said.

Born in North Carolina, Murphy, a widowed mom, has called Harlem home since the 1920s.

“Oh, Lord!” Murphy exclaimed as she was wheeled into a crowded early birthday party Friday night at the Harlem State Office Building.

Decked out in a yellow dress and tiara — accessorized with a corsage, white lace gloves and a white ruffled purse — Murphy clapped along to “Happy Birthday.”

Then she nodded off for a nap in her wheelchair.

“She just told me she lives this long because she believes in God and she believes in taking good care of people,” her visiting nurse, Natalie Mhlambiso, told



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“She is still feisty,” Mhlambiso said.

“She will let you know when she wants to be left alone.”

Understandably, “she has days when she just wants to sleep,” the nurse added.

Still, her blood pressure and heart rate remain excellent.

“She eats well. She drinks well,” especially nutrition drinks, said the nurse, who for the past seven years has made twice-weekly visits to the two-bedroom public-housing apartment Murphy shares with a granddaughter and a home-health attendant.

“She doesn’t like water. She likes things that are sweet. She tells you she wants something like soda, ice cream, chocolate.”



The lucid and cheerful elder even still handwrites Christmas cards to staffers at her apartment building, neighbors said.



Natalie Mhlambiso is Alelia Murphy's visiting nurse.

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"Every year, she gives the super and the handymen Christmas envelopes with money. She writes 'Merry Christmas, Vincent' in mine," building handyman Vincent Deas told The Post.

Mhlambiso said it's been "the joy of my life as a visiting nurse" to take care of Murphy.

"I just admire her — for her to be that age and still communicating well," she said.

"She is in good health for her age, definitely!

“There are many good patients but she is different in temperament, in who she is, her distinctive age. At her age, this is rare. This is history.”

The Harlem legend became the oldest American in January upon the death of Lessie Brown, 114, of Ohio.

Murphy is the eighth oldest person in the world, according to the Gerontology Research Group, which the Guinness Book of World Records uses to help verify claims.

Only five women from Japan and another two women from France are older, the organization says.

Murphy also is one of only 33 living “supercentarians” — people aged 110 or older — in the world.

All 33 are female, and 14 of them, including the oldest person in the world, Kane Tanaka, age 116, live in Japan.

*Additional reporting by Lia Eustachewich and Laura Italiano*



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