

# Davidson graduated Taft High School in 1933

**BIRTHDAY continued**  
from front page

Chaplin's silent film classic "The Tramp" was drawing moviegoers to cinemas. She would be almost a teenager before the first feature length talking picture was released.

She still remembers when movies shown upstairs at what is now the Grand Ronde store cost 35 cents for adults and 10 cents for children.

Davidson's 100th birthday party will be held from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. Sunday, April 19, in the Elders Activity Center, 48940 Blacktail Drive. She will join Pearl Lyon as the second centenarian in the Tribe, which, according to Member Services Department Manager Penny DeLoe, has never occurred in the recorded history of the Tribe.

Lyon, who used to play dolls with Davidson when they were children, recently celebrated her 103rd birthday in February.

Interestingly, both Tribal centenarians are named after precious gems.

Davidson was born to sharpshooter "One Shot" Harry Mercier and his wife, Pearl (Hudson). She was born after brother Vernon and before siblings Vincent and Blanche.

Her memories of her childhood are a little fuzzy, but granddaughter Stephanie Wood lovingly coaxes out a memory of when Opal sat on

## If you go

### Opal Davidson's 100th birthday party

**When:** 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. Sunday, April 19

**Where:** Elders Activity Center, 48940 Blacktail Drive

**More info:** Call 503-879-2233

an upside-down apple crate in the water – probably Agency Creek – and peeled hazel switches for her grandmother Hattie Hudson. During a recent visit to Chachalu, Opal commented on the display baskets as being like those Hattie used to weave.

"I used to help peel the sticks," she recalls.

She graduated from Taft High School in 1933 and attended beauty school at Chemawa Indian School. She owned Nelscott's first beauty salon, which is featured in a Lincoln County history book. Nelscott was one of the five tiny coastal towns that merged to become Lincoln City in 1964. She later worked in a beauty salon in McMinnville where the Sage Restaurant is now located. During this time, she lived with David and Bertha LaChance.

She met her husband, Loren Davidson, when he was living at her

aunt Josephine's boarding house. They married in 1946 and had five children – sons, Gene, Harry and Loren Jr., and daughters, Terri and April. Opal raised the family in the blue house across from the Butler property on the east side of Grand Ronde Road while Loren worked in the local saw mills. Today, she has 13 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Loren walked on in 1986 after 40 years of marriage.

Opal has lived at the Tribal assisted living facility Cougar Lodge since July 2008 after residing in a foster care home in Sheridan. She is attended by Carmen Parren, who has been her caretaker for most of the last 28 years.

Opal is proud to be the eldest Mercier, descended from Francis Mercier, her grandfather who immigrated to the United States from Belgium. He lived with her when Opal was a little girl, her father being Francis' youngest son.

Today, Opal spends her mornings watching Drew Carey in "The Price Is Right," her favorite show. When asked if she likes Carey more than longtime host Bob Barker, she doesn't hesitate to retort, "I like them both."

She also enjoys watching reruns of "The Golden Girls" and "I Love Lucy."

Her walls are decorated with pictures of family members, some

recently arrived, like her fifth great-grandchild, and some long gone, like her younger brother Vincent Mercier who served in World War II and was photographed wearing his U.S. Marines dress uniform.

A tube of her favorite snack, sour cream-flavored Pringles potato chips, sits atop a dresser.

"She has four Pringles every morning without fail," Parren says.

Opal says she is looking forward to her 100th birthday party and possibly having her favorite food – coconut cream pie – which she eats every Monday during Elders' meals at Spirit Mountain Casino. She also is eagerly anticipating the mail and receiving a congratulatory letter from President Barack Obama.

Does she have a secret to living a century?

Her daughter, Terri Wood, says it probably is what she didn't do in her life that attributed to her longevity. She never smoked, never drank alcohol, never drove a car and never flew in an airplane, and, for what it's worth, beans are her favorite food.

After a series of questions about the past, such as who is the earliest president she remembers and what is the first movie she recalls seeing, an increasingly fatigued Opal looks right at the questioner and says, "It's been so long ago ... I don't remember things. I'm almost a 100, you know." ■

# 2015 CTGR Hunting Season

It's almost time...

In preparation of the 2015 hunting season please keep the following in mind:

\*All applicants must have a hunting license issued by NRD before applying for any hunt

\*All applications must be received at NRD by 5 p.m. on the deadline date

\*Applications must be legible and signed in all designated spaces

\*Name and roll numbers must be consistent with hunting license

\*Hunters under 18 years of age must have a Hunters Safety Card on file with NRD before the start of the hunting season

\*Elders wanting to transfer a tag must complete and submit a signed transfer authorization form

**Any incomplete applications will not be considered**