

From left, ca. 1926: Rubye was a teacher, Ruth owned and managed a grocery store, and Rose worked in payroll at the U.S. Treasury.



The secrets to their longevity:

Stay active. "My motto in life has been 'I'd rather wear out than rust out,'" says Ruth.

Believe in a higher power. "Faith can relieve life's stresses," says Rubye.

Eat healthy. The sisters cooked from scratch, using ingredients grown on their farm.

TOGETHER AGAIN

UNBREAKABLE BOND

Three sisters—each over a hundred years old!—reunite for the first time in over 10 years



FAMILY TIES Between them, Ruth, Rubye and Rose (from left, on April 11) have 6 kids, 15 grandkids and 28 great-grandchildren.

Ruth Branum says she feels "like Cinderella." She's not dressed in her Sunday best for a charming prince, however, but for her beloved sisters, Rubye Cox, 110, and Rose Shloss, 101. At 104 herself, Ruth says, "I never thought I would see them again. It's a dream come true."

After they had been separated by distance and health issues for over 10 years, an employee at Rose's Brookdale living facility in Sarasota, Fla., connected the sisters with Wish of a Lifetime, a group helping seniors realize their late-in-life desires. The foundation organized the reunion at Rubye's Rhode Island nursing home on April 10 and paid for the travel arrangements—even providing a private jet. "As I get older, I know that I'm going to lose them," says Rose. "And they mean everything to me."

Growing up on an Oklahoma farm, the sisters "lived very simple lives," recalls Ruth. (Their father was a farmer and they had four other siblings: three brothers and a younger sister who have all died.) Still, they witnessed most of the great changes of the century: They went from horse and buggy to cars ("Our first one was a Ford Model T," says Ruth), from gas lamps to electric light bulbs; had the first telephone in the area; and survived the Great Depression, the World Wars and the loss of their husbands. "It's been a wonderful life," Ruth says. "Being with my sisters means everything."

By Paul Chi

FROM LEFT: COURTESY FAMILIES OF RUBY, RUTH AND ROSE GAWR; CATHY WOOD

VIS