

# Living a beautiful life

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Alex Coolman

NORTHEAST GLENDALE -- Frances Frenzel had a birthday party on Sunday, and she wanted everything to be right.

She made little brownie cakes for all her guests, and she put together the flower arrangements herself: pink stargazer lilies nestled in white orchids.

“I thought, ‘I’m going to make ‘em something good,’ ” Frenzel said, chuckling at the idea.

Frenzel just turned 90, an age at which many people might consider letting someone else handle these kinds of details. But for her, the alternatives were unthinkable.

“I wasn’t going to have them eating store-bought cake,” she declared.

On a recent afternoon, Frenzel showed a visitor around her hillside home, displaying her view of the city and offering a few thoughts on more than four decades of Glendale life.

She originally lived here in 1933 with her husband, Paul. Frenzel worked at the Glendale Sanitarium and Hospital, which is now Glendale Adventist Medical Center. She recalled her time there fondly.

“It was like a beautiful hotel,” she said. “Movie stars and people would come and they would take hydrotherapy and massage.”

But the couple moved to Texas and did not return, along with their daughters Helen and Virginia, until 1955.

In her Texas years, Frenzel had become deeply interested in flowers.

And when she returned to Glendale, she brought her enthusiasm with her.

She started the World Flower Festival, an event that ran for 36 years, and served -- and continues to serve -- as publicity chairwoman of the California Garden Club. She also sat on the Los Angeles County election board for 40 years and served as president of the Los Angeles County Medical Auxiliary.

Frenzel’s passion for flowers seems to be an extension of her taste for beautiful things -- for good food and dressing well. But they’re also part of her perspective on life.

“When you’re looking at flowers and when you’re arranging flowers, you don’t have time to worry,” she said. “It’s a positive thing.”

Frenzel was born in Virginia, and the way she speaks and carries herself betrays her southern roots. Her way of purring the word “horticulture” makes that activity sound like the most delightful enterprise imaginable.

“I’ve never heard her say an unkind word,” said Fran Buchanan, a broker with Buchanan Associates, where Frenzel worked for 20 years. Beverly Brune, a recent president of the California Garden Club, had an explanation for the generous tone.

“It’s something we learn when we go to flower show school,” she said.

“When you’re looking at an arrangement, you always say something good first. I think she certainly has practiced that all through her life.”

When Frenzel takes at the city that has been her home all these years, she takes the same approach.

“It’s wonderful,” she said. “I think it’s delightful that we have changes.”

## THE FRENZEL FILE

Name: Frances Frenzel.

Age: 90.

Occupation: Poet, flower arranger, publicity chair for the California Garden Club.

Philosophy: “I’m not stopping at 90.”