



A photo of Rutledge Home Assisted Living and Memory Care provided by the Chippewa County Historical Society. The facility at 300 Bridgewater Ave. is celebrating its 100th anniversary from 3 to 9 p.m. Friday.

IF YOU GO

WHAT: The Centennial Celebration of Rutledge Home Assisted Living and Memory Care.
WHERE: 300 Bridgewater Ave.
WHEN: Friday, June 14. From 3 to 5 p.m., there will be tours, refreshment, music and a display of memorabilia. From 5 to 9 p.m. in a tent outside the building, the Rhythm Playboys will perform in concert, with brats, beer and birthday cake available.

Hannah's 100-year tribute

Edward Rutledge's idea to honor his late wife continues to be a part of Chippewa Falls a century later

By **ROD STEZER**
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By any measure, Edward Rutledge was rich. He was also heartbroken.

The native of Ireland was a lumber baron and had built a mansion on West Grand Street in Chippewa Falls.

But on Oct. 1, 1910, his wife and love of his life, Hannah M. Rutledge, died.

Ten days later, Edward Rutledge would found an institution to honor his wife. His idea that day has helped Chippewa Falls residents for 100 years.

The Rutledge Home Assisted Living and Memory Care continues to thrive in its mansion-like facility at 300 Bridgewater Ave., near one of the entrances to Irvine Park.

From 3 to 9 p.m. Friday, June 14, the Rutledge Home is throwing itself a centennial party, with tours of the facility, refreshments and live music.

Rutledge died in July 1911. The building was completed in 1912, and the first residents were admitted May 1, 1913, according to the Chippewa County Historical Society.

"You can tell it was built by a lumber baron," Rutledge business office manager Carolyn Volrath said. Volrath has worked at the Rutledge home for 26 years.

The facility is being used exactly the way Edward Rutledge wanted, said Sandy Rasmussen, dietary manager at the



PHOTOS BY ROD STETZER/THE HERALD

ABOVE: Rutledge Home Assisted Living and Memory Care. **RIGHT:** Rutledge Home employees, from left, Sandy Rasmussen, Alex Price and Carolyn Volrath relax in the home's lounge Friday.



home. "I'm sure he's a very happy man," said Rasmussen, who has worked at the home for 41 years.

Alex Price has been the director of the Rutledge Home for only 10 months. But he realizes the home is far from an ordinary home for the elderly.

"It is incredibly unique and special," he said of the facility, which is licensed for 46 apartments.

A majority, 31 of the 46, are for the memory care unit on the building's second floor. The memory care unit helps residents with dementia.

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RUTLEDGE

From A1

Uniroyal and would close in June 1992.

That's why the proceeds from the sale of food, beer and beverages at the birthday bash will go to the Alzheimer's Association Walk to End Alzheimer's, with the money staying in this area.

Elmer Raether intends to attend the celebration. The 94-year-old veteran of D-Day and the Battle of the Bulge has lived on the Rutledge's first floor since November.

"The people are friendly. They've got the patients' welfare at hand," said Raether, who was born in the town of Ludington in Eau Claire County.

Raether lived for a time in Cadott, going to grade and high school there. "It was a lot smaller than it is now," he grinned.

He worked for the Civilian Conservation Corps program in Menomonie, joined the National Guard and was shipped to the European Theatre during World War II.

After the war, he returned to Wisconsin and worked for the United States Rubber Plant in Eau Claire for 35 years, before retiring in 1980. The plant would change its name to

Raether said he enjoys living at the Rutledge. "It's working out good for me," he said, adding he enjoys the food.

There are lots of birds to watch, he said, and deer from Irvine Park sometimes drop by the area.

"They take good care of all of us," he said of the staff.

Rasmussen said the Rutledge is family oriented.

"The residents have fantastic stories they tell us. They become our family," she said.

Price said the facility has the support of its owner, Tommy Davidson.

"We just do what's right and make the right decision for our residents," he said.

And now generations of families have called the Rutledge their home.

"We get a lot of family of families," Rasmussen said.

And those family members continue to praise Edward Rutledge's majestic tribute to his wife.

"This is where the kings and queens live. I don't know how many times I've heard that," Volrath said.



Borman

Rutledge Home a home to generations

By ELIZABETH DOHMS
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Ole Borton lived as a resident in the Rutledge Home until his death in 1954.

Almost 60 years later, his great-niece Andrea Bresina sits with her mother-in-law, Dolores Bresina, in the same place that Dolores now calls home.



Dolores Bresina

Her cozy apartment, furnished with a bathroom and decorated with collages of her family, overlooks the facility's front door.

Dolores sat just outside her apartment at a round table encircled by suede, victorian-style chairs that seated her relatives.

Every few minutes, swarms of people would file past. Dolores' family was visiting during the Rutledge Home's 100-year celebration.

From 5 to 9 p.m. Friday, the Rutledge celebrated with music from the Rhythm Playboys in a tent just outside the mansion, while visitors enjoyed brats, beer and birthday cake.

Before the outdoor events, volunteers and employees gave tours of the 100-year-old building that first received residents in 1913. The home was founded by Edward Rutledge in honor of his late wife, Hannah, who died in 1910. Rutledge followed her in death a year later, before construction was completed on the mansion.

Now, the community-based

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ELIZABETH DOHMS/THE HERALD

Visitors to the Rutledge Home Assisted Living and Memory Care facility at 300 Bridgewater Ave. enjoyed hors d'oeuvres and camaraderie in the Edward Rutledge Dining Room Friday during the centennial celebration.

RUTLEDGE HOME

From A1

residential facility boasts 46 licensed rooms, 31 of which are reserved for dementia patients on the second floor, Director Alex Price said.

Supported by the steady traffic of tourists, Price said he often hears area residents say they've never visited the Rutledge.

"This is the big opportunity that everyone has been waiting for," he said.

Price added that despite certain updates to the building, like wi-fi, the additions of spa rooms and the replacement of sinks, the original structure hasn't been altered.

He said the building has a certain appeal of being home-like and comfortable, specifically with some of the redecorating on the first floor.

Betty Bresina remembers well what it used to look like.

Another of Dolores' daughters-in-law, Betty would often visit the Rutledge, where her mother lived from 1997 to 2001, just one door down from Dolores' current apartment.

Betty pointed to one room where she recalls

her mother sitting in a wheelchair against stark white walls.

"It was more like a nursing home, with white walls and tile," Betty said. "It's a black and white difference."

Now, the halls of the assisted living quarters are carpeted and the walls have been painted a neutral tone. Decorative chairs, tables adorned with flowers and historical pictures adorn the halls.

Dolores, who just celebrated her 90th birthday, said she's comfortable with her new home that she moved into three weeks prior.

"We certainly have our free time," Dolores said. "I walk the halls and (the resident assistants) play games with us."

Dolores, who was given a manicure for the first time in her life from one of the resident assistants, said there were a couple reasons for choosing the facility.

"I thought I'd be able to find my way around the building, and it looked comfortable," she said.

"It's definitely not a cookie-cutter place," Price said.