

Carlton...continued from Page 1A

decades. In 1950, Mr. Colwell and his brothers Robert and Pat Jr. started the Colwell Construction Company, which is now a third-generation business as well as a household name in Union County.

Colwell Construction has been a major influence in the county and abroad since its inception, and is responsible for the establishment of three productive quarries, the paving of countless miles of mountain road and the manufacture of more than a few buildings.

Prior to his tenure as a state representative and apart from his time as a contractor, Mr. Colwell worked for General Motors in Atlanta in the 1950s, and for a short while assumed the job of his father, Pat, who had been the Georgia Department of Transportation supervisor in Blairsville.

It was in 1965 that Mr. Colwell first became elected to the Georgia House of Representatives as a Democrat, and he maintained his seat for 31 years until his retirement in 1995, having committed three decades of his life toward furthering the causes of his constituents.

So it was with great enthusiasm that more than 200 people of the North Georgia Mountains gathered in the Junior Brackett Community Room on Monday, June 27, to celebrate Mr. Colwell's 90th birthday.

Visitors that day signed



Carlton's son Doug Colwell chats with Clyde and Sue Collins, during last week's birthday celebration for his father. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

a guestbook and left personal messages for the nonagenarian newcomer, and each took a turn sitting with Mr. Colwell to chat about old times or just to say hello and wish him a happy birthday.

"I can't believe it, I didn't think there'd be this many come," said Mr. Colwell, looking around at the dozens of people holding different conversations all about the room. "I've been around a long time, longer than I ever thought I'd be, to tell you the truth."

Mr. Colwell graduated Union County High School in 1944, and the community has since changed dramatically,

especially given how much progress arrived in the county because of his legislative and private careers.

Of course, he would not have been able to serve for as long as he did without the continued support of his constituents, many of whom were the people he grew up with and knew like they were family, though he made quite a few new friends along the road to and from the Georgia State Capitol.

"I worked hard," said Mr. Colwell. "I served 30 years in the General Assembly, and it was real rewarding. I didn't know just how much I'd miss it, but I miss it. I

don't miss the being there, but I do miss my friends, seeing them."

Added Mr. Colwell: "The people of this county have been awfully good to me. I can't repay all of them for the things they've done for me and my family."

This year marks another important milestone in the Colwell Household - he and Odetta, his wife, will celebrate their 68th wedding anniversary.

"It's been great," said Odetta, who stood proudly by her husband's side in that 90th birthday gathering - the same as she always has, since 1948. "We've been just best friends, and just always been compatible. What he likes, I like, and we've always got on together."

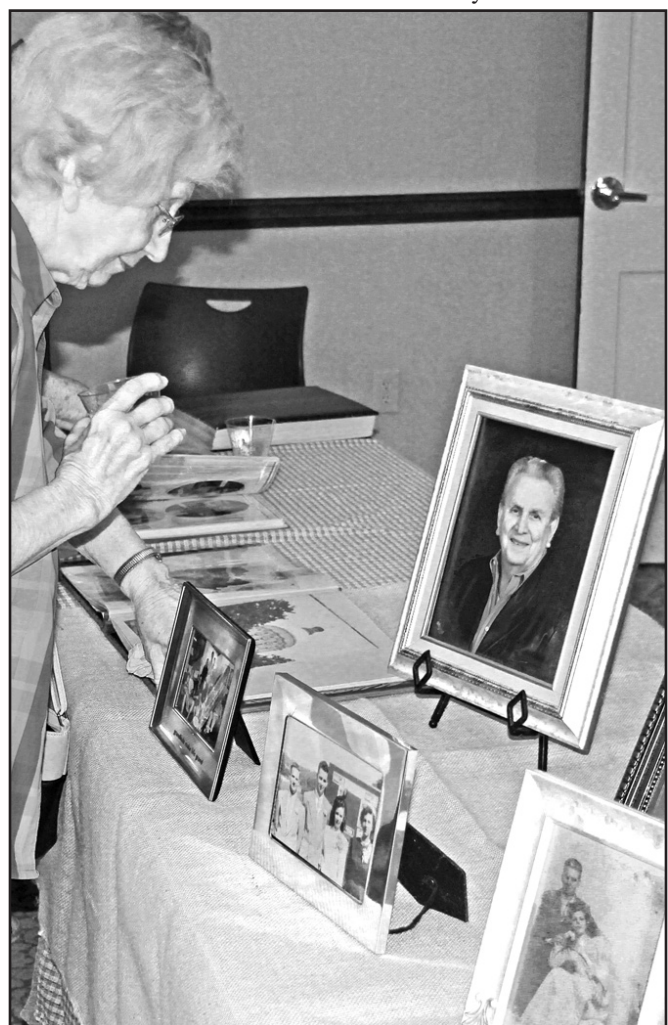
Mr. and Mrs. Colwell have five children who have given them 10 grandchildren all told, who in turn have expanded the family even further with six great-grandchildren for Carlton and Odetta.

"The family is very appreciative of the turnout and support of the people from North Georgia," said Curtis Colwell, the eldest child of Carlton and Odetta, concerning his father's 90th birthday celebration. "Several in attendance were from Gilmer, Fannin, Towns (and beyond).

"Carlton had a great day seeing friends and colleagues and visiting with them. He has always cherished gatherings, as this was where he could talk to everyone."



Left, Carlton chats with his sister-in-law Sue Colwell; right, Mary Carol Akins looks at photographs of the legendary member of the Georgia House of Representatives. Photos/Shawn Jarrard



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