

Wednesday, July 14, 2021

# Gladys Wright graduates from Paris High School at the age of 102



Submitted Photo

A 102-year-old woman is officially a high school graduate. July 7 Paris District 95 honored and celebrated Gladys Wright's graduation. She was a high school senior in 1936 when she became ill, and it was on her bucket list to get her diploma. As Gladys arrived for the ceremony she was greeted with a parade of people holding signs, cheering and the Paris Marching Band played the school's fight song. When asked what she would like to do now that she has graduated Wright replied she is thinking about getting a job, then laughed. She also encourages anyone who has not gotten their high school diploma to take courses like she did because "it's just worth it." Mayor Craig Smith proclaimed it Gladys Wright Day and she received over 200-congratulations cards from people including Governor Pritzker and other elected officials. Earlier this summer she enrolled with the Paris District 95 Adult Education Program and completed all required courses on the computer. Gladys has another big celebration just around the corner...she turns 103 next month.

## Red Cross issues safety advice for everyone to have a safe holiday

Independence Day celebrations continue after July 4 and many people plan to attend firework displays, a backyard picnic, or just enjoy the outdoors. Also, many people will enjoy the warm weather in the water, including pools, lakes and water parks. The American Red Cross recommends steps you should take to help stay safe around the water, especially during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

According to the latest guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), stay home if you are sick. If you are fully vaccinated, you can resume activities without wearing a mask or social distancing. Again, check state and local guidance.

If you are not fully vaccinated, stay at least 6 feet away, both in and out of the water, from people you don't live with. Wear a mask when you are not in the water. Wash your hands often and don't share items with people you don't live with. Information on finding a vaccine is available here.

As you head back to the water, take it slow. Give yourself and children time to reacclimate to swimming and being around the water, especially in water that is more than chest deep. Swimming skills and fitness in the water could both be a little rusty for those who have been out of the water for the last year or longer.

**Water Safety**  
 \* Designate a "water watcher" to keep a close eye

and constant attention on children and weaker swimmers in and around the water until the next water watcher takes over.

\* Always swim with a buddy in a lifeguarded area and follow the rules of the facility.

\* Provide close and constant attention to those you are supervising in the water.

\* Stay within arm's reach of young children and new swimmers.

\* Check the water depth and don't swim or play beyond your swimming abilities.

\* Children, weak or non-swimmers, and all boaters should wear a properly fitted U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket.

\* Watch the weather and get out of the water at the first sign of lightning or rumble of thunder. Stay indoors and away from the water for 30 minutes after the last lightning flashes or thunder roars.

**Beach Safety**  
 \* Swimming in the ocean, a lake or river is different than swimming in a pool. Be sure you have the skills for these environments.

\* Swim only at a beach with a lifeguard, within the designated swimming area. Obey all instructions and orders from lifeguards and ask them about local conditions.

\* Make sure you swim sober and that you always swim with a buddy.

\* Protect your neck—don't dive in headfirst. Check for water depth and obstructions and walk carefully into open waters.

\* Know your limitations and make sure you have enough energy to swim back to shore.

\* If you are caught in a rip current, try not to panic. Signal to those on shore that you need assistance. Stay calm and don't fight it. Swim parallel to the shore until you are out of the current. Once you are free, swim toward shore. If you can't swim to the shore, float or tread water until you are free of the rip current and then head toward shore.

**Water Park Safety**  
 \* Make sure lifeguards are on duty before you go in the water and follow all their instructions.

\* Wear protective clothing, including a hat and some kind of cover-up for when you've had enough sun.

\* Use waterproof sunscreen before leaving home and reapply during the day and drink plenty of fluids.

\* Read the signage at each waterpark attraction—including height, weight or age requirements, water depth, health and safety advisories, and how to safely use the attraction.

\* Parents—keep an eye on the kids. If they can't swim or are less than four feet tall, have them wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved life jacket.

\* Signal a lifeguard if you see someone is in trouble. Yell if you need to grab attention, but don't go in after the person yourself.

\* Set up a meeting place in case someone gets separated from your group. Use the

buddy system to make sure no child is alone.

**Before Heading Out:** Download the Red Cross Swim app, sponsored by The ZAC Foundation, for safety tips, kid-friendly videos and activities, and take the free Water Safety for Parents and Caregivers online course. Additional tips and resources are available at [redcross.org/watersafetyforkids](http://redcross.org/watersafetyforkids). The Red Cross also has these additional tips to help you enjoy a fun-packed, safe holiday:

**Picnic Safety**  
 \* Don't leave food out in the hot sun. Keep perishable foods in a cooler with plenty of ice or freezer gel packs.

\* Wash your hands before preparing the food.

\* If you are going to grill, always supervise when in use. Don't add charcoal starter fluid when coals have already been ignited. Use the long-handled tools especially made for cooking on the grill to keep the chef safe.

\* Never grill indoors. Keep the grill out in the open, away from the house, the deck, tree branches or anything that could catch fire.

\* Make sure everyone, including pets, stays away from the grill.

**Heat Safety**  
 \* Hot cars can be deadly. Never leave children or pets in your vehicle. The inside temperature of the car can quickly reach 120 degrees. Check on animals frequently to ensure that they are not suffering from the heat. Make sure they have plenty of cool water and shade.

\* Stay hydrated by drink-

ing plenty of fluids. Avoid drinks with caffeine or alcohol.

\* Avoid extreme temperature changes.

\* Wear loose-fitting, lightweights, light-colored clothing. Avoid dark colors because they absorb the sun's rays.

\* Check on family, friends and neighbors who do not have air conditioning, who spend much of their time alone or who are more likely to be affected by heat. If someone doesn't have air conditioning, they should seek relief from the heat during the warmest part of the day in places like schools, libraries, theaters, malls, etc.

Download the Red Cross Apps. The Red Cross app "Emergency" can help you and your loved ones safe with real-time alerts, open Red Cross shelter locations and safety devices. The Red Cross First Aid app provides instant access to information on handling the most common emergencies. Download these apps for free by searching for "American Red Cross" in your app store or at [redcross.org/apps](http://redcross.org/apps).

**Follow COVID-19 Guidelines**

Remember to review the latest COVID-19 pandemic guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) with your family before you head out.

**About the American Red Cross of Illinois**

The American Red Cross of Illinois serves 12.4 million people in 88 counties in Illinois, Iowa and Missouri

including Adams, Bond, Boone, Brown, Bureau, Carroll, Cass, Champaign, Christian, Clark, Clay, Clinton, Cook, Coles, Crawford, Cumberland, DeKalb, De Witt, Douglas, DuPage, Edgar, Effingham, Fayette, Ford, Franklin, Fulton, Green, Grundy, Hamilton, Hancock, Henderson, Henry, Iroquois, Jasper, Jefferson, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Knox, LaSalle, Lake, Lee, Livingston, Logan, Macon, Macoupin, Marion, Marshall, Mason, McDonough, McHenry, McLean, Menard, Mercer, Montgomery, Morgan, Moultrie, Ogle, Peoria, Perry, Piatt, Pike, Putnam, Richland, Rock Island, Sangamon, Schuyler, Scott, Shelby, Stark, Stephenson, Tazewell, Vermillion, Warren, Washington, Whiteside, Will, Williamson Winnebago, Woodford. Iowa: Lee, Muscatine, Scott and Van Buren. Missouri: Clark, Lewis, Marion and Ralls. The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides emotional support to victims of disasters; supplies about 40 percent of the nation's blood; teaches skills that save lives; provides international humanitarian aid; and supports military members and their families. The Red Cross is a not-for-profit organization that depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to perform its mission. For more information, please visit us at [Redcross.org/Illinois](http://Redcross.org/Illinois) or visit us on Twitter @RedCrossIL.

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