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## 98-year-old N.J. woman to receive her high school diploma

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### Nursing home resident erasing a lifelong regret

In the spring of 2009, the Adult High School of the Perth Amboy Adult Education Center was contacted by the Alameda Nursing facility in Perth Amboy regarding a patient named Ida Ruth Hayes Greene. Mrs. Greene is a 98-year-old patient at their facility. She had told everyone involved in caring for her that the only regret she had in her otherwise amazing lifetime was that she had not graduated from high school.

Well, on March 22, 2010 at 2:00 p.m. Ida Ruth Hayes Greene will fulfill her goal and receive her high school diploma at the Alameda facility.

Ida Ruth Hayes Greene was the eldest of 11 children who was given considerable responsibilities early on at her family home and farm in Colquitt, Ga. Her family owned a farm. Her mother passed away when she was young and she was required to basically become a surrogate mother to her 10 siblings. She was required to get up at 4:30 every morning and make breakfast for her father and siblings, and that was followed by tackling chores, making lunch for everyone ... including those working in the fields.

Ida Ruth's educational experience was impacted by the needs of her family and a nation at war. She often had to miss school to work in the fields or to manage additional workers needed to supply crops, etc. to American troops and citizens for the growing nation.

This was especially critical during wartime. Ida's generation knew what the word "sacrifice" meant - and she personified the meaning of grit, determination and working as a unit on behalf of her family and country. Despite hardships and a grueling schedule, she completed 10 years of primary schooling in Colquitt.

Mrs. Green took over the leadership role in her family upon the death of her father and then taught her brothers to read and manage the business after getting married.

She was married for over 60 years. She has one sister left in the U.S. that remains in Georgia who is in very poor health.

Ida has a dedicated niece, Ms. Lillie Pinckney, who visits her weekly at Alameda Nursing Home. She has been a constant force in her aunt's life — and remains her only connection to a once large and thriving family.

Nevertheless, Mrs. Green's attitude is nothing short of inspirational. She doesn't believe that racism or bias determines the fate of today's youth. She believes that each of us controls the fate of our own respective destiny and makes that abundantly clear to the students at the Perth Amboy Adult Education Center. She emphasizes the need for hard work, discipline and sacrifice. She stresses an appreciation for education that has resonated with many of the Perth Amboy students and staff.

— ANDY LAGOMARSINO, NEWJERSEYNEWSROOM.COM

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