

# Friends, family join cyclist to celebrate 101st birthday

Clair Duckham, who has been riding bicycles for 70 years, co-founded the Dayton Cycling Club.

By Chuck Smith  
Contributing Writer

5-10-07

DAYTON — When Dayton Cycling Club co-founder Clair Duckham was born on April 28, 1906, a couple of bicyclists named Orville and Wilbur Wright were perfecting their Wright Flyer on Huffman Prairie.

On April 29, Duckham left the Vandalia Recreation Center on a bicycle ride with about 50 family members and Dayton Cycling Club members — about 100 cyclists — for his 101st birthday party.

Among the riders were former Ohio Gov. Bob Taft, whose great-grandfather William Howard Taft became president in 1909, when Duckham was almost 3 years old. This year's birthday ride was the sixth time for Bob Taft.

This ride is an annual re-enactment of Sunday morning breakfast rides which Duckham and his group of Gray Wolves enjoyed for many years. It started in 1961, when Huffly Corp. CEO Horace M. Huffman Jr. suggested forming a bicycling club in Dayton. Originally a racing club of 25 members, the Dayton Cycling Club now has about 700 cyclists.

The Dayton Cycling Club has celebrated each Duckham birthday since his 90th in 1997 with a celebration following a ride to the Troy Frisch's Big Boy Restaurant. The event has become a family reunion, with Duckham children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren participating.

Duckham, formerly of Harrison Twp.



On April 29, Clair Duckham left the Vandalia Recreation Center on a bicycle ride with about 50 family members and Dayton Cycling Club members for his 101st birthday party. Contributed photo

and now living in Chicago, has been riding a bicycle for almost 70 years. He attributes his long life to cardiovascular activities like cycling and race walking.

Over the years, Duckham collected vintage bicycles as a member of the Wheelmen. He sold part of his collection and donated the rest to the Bicycle Museum of America in New Bremen.

Taft, now 65, said, "We are all kids compared to Clair!" He added that Duckham is a great example of what regular physical exercise can do for the human body.