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My name is Patricia Farley and I now live in Scarborough, Maine.

Ten years of my life have been profoundly shaped by the incredible care my father received in his own home in Orono, Maine. He passed away just three days shy of his 103rd birthday, a remarkable milestone for a man who had lived a full and dedicated life. He was a retired Brigadier General from the Maine Air National Guard and a Colonel in the USAF, a veteran of both World War II and the Korean War – a true pillar of strength and independence.

When my mother passed away suddenly when he was 93, a wave of concern washed over me. As his only child, living three hours away, I could only be there on weekends. The thought of him being completely alone in that house weighed heavily on my heart. True to his nature, Dad stubbornly insisted he didn't need anyone. But I explained it wasn't just about him; it was about my peace of mind too. I needed to know someone would check in on him a few times a week, offer a helping hand with a meal or an errand, or simply keep him company.

Those initial few hours of care gradually increased as the years passed. Dad needed more assistance with daily tasks – dressing, showers, preparing meals. It was such a comfort to me to witness the professionalism and compassion of the various caretakers who came into his life. Their company had clearly provided excellent training, as they capably handled every aspect of his increasing needs. More than just caregivers, they became his companions, his friends. The few hours a day eventually grew to more than eight, and they were there to take him to doctor appointments, to the pharmacy, anywhere he needed to go.

His days were filled with more than just essential care. He continued to enjoy his passions. I'd often hear stories of him painting vibrant landscapes, engaging in intense chess matches, or even enthusiastically playing Xbox Golf and other games with his caretakers. Sundays were always special, with the whole family connecting through our weekly Zoom calls. For those last ten years, his world, while centered in his home, was rich with the presence of his family and these dedicated individuals. He was adamant about not going into a nursing home, a decision I fully supported. Having these capable and caring individuals allowed him to live out his life with dignity and pride in the familiar surroundings he loved.

Looking back, I truly believe that the consistent presence of these well-trained and compassionate caretakers not only made his final years more comfortable and enjoyable but very likely extended his life. Their dedication gave me immeasurable peace of mind, knowing my father was not just cared for, but cherished, right until the very end.