

= Jeanne Calment =

Jeanne Louise Calment (French pronunciation : ? [?an lwiz kalm? ?] ; 21 February 1875 ? 4 August 1997) was a French supercentenarian who has the longest confirmed human lifespan on record , living to the age of 122 years , 164 days . She lived in Arles , France , for her entire life , outliving both her daughter and grandson by several decades . Calment became especially well known from the age of 113 , when the centenary of Vincent van Gogh 's visit brought reporters to Arles . Her lifespan has been thoroughly documented by scientific study .

= = Early life = =

Calment was born in Arles on 21 February 1875 . Her father , Nicolas Calment (28 January 1838 ? 22 January 1931) , was a shipbuilder , and her mother , Marguerite Gilles (20 February 1838 ? 18 September 1924) , was from a family of millers . She had an older brother , François (25 April 1865 ? 1 December 1962) . Some of her close family members also lived an above @-@ average lifespan , although none lived anywhere near as long as Jeanne : her older brother François lived to the age of 97 , her father to six days shy of 93 , and her mother to 86 .

= = Personal life = =

In 1896 , at the age of 21 , she married her double second cousin , Fernand Nicolas Calment , a wealthy store owner . Their paternal grandfathers were brothers , hence the same surname , and their paternal grandmothers were also sisters . His wealth made it possible for Calment never to have to work ; instead she led a leisured lifestyle , pursuing hobbies such as tennis , cycling , swimming , rollerskating , piano , and opera . Fernand died in 1942 at the age of 73 after suffering from a bout of food poisoning .

Their only child , a daughter named Yvonne Marie Nicolle Calment (19 January 1898 ? 19 January 1934) , produced a grandson , Frédéric Billiot , on 23 December 1926 . Yvonne died on her 36th birthday from pneumonia , after which Calment raised Frédéric herself . Frédéric became a doctor , but died at age 36 in an automobile accident on 13 August 1963 .

In 1965 , at age 90 and with no heirs , Calment signed a deal to sell her apartment to lawyer André @-@ François Raffray , on a contingency contract . Raffray , then aged 47 years , agreed to pay her a monthly sum of 2 @,@ 500 francs (? 381 @.@ 12) until she died . Raffray ended up paying Calment the equivalent of more than ? 140 @,@ 000 which was more than double the apartment 's value . After Raffray 's death from cancer at the age of 77 , in 1995 , his widow continued the payments until Calment 's death . During all these years , Calment used to say to them that she " competed with Methuselah " .

= = Recognition = =

In 1985 , Calment moved into a nursing home , having lived on her own until age 110 . Her international fame escalated in 1988 , when the centenary of Vincent van Gogh 's visit to Arles provided an occasion to meet reporters . She said at the time that she had met Van Gogh 100 years before , in 1888 , as a thirteen @-@ year @-@ old girl in her father 's fabric shop , where he wanted to buy some canvas , later describing him as " dirty , badly dressed and disagreeable " , and " very ugly , ungracious , impolite , sick " . Calment recalled selling coloured pencils to Van Gogh , and seeing the Eiffel Tower being built . At the age of 114 , she appeared briefly in the 1990 film Vincent and Me as herself , becoming the oldest actress ever to appear in a motion picture .

A documentary film about her life , entitled Beyond 120 Years with Jeanne Calment , was released in 1995 . In 1996 , Time 's Mistress , a four @-@ track CD of Calment speaking over a background of rap , was released . On her 122nd birthday on 21 February 1997 , it was announced that she would make no more public appearances , as her health had seriously deteriorated . Jean @-@ Marie Robine , the French demographer and gerontologist , said that this " allowed her to die , as

the attention had kept her alive . " She died on 4 August of that same year of unknown causes .

Both before and after Calment 's death , there have been several claims to have surpassed her age (see Unverified longevity claims) , but none of these have been proven and Calment therefore continues to hold the record for the oldest verified person ever .

= = Record breaking = =

After her 1988 interview , at age 113 , Calment was given the Guinness title " world 's oldest living person " . However , in 1989 , the title was withdrawn and given to Carrie C. White of Florida , who claimed to have been born in 1874 , although this has been discounted by subsequent census research . On White 's death on 14 February 1991 , Calment , then a week shy of 116 , became the oldest recognized living person .

On 17 October 1995 , Calment reached 120 years and 238 days to become the " oldest person ever " according to Guinness , surpassing Shigechiyo Izumi of Japan , whose claim (120 years 237 days old at the time of his death on 21 February 1986 , Calment 's 111th birthday) was discounted in February of 2011 , more than thirteen years after Calment 's death .

= = Health and lifestyle = =

Calment 's remarkable health presaged her later record . At age 85 (1960) , she took up fencing , and continued to ride her bicycle up until her 100th birthday (1975) . She was reportedly neither athletic nor fanatical about her health . Calment lived on her own until shortly before her 110th birthday , when it was decided that she needed to be moved to a nursing home after starting a small fire in her house , caused by a cooking accident , which has been attributed to complications with sight . However , Calment was still in good shape , and continued to walk until she fractured her femur during a fall at age 114 years 11 months (January 1990) , which required surgery .

It has been claimed that Calment smoked cigarettes from the age of 21 (1896) to 117 (1992) . According to one source , she smoked no more than two cigarettes per day . After her operation , Calment needed to use a wheelchair . In 1994 , age 119 , she weighed 45 kilograms (99 lb) .

Calment ascribed her longevity and relatively youthful appearance for her age to a diet rich in olive oil (which she also rubbed onto her skin) , as well as a diet of port wine , and ate nearly one kilogram (2 @. @ 2 lb) of chocolate every week . She also credited her calmness , saying , " That 's why they call me Calment . " Calment reportedly remained mentally intact until her very end .

= = Death = =

On 4 August 1997 , around 10 AM Central European Time , Calment died at age 122 of natural causes . After her death , 116 @-@ year @-@ old Marie @-@ Louise Meilleur became the oldest recognized living person .

= = Verification = =

Exceeding any other longevity case reported , Calment establishes the record as the most @-@ verifiable supercentenarian ever recorded . Beginning with the 1876 census (Calment is listed as a one @-@ year @-@ old) , she was indexed within fourteen census documents until 1975 (conducted sometime after she celebrated her 100th birthday) . She was still managing independently at the time .