

Taxi driver was left a big tip

By Luke Salkeld

- 1 As a taxi driver with almost 30 years' experience under his seatbelt, Don Pratt has plenty of tips of the trade. But perhaps the best advice he could give is that it pays to be nice to your customers. Mr Pratt, 65, has now retired from the taxi rank after a regular passenger left him more than 250,000 pounds in her will. Mary Watson, who died in December aged 86, had been a customer of Mr Pratt's for two decades when she lived in Newquay. And on the evidence of her final tip, he always went the extra mile. Mrs Watson, who is understood not to have had any close family, left everything she had to Mr Pratt.
- 2 Yesterday the ex-cabbie, who is planning to travel around Britain in his retirement, said: 'She was always a good tipper in life and she was an even better tipper when she went.' The father of four added: 'I knew Mary for 20 years. She was a very nice lady and was always very generous. We would always have a good chat while I ferried her around. One day she said to me, "when I pass on, I'll look after you". I took it with a pinch of salt at the time – I had no idea she was going to leave me a fortune. When I was told she had left everything to me, I just couldn't believe it. We were sad to hear she had passed on but thankful she had left us this money. We are very grateful for her generosity. In nearly 30 years as a cabbie, this is certainly the biggest tip I've ever had.'
- 3 Mr Pratt, who is married to Gill, 63, took Mrs Watson to the shops every day until a few years ago when she moved to Northampton. He said: 'She later went into a care home and we lost contact. But obviously she remembered me and left me one last big tip. She left me everything. I'm not sure what family she had or how they feel about it but the solicitor was clear that she wanted me to have what she left behind. This money means that we can retire and go travelling. I've had a great time being a taxi driver. I've been all over the country driving people. I'm going to miss them. Mary was a very nice person, everybody liked her and at her funeral I heard so many people say lovely things about her.'
- 4 Mrs Watson spent the last two years of her life at the Argyle House care home in Northampton. A spokesman said: 'Mary was a lovely lady and all the staff and guests were very fond of her. We didn't know anything about her leaving money to the taxi driver but there was a whole side to her life we didn't know about. It's a very generous thing to do and he obviously had a great impact on her. He must have been a very good driver.'



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