



Myrtle Frances Clark Gibson died April 26, 2007 in her home at Aspen Pointe in Bozeman, Montana. She was born April 16, 1918 in Owensboro, Kentucky, the daughter of Otis Clark and Delia Belle French Clark.

Her earliest years in her farm-family were idyllic, with summer sun and play with older sister Georgie Mae and family additions with the births of her brother Walter, sister Nora Louise Clark (now Moseley living in Fairfield Glade, TN), and Elva Lee Clark (now Lanning living in Highland, IN). That changed abruptly when she was 9 with the deaths in 1926 of Georgie and a few months later her father. Delia gave birth in March 1927 to Otis Eugene "Gene" Clark four months after his father's death. The Depression years were financially difficult but full of healthy farm food and shared chores.

In 1942, her sister Louise was in Detroit and married to Urey Moseley. Myrtle moved there to work in the Packard Automotive Plant, which had been converted to build airplane parts for the war effort. At the plant, Myrtle met John David Gibson (Jack), a tall hunk of a guy with a big smile who would shortly enter the Navy. They married Jan. 23, 1943 in Toledo, Ohio. She moved with him to make their home near his postings in Yorktown, VA and then McAlester, OK. In McAlester their daughter Kathleen Frances Gibson (now Scanlon) was born Jan. 14, 1945. Following the war, they moved to Dearborn, MI, where Jack's Navy experience got him a job at the Ford Motor Company. Daughter Carol Ann Gibson (now Flaherty) was born in Dearborn Jan. 22, 1949. Family vacations centered on small Michigan towns where Jack knew the fly-fishing was good and where the girls could swim and fish in nearby shallow lakes. Myrtle also spent many hours volunteering, and logged about 30 years as a volunteer with the Muscular Dystrophy Campaign as worker and area organizer.

Myrtle's Michigan life revolved around family to such a degree that she sought refuge in bowling with the Ford Wive's Club in the 1950s and 1960s. That was the one place at that time where, she said, she was "just Myrtle, not Jack's wife or Kathy and Carol's mother."

After Kathleen married Richard Scanlon in 1975 in Dearborn, Myrtle and Jack's Michigan years were enriched by many visits with Kathy and Rick's daughters Roberta Shawn Scanlon (now Reynard of Topeka, KS), Darlene Renee Scanlon (now Wilkins of Bahama, NC) and Shannon Marie Scanlon (now Fick of Harietta, MI).

When Myrtle and Jack retired to Lake Havasu City, AZ in 1979, it seemed that everything grew brighter. Church, always important to Myrtle, became important to Jack, and they both helped St. Michael's United Methodist Church grow from 15 members to hundreds. After Jack died in 1982, Myrtle expanded her work for the church, among other things, acting as evangelism chairperson for eight years and becoming a Stephen's Minister after taking its extensive training.

Largely because of the fly-fishing, but also because Carol lived in Bozeman, MT with her husband, Dr. Robert Flaherty, Jack and Myrtle began spending summers in Bozeman, a tradition Myrtle continued after Jack's death Dec. 9, 1982 in Lansing, Michigan. On the drive to Montana one spring, Myrtle mentioned that she knew little about her father, so Carol and Myrtle stopped at the LDS Genealogy Library. Almost the first book Myrtle took from the Kentucky shelves included information about Delia French and her parents Gregory Louis French and Victoria Russell French. Within a few years, Myrtle had joined the Daughters of the American Revolution and eventually identified 26 ancestors who had either performed military or support service during the Revolutionary War.

In addition to the children and grandchildren named, Myrtle is survived by seven great-grandchildren. Her life was recently enriched by a visit from her brother Gene's children: Numa Clark Barnes of Alamo, CA and Sabrina Clark Westbrook of Peshastin, WA.

Myrtle never looked back, only forward. Her dual guides seemed to be an unswerving determination to do what was right and a belief in Jesus and His resurrection. She knew she wasn't perfect, but trusted in God's forgiveness. Even as the end came near, she prayed not for health and a return to a young body but for God to "take her home" to a new beginning.

A memorial service will be held at 3 pm Tuesday at the Bozeman United Methodist Church. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that contributions be made to the Gallatin Community Clinic, Bozeman United Methodist Church or Bozeman Deaconess Hospice.