

Cleo Gibson

by Cheryl Morris, Coordinator, Nevada County Branch Charitable Trust

In the midst of this very strange time, the Nevada County Branch has received a wonderful surprise. One of our past presidents (1996), Cleo Gibson, named the Charitable Trust as one of the beneficiaries of her estate.

Those who knew Cleo remember her as a dedicated activist who was very proud of her AAUW membership and service. She was also a long-time member of The League of Women Voters and a passionate supporter of animal welfare organizations. She was smart, outspoken and quick to take on a leadership role in any organization that interested her.

A woman ahead of her time, Cleo graduated from UC Berkeley in 1950 with a degree in political science. She was involved in management with both Montgomery Ward and the Emporium-Capwell company, whose flagship department store in San Francisco dated back to the late 1800's. Among other things, she developed a program to enhance job skills for women. Very practically, she knew Spanish and was able to negotiate with delivery people.

Cleo was married many years to Gerry, a civil engineer. When they moved to Nevada County, Gerry designed and supervised the building of their home. This was Cleo's little piece of paradise; she loved the woods, the wildlife, and the house itself. After Gerry's passing she remained there with the help of a caregiver until her health necessitated a move to Cascades of Grass Valley. She continued with the same dedicated caregiver, and Branch members Marty Austin and Jennifer Wilkerson were instrumental in supporting her wish to live as independently as possible.

Both Cleo and Gerry were strong believers in the value of public service and an active and informed citizenry. They were also interested in and proud of the history and culture of Grass Valley and Nevada City.

In addition to the bequest to the Charitable Trust, Cleo also named AAUW National as a beneficiary. The Branch will receive \$446,000. The bequest to National will be approximately \$500,000. We are touched and inspired by this unexpected act of generosity and will use Cleo's gift in the most meaningful and lasting ways we can.



Cleo Gibson, circa 2003