



Marie J. Gibson PhD

May 22, 1937 - March 16, 2026

Marie J. Gibson, Ph.D. (1937–2026)

Marie J. Gibson, 88, of Bend, Oregon, passed away peacefully in her sleep on March 16, 2026. A pioneering scientist, a devoted mother, and a beloved friend, Marie leaves behind a legacy defined by intellectual brilliance and an unwavering commitment to her family.

Early Life and Love

Born in Manhattan on May 22, 1937, to John and Marie McAvoy, Marie was raised in Brooklyn alongside her sister, Carol, surrounded by a large, vibrant, extended family. A natural scholar, Marie earned scholarships to Marymount Manhattan College, though she made the difficult decision to leave after her freshman year to help support her family.

It was during this time that she became engaged to the love of her life, Joseph “Pat” Gibson. The two had met on a blind date two years prior and were married on September 1, 1956. Their marriage would span 61 years of deep devotion until Pat’s passing in 2018.

A Journey of Ambition

Marie worked to support Pat, while he finished his senior year at Hobart College in Geneva, New York, where their first child was born. Their move to Queens, NY, was soon followed by a second and third child. When that third child was two, Marie first returned to night school. In 1963 Pat’s career

allowed them to purchase their longtime family home in Nutley, New Jersey. Despite the demands of a large household that soon grew to include five children, with Pat's steadfast support, Marie continued her studies via night classes, eventually graduating from Rutgers in Psychology. From end to end hers was a twenty year undergraduate program.

Marie immediately transitioned to full-time graduate work at the Institute of Animal Behavior at Rutgers University. Her determination culminated in a Ph.D. in Psychobiology and launched a distinguished career in Reproductive Neuroendocrinology. As a Professor of Medicine and Neurobiology at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine, Dr. Gibson became a world-renowned figure in her field. Her seminal research on GnRH neurons and neural grafts provided groundbreaking insights into reversing reproductive deficits – work that remains a cornerstone of endocrine science.

Excellence and Mentorship

Beyond her research, Dr. Gibson was a pillar of the Mount Sinai community. She served as Chair of the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) and was a respected mentor to generations of graduate students and fellows. Her accolades were many, including being named Mount Sinai's Endocrinologist of the Year (1989) and receiving the Distinguished Research in Medicine Award. She served as a member of various NIH study sections and peer-review committees, as well as editorial reviewer for numerous scientific journals.

Retirement years in Bend

Retirement in Bend marked the beginning of a rebirth of sorts for Marie and Pat in 2000, with time to explore a new landscape via hiking groups, kayaking, snowshoeing, and grandparenting. And Marie also worked to improve the lives of the people around her. She co-founded the non-profit Hunger Prevention Coalition, raising, over the course of two decades, more than one million dollars; she served on many boards and committees, including the St.

Charles Hospital Bioethics Committee and the board of Family Kitchen, which feeds both the working and the houseless hungry; she co-chaired the Trinity Episcopal Outreach Committee with Pat; and she continued to be an active member of the League of Women Voters. In 2019, Marie moved to Touchmark where she found many old friends and made many new ones through her intellectual and social involvement.

Family and Legacy

While her professional life was marked by discovery, her personal life was anchored by her family. She is survived by her five children and their families, who carry forward her spirit of curiosity and kindness: Cathy Wilken (and husband Kent, parents of Tyler and Matthias); Rob Gibson Cairns (and wife Deidra, parents of Niko and Eli); Anne Gibson (and partner Frank Brown, and her children, Joe Reitz and Maddie Reitz); Stephen Gibson (and wife Erin Elman, parents of Izzy Gibson); and David Gibson (and wife Anita, parents of Kalina and Shailen); as well as her sister-in-law, Mary B. Gibson.

She was predeceased by her husband of 61 years, Joseph “Pat” Gibson, who died in 2018, her younger sister Carol Rolewski, in 2023, and her grandson Philip Francis Reitz in 1998.

Marie was a woman who proved it was possible to be both a cherished grandmother and a highly accomplished scientist without compromising the heart of either. Her presence will be deeply missed by the scientific community, her many friends, and the family who adored her.

Memorial Gifts may be sent to:

- Family Kitchen, PO Box 982, Bend, OR 97709

<https://www.familykitchen.org/donate>

- Latino Community Association, 2680 NE Twin Knolls Drive, #110, Bend, OR 97701

<https://latinocommunityassociation.org/donate/>

- Breakthrough T1D (Formerly JDRF), Po Box 5042, Hagerstown, MD 21741-

5042,

<https://www.breakthrough1d.org/>

Niswonger-Reynolds Funeral Home, Bend, Oregon, was honored to serve the family.

Tribute Wall

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“ *What a great person to know and grow up with. Passing by 125 High on a regular basis has even more deep meaning now for me. A friend to my Mom, my other mother, and an inspiration growing up. Silly moments I remember often.....Christmas cookies, me sitting by the phone on Christmas nights waiting to hear that dinner was over and me and my mom could come up for dessert . Sitting around the table at Christmas night . I know it was a true pleasure for my Mom as well. She also taught me Arnold bread and grilled cheese with Worcestershire sauce , which I have even now. Peace and love .thank you for including us in your lives.*

Chris Freudenreich - March 31 at 12:44 PM



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Niswonger Reynolds Funeral Home & Greenwood Cemetery - March 30 at 02:00 PM