

Westbrook

Featured Resident



Mildred Self

Mildred was born in Moberly, MO, to Charlie and Helen Lawrence. She was the middle child of five with two brothers and two sisters. Both of her parents worked at the shoe factory in Moberly. When Mildred was ten, her mother was pregnant with her youngest sister. Because of this, their family had a phone by doctor's orders. Mildred would stay overnight with a neighbor who had a severe case of asthma. That way if she had an attack in the night, Mildred could run home and use the phone to call the doctor out. Mildred said that she couldn't sleep because of the noises the neighbor lady made, but she still had to go to school the next day. Mildred was basically in charge of taking care of her baby sister after school and during the summers, as well as fixing the noon meal for her siblings. When Mildred had the opportunity, she loved to go roller skating at the local skating rink. She graduated high school and attended nursing school at the University of Kansas City on a scholarship.

A year and a half into nursing school, the shoe factory shut down in Moberly. Mildred quit school and went back to work at the hospital near home. She was able to go to Jefferson City and take her state boards to become an LPN, which allowed her to make more money. She switched jobs and went to work at Children's Mercy Hospital in the OR.

On a weekend trip home to visit some nursing friends, Mildred's life changed. They were invited to Kirksville to visit some of the student doctors. It was New Year's Eve and on their way home, they got lost. They drove around and around and stumbled upon a barn dance. The music was loud and inviting so they decided to crash the party. Mildred walked into the barn, spied a young man across the room and that was it. She spent the rest of the evening sitting on hay bales talking with Glenn Self. They dated a year and a half and married in 1957.

They settled down in LaPlata, MO, Glenn's hometown, where he had a job at a hatchery. His brother had a hatchery and convinced Glenn to go to work for him and so they moved to Trenton. In 1958, their daughter, Beth, was born. When she was six weeks old, they moved to Kansas City by train. They lived in a third floor apartment and Glenn went to work for the Post Office. In 1960, Chuck was born. Because he was a 10lb baby and Mildred was only 98lbs, she was paralyzed for three days after his birth and told that she'd never have any more children. However, in 1973, Joe was born. When Chuck was starting college, Joe was starting kindergarten. Mildred was room mother for all her children, volunteered two days a week in the school library and sold school supplies before school. The family attended church regularly and were charter members at North Star United Methodist in Liberty.

When Beth was getting ready to start kindergarten, they moved to a three room house then to a tri-level and finally a settled in a ranch style home all in Claycomo. Glenn worked for the post office for thirty-three years, retiring in 1992. They traveled to see Chuck and his wife, Ann, in the various southern states that they lived including Kentucky, Texas, Florida, Georgia and North Carolina.

In 2000, Beth passed away due to complications from diabetes. She had been diagnosed ten years earlier and had a decade of many complications and inability to work. Mildred, who had already been caring for her two grandsons, Billy and Jarrod, took them into her home and finished raising them as her own. She was room mother for them just as she had been for her own children.

Glenn passed away in 2003 from cancer. Mildred continued to live in their Claycomo home. However, with failing health, she became unable to take care of herself or her home. Chuck started looking at independent living facilities in the area. When he met Steve and Amy and saw Westbrook, he knew it was the place for Mildred. She moved here in February of this year. She says that she has never been a social person, but that is changing. She is currently the reigning spelling bee champion. She says the best thing about living here is the owners, staff and residents. Everybody is very helpful. Her words of advice are "You'd better be nice to people or it will come back to bite you. It never pays to be mean or hateful with people." Her family includes Chuck and Ann, their two children – Ashley and Travis(Krissie), Joe and Ziva and the grandsons she raised, Billy and Jarrod.

Always a ton of activities to participate in! My mom is at Westbrook and she is always busy with her friends. I love that she is enjoying herself.—Jackie T

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