



Witnesses to the marriage included John Dzuris, Dean Plese, and Lucille's two sisters, Madonna and Margie. As her sister Marilyn had three young children then, she decided to mind the children during the ceremony and the day.



Lucille and Joe spent their entire married life in Coal City, devoting themselves to each other and the community they served. Lucille created a long-lasting legacy as an excellent educator. With perfect posture, remarkable poise, and impeccable style, Lucille was a commanding influence who insisted on her students' best and encouraged each and every student to embrace their greatness. For over thirty years, Lucille's tremendous care and exceptional talent inspired many generations of learners to communicate effectively and confidently face life's challenges.



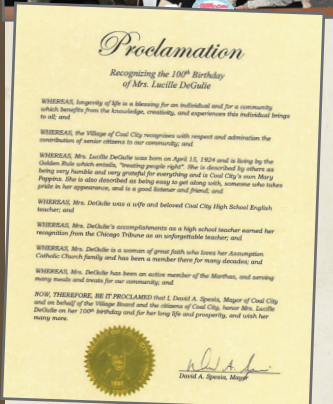
In 1998 Lucille and Joe built a new house on two lots the bought from Kay DiPaolo on Third Street in Coal City. Lucille designed the home from a magazine design. They hired Greg Lyons for architect work and Gary Grskovic as their builder. When Peggy O'Connor from Wilmington who married Kevin Feeney from Morris, wanted to settle in Coal City, they became Lucille's godsend neighbors and very much family to her.

After Joe announced that he was ready to retire, Lucille realized that if he wasn't going to be at school, she was ready, too. The couple retired from teaching in 1983, which proved a wise decision as Lucille's mother required additional care and support. Lucille and Joe welcomed Lucille's mother into their home, where Lucille ensured she was well cared for. The first few days, her mother hallucinated terribly. Dr. Smyk came over at Lucille's request and visited every day until her mother died on an April day at the age of 89 years old.



As a devout Catholic, Lucille was an active member of Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Catholic Church in Coal City. Always willing to lend her time and talents, she served as a Martha, was a lector and extraordinary eucharistic minister, served on the parish council, and participated in the church community's ministry of care.

On April 15, 2024 Lucille celebrated her 100th birthday in the good company of family, friends, and students. The special occasion was marked by a Proclamation by the Coal City Village Board, which proclaimed her Coal City's Mary Poppins. With signature style, Lucille humbly lived by the Golden Rule, ensuring everyone in her care was treated with respect, loved, and knew their value. Those were the cornerstones of the beautiful legacy that will continue to live on in the many lives Lucille touched and inspired throughout her long and wonderful life.



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Lucille Plese DeGulie

April 15, 1924 - September 2, 2026



Lucille's Life Story

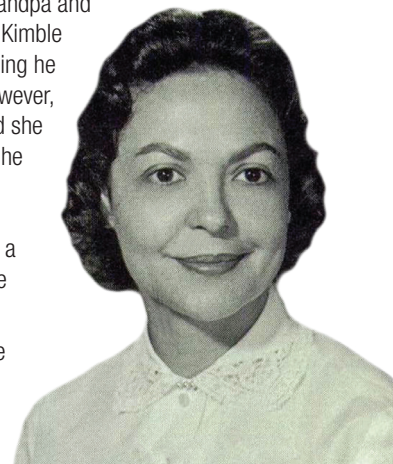
With unwavering passion, tremendous wisdom, and a loving heart, Lucille DeGulie continues to live a life rich in family and friends. Throughout the past century, Lucille has embodied the principles of her faith, welcoming each day as a gift and every person as a friend. As an educator, colleague, and friend, Lucille's generous care and unflappable commitment to excellence proves to be a powerful inspiration for all who are blessed to cross her path. A devoted wife, sister, aunt, teacher, and friend, Lucille continues to leave an indelible mark on all those privileged to be a part of her life.

The 1920s were an age of dramatic social and political change. Post-war peace, a booming economy, rising wages for most Americans, and falling consumer prices gave rise to a higher standard of living for most. The world quickly changed with the inventions of washing machines, vacuum cleaners, the band-aid, and the first automobile with a combustion engine. Tremendous confidence, prosperity, and previously unknown comforts marked this roaring decade when a person's success was largely determined by their ability to identify their desires and then work to make them a reality. Locally, this vibrant decade grew even brighter as John J. and Margaret (nee Berta) Plese welcomed their daughter Lucille to their family on April 15, 1924, in Wilmington, Illinois

Born on the Plese family farm on West River Road, Lucille lived with her parents and paternal grandfather on the farm that had been established in 1900. She was baptized in St. Rose Catholic Church in Wilmington, with Henry Berta and Mary Berta as her godparents. Lucille enjoyed growing up with her siblings, James, Marilyn, Leo, Madonna, Dean, and Margaret.

Once, while her mother was preparing supper and her grandfather was watching her, Lucille got into a little of the "home brew" that Grandpa and his friends had. When she started convulsing, Dr. Kimble was called. He told the family that there was nothing he could do and that they were going to lose her. However, Dr. Kimble stayed by her side the entire night, and she miraculously recovered. From that scary time on, he remained her dearest buddy. They would fish and hunt together, and he made blackbird pie for her when she was in grade school. Dr. Kimble proved a tremendous influence on Lucille. As she told it, he was much more than a "family friend at a meal."

Growing up on the river, Lucille fondly recalled the family's property was sheltered beyond the walkable farm/river.



As it was a prime place to fish, people paid 50 cents a day to fish there. Sometimes visitors from Chicago would bring a tent and stay the weekend. One family who left an impression was a Jewish family. Hosting these guests was how the family learned respect for and an appreciation of diversity.

Lucille attended Reed Custer High School where she was a cheerleader and served on the student council. As her mother had good taste and told her to buy something that wouldn't go out of style, Lucille wore a plaid jacket in brown, beige, and burnt orange that was probably bought in Joliet for serving on the student council.

On December 6, 1941, when Lucille was 17 years old, a warplane crash-landed in the icy Kankakee River behind the family's farm. The plane was stuck, and the Plese family welcomed the crew to their home. The next day, while the rest of the family tended to the crew, Lucille was out of the house and learned about the attack on Pearl Harbor. When she returned home, she shared the awful news with her family and the crew. As the crew needed to wait for the river to thaw and the plane repairs to be completed, they stayed with the Plese family until mid-April 1942, sleeping in the summer cottage along the river. Lucille fondly remembered how cooking for their family, and additional guests never seemed hard for her mother. Becoming local celebrities, the men on the crew were down-to-earth guys, and several of them kept in touch with the family in later years.

After graduating with the class of 1942, Lucille studied sociology at the University of Illinois. She graduated with her degree in 1946 and worked for a time with Catholic Charities in Joliet. The work conditions proved discouraging, so Lucille decided to pursue a career as a teacher later that year.

She began her teaching career at Mount Zion, south of Decatur. Two years later, she taught in El Paso for two years. She taught at Somonauk for a year, then in Arthur, Illinois, for a year, where she had senior class and loved the area. The following year, she was hired by Mr. Pete DiPaolo in Coal City. When he called Lucille to offer her the job, her mother answered the phone and told him she would give Lucille the message. She was sure that because their family was in Coal City, Lucille would be easily convinced to return home to teach.

Not only did Lucille discover her forever teaching home at Coal City High School, but she also met her husband there. As the story goes, as the agriculture teacher, Mr. Joe DeGulie, never said much, Lucille was initially less than impressed. However, when she found herself struggling to get enough volunteers for the prom set-up one year, Joe ended up being her biggest help. After the prom, he asked to take her for a ride and out to get a bite to eat. In little time, the couple began planning a future together.

Consummate professionals Lucille and Joe kept their courtship impeccably discreet at school. However, their students were thrilled when they married! Lucille and Joe exchanged their marriage vows on August 8, 1964, in St. Rose Catholic Church and celebrated their wedding at Lucille's parents' farm.

