



## Arlene F DeGonia

November 25, 1935 - July 17, 2022

Arlene F. DeGonia, age 86, passed away after a heroic fight with cancer on Sunday, July 17, with family by her side. Arlene was born on November 25, 1935 in Festus, Missouri to the late Gilbert and Verna (Govero) Simms. She graduated from Festus High School with Honors, and from Southeast Missouri State University with a Bachelor's of Science Degree in Education, and a Master's of Education Degree with Academic Distinction. Arlene was a teacher for 2 years at Hillsboro High School, and for 33 years at the Crystal City School District, guiding her students to a quest for knowledge and a love for learning. She taught in a variety of capacities including Junior High Girls' Physical Education, Middle School Physical Education, Kindergarten, 2nd Grade, 5th grade, 6th grade, 7th and 8th grade Science and for most of the years, 1st Grade. Arlene also coached the Junior High Volleyball Team for over 18 years. Arlene was a member of Arnold Church of Christ, and also enjoyed attending Twin City Church of Christ where she was a member of the Ladies' Tuesday Bible Study class.

Arlene was a member of the Missouri Retired Teacher's Association and the Jefferson County Retired National Educator's Association (JCREA) and served in a variety of leadership positions in these organizations. Arlene was also an active member of the Twin City Area Optimist Club for over 20 years, Friends of Festus Library and SAVE (Jefferson County Sheriff's Alumni Volunteer Echelon). She enjoyed serving the community alongside her friends in these organizations. Arlene and her late husband John lived an

adventurous life; traveling and camping throughout the United States with family and friends. Two years in a row they received recognition for visiting all Missouri State Parks and Historical Sites. Arlene also enjoyed jewelry making, painting, rock hunts and singing in a variety of community choral singing groups throughout the years. She looked forward to visiting with her classmates and friends, and met them regularly for meals and conversation. She loved seeing her past students in the community, and hearing about their lives. She was a teacher of the mind and heart, and a friend to all. In 2021, Arlene was inducted into the Crystal City School District's Hall of Fame.

Arlene is survived by daughters Diana Kay Schaffer of Florida, and Deena Amy Kausler (James) of Hillsboro, grandchildren A.J. Kausler (Baileigh) and Maggie Kausler, and great granddaughter Lucy Kausler. She is also survived by her best friend and sister Linda (the late Kenneth) Werner of Florida and sister in law, Delores (the late Bill) Hulett of Waterloo, IL, and many more family members, friends, and beloved students. Arlene was preceded in death by her husband of 64 years, John T. DeGonia. Visitation will be held on Wednesday, July 27 from 4:00 PM until 6:00 PM at the Robert D. Brown Funeral Home in Hillsboro, Missouri, with the Funeral Services at 9:00 AM on Thursday, July 28. Interment at Jefferson Barracks in St. Louis, Missouri. In Lieu of flowers, the family is requesting that donations be made in Arlene's memory to the John & Arlene DeGonia Memorial Scholarship, to be awarded to a student enrolled in the Jefferson College Law Enforcement Academy. The link for memorial donations is located here: <https://interland3.donorperfect.net/weblink/weblink.aspx?name=jeffcoll&id=60>  
Arrangements under the direction of Robert D. Brown Funeral Home with Josh Robinson and James Kausler officiating.