



Lucila "Lucy" Willis-Hilliard

June 30, 1938 - May 30, 2026

Lucila "Lucy" Willis-Hilliard, 87, of Peoria, peacefully passed away on Saturday, May 30, 2026, at Grand View Alzheimer's Special Care Center in Peoria.

She was born in Naval, Biliran, Philippines on June 30, 1938, to Jose and Mercedes (Matugas) Vero. In April of 1965, she married James Willis in the Philippines; he preceded her in death on June 27, 1982.

She was also preceded in death by four siblings.

Surviving are her children, Jim (Bonnie) Willis of Peoria, Christina (Brett) Newnam of Peoria, Jesselee Jones (Emily) of Nashville, TN, and Cynthia (Terry) Rigsby of Florence, KY; sister, Marina Escamis of Las Vegas, NV; brother, Carlito Vero of Alabama; 7 grandchildren; and 5 great grandchildren.

Lucy worked as a forklift driver at Caterpillar Inc. for four years before beginning her career at PARC, where she served as the Program Director for over 20 years.

She cherished being a mother, grandmother, and enjoyed traveling, especially to Charleston, South Carolina and Nashville, Tennessee. She also had a deep love for cooking and gardening, sharing her warmth and creativity through her wonderful meals and beautiful gardens. After retiring, she dedicated time volunteering at Luthy Botanical Gardens. Lucy loved music and supported all of her children's musical endeavors.

She was a member at St. Monica Catholic Church in East Peoria before becoming an active member at Holy Family Catholic Church in Peoria. She

also belonged to the Filipino American Society.

Private burial will be at Fondulac Cemetery in East Peoria. Gary Deiters Funeral Home & Cremation Services in East Peoria is assisting the family.

Memorial contributions may be made to EP!C or Grand View. Online condolences may be left at www.GaryDeitersFH.com.

Cemetery Details

Fondulac Cemetery

143 Arnold Road
East Peoria, IL 61611

Tribute Wall



“ Gary Deiters Funeral Home & Cremation Services created a Tribute Video in memory of Lucila "Lucy" Willis-Hilliard



Gary Deiters Funeral Home & Cremation Services - June 02 at 03:44 PM

JH

I am so very sorry for your loss. Sending my Love and Prayers.

Jon Hill - June 03 at 06:17 AM

JN

“ Jimmy, I got meet and chat with your mom at a few of your bands performances when she came out to hear you. She was so proud of you. I am so glad I got the chance to see her. She raised a very special man, I know how hard the last few years have been but now she is truely at peace



Jan Nichols - June 03 at 02:37 AM



“ 40 files added to the album Life Tributes



Gary Deiters Funeral Home & Cremation Services - June 02 at 12:34 PM

DG

“ Jimmy, Cindy and family, I am so sorry for your loss. Even though I didn't know your Mama (although I am sure I had probably met her somewhere down the line) I know she must have been special knowing she raised amazing children and what a wonderful legacy to leave. Love Denise Griffin 🙏❤️

Denise Griffin - June 01 at 06:13 PM

SC

“ Dear momma Lucy taught me one of the most important relationship rules that I live by till this day - 40 years later... "never let a loved one walk out the door without saying I love you". She was funny, kind, fair, strong, an example to so many of us, and the essence of what it means to be a matriarch. Thank you for all you did for me! May God embrace you, rest in eternal peace!

Sybele Capezzutti - June 01 at 04:13 PM



“ *Just remember that smile when she would come hear the band play. She always made me smile.*

Mark Killion - June 01 at 03:34 PM



“ *Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Lucila "Lucy" Willis-Hilliard.*



June 01 at 03:26 PM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Lucila "Lucy" Willis-Hilliard.*

June 01 at 03:26 PM