



Anya Natalia Kovalenko

August 16, 1948 - September 2, 2026

Binghamton, New York

Anya Natalia Kovalenko died in Binghamton on September 2, 2026. She was seventy-eight. Born there on August 16, 1948, to parents who had come from Kyiv by way of a long patience, she grew up in a city that still had shoe shops at the edges and offices in the middle. She learned English at school and a second set of manners at the table. She never treated either language as a costume.

She spent twenty-two years on a lasting line that turned leather into boxes the rest of the country wore without thinking. She was the adult who could sit on a stool without making a production of it. She kept extra socks in a locker for the woman whose morning had already been too long. When a buyer sent a new grade sheet, she translated it twice: once into English a tired crew could use, and once into the quiet that says you are not in trouble for needing help.

She married Daniel Kovalenko in 1970. They bought a bungalow in a neighborhood that later became expensive around them. They stayed. A son and a daughter went through public schools she trusted more than she trusted real-estate talk. After Daniel died in 2015 she kept the garden of dill and the habit of walking a neighbor's child to the bus when a shift ran late.

Neighbors remember a woman who swept her sidewalk and yours if the wind had been unfair, who kept a coffee can of buttons labeled in two languages, and who could sit through a graduation without making it about herself. She liked the river early, before the heat, when the trees still looked like a place a person could walk. She died in Binghamton, the only city she had ever needed. The extra socks are still in the locker. That would have pleased her more than a eulogy.

Services

A memorial in Binghamton with tea afterward. In lieu of flowers, a gift to a shop hardship fund or adult English class is welcome.

NN-OBIT-2026-C174

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