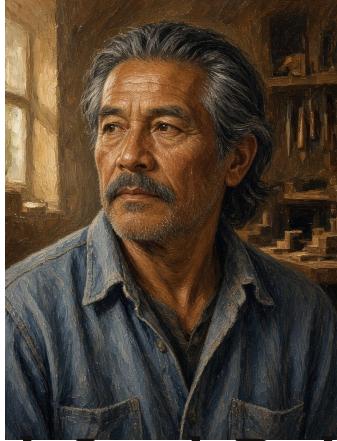




Caleb Jonah Redbird

August 7, 1963 - September 5, 2026

Tulsa, Oklahoma

Caleb Jonah Redbird died in Tulsa on September 5, 2026. He was sixty-three. Born there on August 7, 1963, he grew up between a shop class and a kitchen table where Cherokee was spoken when the conversation needed to be exact. He learned a lathe before he learned a lecture. A straight cut, he said, is a kind of respect.

He taught industrial arts in a public high school for twenty-nine years. He kept the tool room locked and the door to his classroom open. He would not let a student use a saw they had not named. He would not let a senior graduate without knowing how to change a bit and how to apologize when a project failed. Parents who wanted a trophy learned that Mr. Redbird graded the joint, not the speech. After school he stayed for the kid who had nowhere else to be until five.

He married Denise Redbird in 1988. They raised a daughter and a son in a house with a garage that was cleaner than the living room. Denise worked at the clinic. Caleb grilled on Sundays and considered fry bread a holiday even when it was not. He volunteered at a community workshop on Saturdays and refused to charge a widow what the parts actually cost.

Students, some of them now with children of their own, remember a man who smelled like sawdust and soap, who could tell when a slump was fear, and who appeared at a graduation years later as if no time had passed. He loved the river parks at evening, a plate of barbecue he did not finish, and the sound of a clean rabbit. He died in Tulsa, the city that had always been enough map. The tool room is locked. The patience he practiced there is harder to replace than a syllabus.

Services

A memorial in Tulsa with photographs and one short song. A gift to a high-school shop program or a community tool library suits him.

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