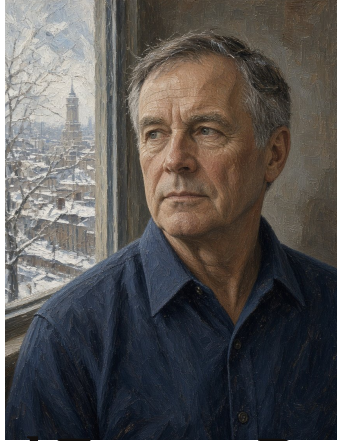




Carl Eugene Ratliff

June 1, 1953 - September 3, 2026

Indianapolis, Indiana

Carl Eugene Ratliff died in Indianapolis on September 3, 2026. He was seventy-three. Born there on June 1, 1953, he grew up knowing the bus barn as a neighbor that never slept, and he learned a route before he learned a campus. A schedule, he said, is a kind of promise you make to people who are already late.

He spent twenty-nine years driving a city bus, first on a night shift that smelled of wet wool, later as the calm face in the glass when the snow made the city argue with itself. He did not shout. He waited an extra beat at a stop when he recognized a walker. Riders trusted him because he would tell them when he did not know, which is rarer than courtesy. After a bad afternoon he sat in the yard with the windows cracked until his hands were quiet.

He married Linda Ratliff in 1976. They raised a daughter and a son in a bungalow that needed a new porch every twenty years. Linda taught third grade. Carl packed lunches that could survive a fourteen-hour shift and still taste like home. He walked the canal before dawn because that was when the water looked like work instead of recreation.

Neighbors remember a man who brought coffee to a barn without staying for thanks, who knew which intern needed a second explanation, and who could hear a transfer without making it a personality. He loved a late-summer tomato, a clean punch, and the particular silence after a delay is cleared. He died in Indianapolis, the tight city that had always been enough map. The line is still open. Someone else will open the door. They will open it a little faster than he did.

Services

A gathering in Indianapolis at evening. A gift to a transit-workers' fund or a parish pantry suits him.

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