



Carl Ray Burkholder

July 27, 1942 - October 24, 2024

Chattanooga, Tennessee

Carl Ray Burkholder, 82, of Chattanooga, died on October 24, 2024. Born July 27, 1942 in Chattanooga, carrying Japanese-American stories that arrived without footnotes. He learned early that a day is something you finish, not something you wait for.

He passed coal that kept plants from inventing delay theater. A coal passer shovel chalked preferred work over speeches. Colleagues still mention a coal passer shovel chalked.

He married Betty in 1967. They kept a house that stayed modest when the neighborhood did not. They raised a son and a daughter through public schools and ordinary weather. After Betty died in 2017, he kept the routines that still made sense: the walk, the garden, the Sunday call.

Neighbors remember a wave from the driveway that meant you were seen. Mornings were his favorite shift at home. He died in Chattanooga, on streets that already knew his pace. The extra coffee is still in the thermos.

What remains is not a legend but a practice: showing up, keeping a promise, leaving a place better than you found it. His life was the kind America is built from and too often forgets to name.

Services

A memorial gathering in Chattanooga with coffee afterward. In lieu of flowers, a gift to a local workers' fund, clinic, or neighborhood library is welcome.

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