



Carmela Antoinette DeLuca

January 8, 1947 - September 7, 2026

Camden, New Jersey

Carmela Antoinette DeLuca died in Camden on September 7, 2026. She was seventy-nine. Born there on January 8, 1947, she grew up above a diner her uncle still called the shop, and she learned a kettle before she learned a campus. A can, she believed, should arrive complete.

She spent thirty-one years in a soup plant, then another decade running a line after the uncle was gone. She would not let a widower be rushed toward a special he had not chosen. She would not let a vendor invent a discount that made the register a liar. After a bad afternoon she sat in the stairwell with the radio off until her hands were quiet. She kept extra coffee for the plow driver whose morning had already been too long.

She married Paul DeLuca in 1968. They raised a daughter in a two-family that needed storm windows and a son who needed a ride to CYO at hours no one should be awake. Paul drove a bread truck. Carmela packed lunches and considered a Sunday gravy a civic obligation. After he died in 2015 she kept the garden of tomatoes against the porch and the habit of sending a plate next door.

Friends remember a woman who showed up with soup as if that were the natural use of a Tuesday, who could explain a price without making it a sermon, and who kept one good coat. She loved a quiet gallery at the university museum, a cup of coffee that was never quite hot enough, and the river when it looked like pewter. She died in Camden, the brick city she refused to narrate as a punch line. The line is closed. The fairness she practiced there is harder to replace than a recipe card.

Services

A funeral Mass in Camden. A gift to a parish pantry or a plant-workers' fund suits her.

NN-OBIT-2026-C151

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