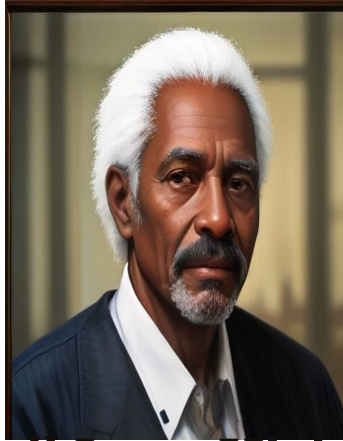




Darnell Isaac Hightower

October 30, 1954 - September 7, 2026

Detroit, Michigan

Darnell Isaac Hightower died in Detroit on September 7, 2026. He was seventy-one. Born there on October 30, 1954, he grew up knowing the plant as a clock and a weather report. He learned a die before he learned a necktie. A clean strike, he said, is a kind of promise: it has to hold or the whole story is scrap.

He spent thirty-three years in a tool-and-die shop, first as a helper, later as the man who could hear a bad fit before the gauge admitted it. He did not advertise. Foremen called him because he would tell an owner the truth about a tool even when the truth postponed a shift. He charged a fair hour and a smaller one when a church van needed a lift more than a sermon. He kept a notebook of tools, not clients.

He married Inez Hightower in 1977. They raised three children in a brick house that needed a new porch every twenty years. Inez taught Sunday school. Darnell grilled on Sundays and considered a plate of smoked chicken a seasonal obligation. After his knees quit the worst presses he still came out for a favorite die, moving slower, swearing less, doing the same honest work.

Friends remember a man who wiped his hands before he shook yours, who could stand in a noise without making it a personality, and who left a floor cleaner than he found it. He loved a quiet porch at dusk, a glass of tea he did not finish, and the sound of a press that had decided to live. He died in Detroit, in the city whose iron had written his calendar. The shop still opens. Someone else will hear the sound that means trouble.

Services

Visitation in Detroit, then a simple service. A gift to a trade-school scholarship or a neighborhood pantry is welcome.

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