



Dorothy Ann Keeler

September 21, 1945 - June 14, 2026

Omaha, Nebraska

Dorothy Ann Keeler died in Omaha on June 14, 2026. She was eighty. Born in the same city on September 21, 1945, she grew up south of the packing plants when the air still carried the yards on a wet morning, and she never pretended Omaha was a place you had to apologize for. She learned a kitchen before she learned a classroom: her mother packed lunches for the night shift, and Dorothy learned that a tray could be a kindness if it arrived hot and on time.

She spent thirty-one years in the Omaha Public Schools food service, first as a helper, later as the woman who ran the kitchen at a brick elementary on the west side. She knew which child would not eat the peas and which one needed a second milk without being asked twice. She kept a pencil over her ear and a list on the walk-in door. Budget cuts came and went. She treated a government commodity cheese block as a problem of seasoning, not a humiliation. When a snow day emptied the building, she still came in to check the freezers because she did not trust a thermostat the way she trusted her own hand on a handle.

She married Robert Keeler in 1967. They bought a small house near 42nd Street and raised a daughter and a son who still argue, fondly, about who got the last cinnamon roll. Robert drove for a bakery and died in 2009. Dorothy kept his chair at the table for a year and then gave it to a grandson who needed a place to do homework. She bowled on Thursday nights until her shoulder quit, played cards with the same four women for four decades, and sent birthday cards that arrived a day early because she did not believe in the excuse of the mail.

Neighbors remember a woman who would freeze soup in old margarine tubs and leave them on porches without a speech. She disliked fuss, loved a clean counter, and could tell you, without looking it up, which year the school switched from rectangular pizza to the round kind the children actually ate. She died in the city that had

always been enough. The kitchen she left is still feeding people. That would have pleased her more than a eulogy.

Services

A gathering at her parish hall in Omaha. Friends may bring a covered dish. In lieu of flowers, a gift to a school meal program is welcome.

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