



Dorothy Fay Ellison

October 14, 1940 - September 7, 2026
Springfield, Illinois

Dorothy Fay Ellison died in Springfield on September 7, 2026. She was eighty-five. Born there on October 14, 1940, she grew up knowing the capitol dome as a weekday neighbor, and she learned a card catalog before she learned a highway. A correct call number, she said, is a form of respect.

She spent thirty-three years in the state library stacks, first shelving, later running the desk that had to catch legislators who arrived late and citizens who arrived early. She treated a long line as weather. When the building put in a machine that was supposed to replace a person, she learned the machine and then taught it manners. She retired with a pin and a cake she tried to leave early.

She married Walter Ellison in 1962. He taught history and died in 2009. They raised a son and a daughter in a bungalow that smelled of wool and coffee. Dorothy kept the walk to the library and the habit of bringing extra pencils to the desk in January. She read the local paper with a pencil and voted in every storm.

Neighbors remember a woman who remembered your return date, who brought cookies at Christmas without announcing a tradition, and who could sit through a budget hearing without making it a personality. She loved a library sale, a good cup of coffee that was never quite hot enough, and the late light on the dome. She died in Springfield, in the prairie city she had always said was enough map. The desk is someone else's now. The patience she practiced there is harder to replace than a catalog.

Services

A service in Springfield, then coffee. A gift to the public library suits her.

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