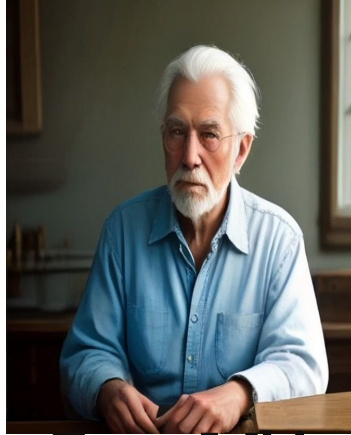




Eben Frost Whittaker

September 14, 1938 - August 17, 2026

Keene, New Hampshire

Eben Frost Whittaker died in Keene on August 17, 2026. He was eighty-seven. Born there on September 14, 1938, he grew up knowing a furniture mill as a clock that did not sleep, and he learned a plane before he learned a highway. A joint, he said, is a story that has to be true twice: once for the person and once for the wood.

He spent thirty-six years as a cabinetmaker, walking aisles after a rush and kitchens after a pan left on a burner at home. He did not enjoy the work the way a man usually enjoys a hobby. He enjoyed finishing it correctly. He would not let a widow be rushed. He would not let a contractor invent a cathedral ceiling. After a bad afternoon he sat in the truck with the radio off until his hands were quiet.

He married Ellen Whittaker in 1961. They raised a daughter in a two-family that needed storm windows and a son who needed a ride to 4-H at hours no one should be awake. Ellen taught piano. Eben packed lunches and considered a Sunday maple doughnut a civic obligation. After he retired he read the paper with a pencil and argued, fondly, with the letters page.

Friends remember a man who showed up to help move a dryer as if that were the natural use of a Saturday, who could explain a tolerance without making it a sermon, and who kept one good coat. He loved a quiet gallery at the historical society, a cup of coffee that was never quite hot enough, and the river when it looked like pewter. He died in Keene, the mill city he refused to narrate as a punch line. The bench is closed. The fairness he practiced there is harder to replace than a plane.

Services

A memorial in Keene. A gift to a tool-and-learning fund or the public library suits him.

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