



Eugene Miles Harwood

November 14, 1951 - August 28, 2026

Laurel, Montana

Eugene Miles Harwood died in Laurel on August 28, 2026. He was seventy-four. Born there on November 14, 1951, he grew up knowing the refinery as a clock and the mill as a rumor that paid. He learned a saw before he learned a necktie. A clean cut, he said, is a kind of promise: it has to hold or the whole story is scrap.

He spent a decade in a sawmill, then twenty-four years behind the counter of a hardware store that did not advertise because it did not need to. Word moved along the tracks: Gene will tell you if you do not need the part. He kept a handwritten ledger and a jar of extra fuses. He hired a neighbor's kid every summer and taught him that a torque wrench is not a suggestion. When the big chains arrived with televisions in the waiting rooms, he kept the radio on an AM station and a pot of coffee that was never quite fresh and never empty.

He married Teresa Harwood in 1974. They raised two sons in a house with a garage that was cleaner than the living room. Teresa worked at the clinic. Gene grilled on Sundays and considered a Saturday at the river a civic duty. After the mill closed he still came out when a neighbor's mower died, moving slower, charging less.

Customers remember a man who wiped his hands before he shook yours, who would jump a battery at dusk without calling it a favor, and who could diagnose a knock from the curb. He liked the Beartooths at evening, a green-chile cheeseburger on a rare trip to Billings, and a church he stood through in the back because his knees had opinions. He died in Laurel, the small rail town that had always been home. The shop sign is down. A lot of machines in the valley still run because he was stubborn about a job.

Services

A memorial in Laurel. The family welcomes stories in the hall, and a contribution to a youth trades program if

you insist on doing something extra.

NN-OBIT-2026-C087

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