



Frances Mae Holcomb

September 30, 1946 - August 27, 2026

Asheville, North Carolina

Frances Mae Holcomb died in Asheville on August 27, 2026. She was seventy-nine. Born in a hollow that later got a prettier name, on September 30, 1946, she grew up knowing fog as a workday and a biscuit as a wage. She learned a kitchen before she learned a tourist. A skillet, she said, does not care who is paying for the view.

She spent twenty-eight years cooking at a mountain inn that changed owners more often than it changed the gravy. She did not put her name on the menu. She put enough salt in the pot and enough wood in the stove. When a wedding party arrived late and wet she fed them anyway and did not accept the tip that was meant to buy her silence about the hour. After she retired she still made pies for a church that had more funerals than it liked to admit.

She married Boyd Holcomb in 1965. He logged until the body said otherwise, then mended saws in a shed that never quite closed. They raised a daughter and a son in a house that leaned toward the creek. Boyd died in 2011. Frances kept the garden of beans and the habit of leaving a loaf on a porch without a speech.

Neighbors remember a woman who could tell the weather by the way the ridge disappeared, who corrected their manners more than their recipes, and who sat through rain the way other people sit through television. She loved a late-summer tomato, a clean apron, and the particular silence after a pie comes out right. She died in Asheville, in the wet city she had always said was kinder than a dry one. The stove is someone else's now. The patience she practiced there is harder to replace than a recipe.

Services

A service in Asheville, then food in the hall. A gift to a mountain food pantry or a volunteer fire company suits

her.

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