



Geneva Pearl Askew

July 21, 1944 - September 12, 2026

Norfolk, Virginia

Geneva Pearl Askew died in Norfolk on September 12, 2026, at eighty-two. She was born there on July 21, 1944, in a house that sat close enough to a yard that children learned a horn before they learned a hymn. Her mother pressed church dresses for other women. Geneva learned that a clean stamp pad is a kind of welcome that does not require a speech.

She spent twenty-nine years in a shipyard office that smelled of toner and coffee. She was the adult who could sit with a form without making a production of it. She kept extra clips in a drawer for the intern whose morning had already been too long. When the office sent a new form, she translated it twice: once into English a tired welder could use, and once into the quiet that says you are not in trouble for needing help.

She married Ellis Askew in 1965. They raised a daughter and a son in a bungalow that needed a new roof more often than the paycheck admitted. After Ellis died in 2008 she kept his saucer on the drainboard for a season, then gave it to a granddaughter.

People on her block remember a woman who froze extra cornbread in coffee cans and left them after a funeral. She disliked a speech, loved a clean file, and could tell you which year the hall switched from square pizza to the round kind the students would actually finish. She died in Norfolk, in humidity she had always said was honest. The office still opens.

Services

A gathering at her church hall in Norfolk. Friends may bring a covered dish. A gift to a yard-office scholarship is welcome.

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