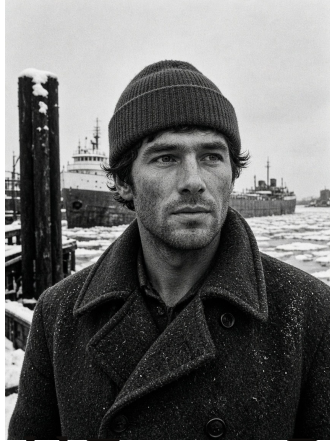




Harold Eugene Briggs

April 2, 1939 - May 3, 2026

Duluth, Minnesota

Harold Eugene Briggs died in Duluth on May 3, 2026. He was eighty-seven. Born there on April 2, 1939, he learned the lake before he learned a trade. His father worked the ore docks. Harold worked them too, then the grain elevators, then whatever job would keep a man outdoors in a city that does not flatter anyone who waits for mild weather.

He shipped as a young deckhand on a laker when the season still felt like a second country: long water, short nights, and a paycheck that arrived smelling of rust. Later he stayed ashore and spent decades moving grain, checking hatches, and teaching younger men that ice on a ladder is not a story you tell afterward if you have been careful. He did not romanticize the work. He said the lake was beautiful from a hill and dangerous from a deck, and that both facts could be true before breakfast.

He married Elaine Briggs in 1963. They kept a house up the hill from the lift bridge and a cabin they almost never finished painting. Two sons grew up knowing how to bait a hook and how to be quiet in a boat. Elaine taught school. Harold packed her lunches with the same seriousness he packed a toolbox. After he retired he walked the lakewalk in every month except the ones when the wind made walking a kind of argument. He volunteered at the maritime museum because he wanted the models labeled correctly, not because he wanted to be asked for speeches.

Friends remember a dry laugh, a refusal to own more than one good coat, and a habit of showing up to help move a freezer as if that were the natural use of a Saturday. He could name the boats of his youth and would stop himself before the list became a lecture. He died in the city whose ore and grain and weather had written his calendar. The bridge still goes up. He would have liked that the work outlasted the man.

Services

Visitation in Duluth, followed by a simple service. A walk along the lake afterward, weather allowing.

NN-OBIT-2026-C005

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