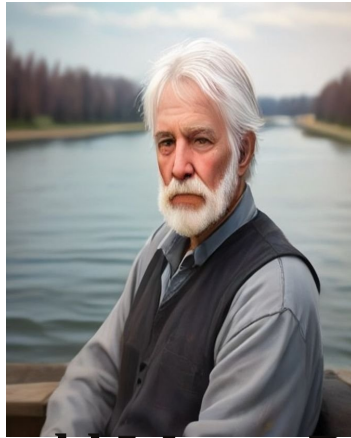




Harold Wayne Pettis

June 1, 1943 - August 27, 2026

Quincy, Illinois

Harold Wayne Pettis died in Quincy on August 27, 2026. He was eighty-three. Born there on June 1, 1943, he grew up knowing the river as a clock and a weather report. His father worked the lock. Harold learned a gate before he learned a necktie. He became a lockman because a tow that waits is a kind of insult, and because he liked a job whose mistakes were immediately visible.

For thirty-three years he kept barges moving that other men only blamed on the river. He arrived early. He did not advertise. Pilots called him because he would tell the truth about a gate even when the truth postponed a lockage. He charged a fair hour on the side when a widow's outboard needed more mercy than a marina. He kept a notebook of stages, not clients.

He married Beverly Pettis in 1965. They raised two children in a frame house that needed a new porch every twenty years. Beverly kept the library desk. Harold grilled on Sundays and considered a plate of catfish a seasonal obligation. After he retired he still came out when a neighbor's auger died, moving slower, charging less.

Friends remember a man who wiped his hands before he shook yours, who could stand in a noise without making it a personality, and who left a lock wall cleaner than he found it. He loved a quiet porch at dusk, a glass of tea he did not finish, and the sound of a tow that had decided to live. He died in Quincy, in the city whose river had written his calendar. The lock still opens. Someone else will hear the sound that means trouble.

Services

Visitation in Quincy, then a simple service. A gift to a river-safety program or a youth fishing fund is welcome.

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