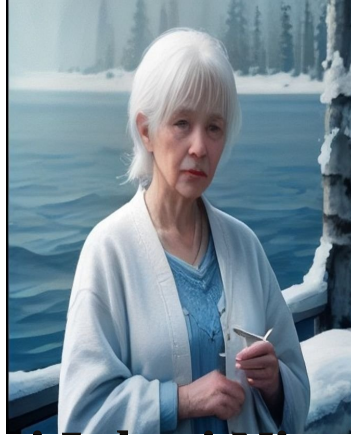




Helmi Inkeri Nieminen

February 14, 1944 - September 8, 2026

Marquette, Michigan

Helmi Inkeri Nieminen died in Marquette on September 8, 2026, at eighty-two. She was born there on February 14, 1944, when dark was a work schedule and a lake was a weekday neighbor. Her people had come from Savonia. She learned a steam table before she learned a highway south.

Twenty-five years of her life went into a hospital kitchen that fed people who treated gravy as a weather report. She began washing pans that never quite came clean. She finished as the woman who could tell, from the sound of a pot, whether the rice would hold through a late surgery. She kept extra milk without making a speech about it. When a storm closed the pass she still opened, because weather is not a reason to skip a tray.

She married Toivo Nieminen in 1965. They raised a son and a daughter in a bungalow that needed a new mudroom every decade. After Toivo died in 2004 she kept the garden of rhubarb and the habit of leaving a casserole on a porch without a speech. She sat through long meetings the way other people sit through lake wind.

Grandchildren remember a woman who corrected their thank-you notes more than their homework, who kept a biscuit tin of paper clips, and who could name every auntie in the sanctuary by the hat she no longer wore. She died in Marquette, in cold she had always preferred to a heavy humidity. The kitchen is someone else's now.

Services

A funeral in Marquette with one familiar hymn, sung slowly. A gift to a hospital-kitchen fund is welcome.

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