



Hester Ann Peabody

July 12, 1939 - September 2, 2026

Lewiston, Maine

Hester Ann Peabody died in Lewiston on September 2, 2026. She was eighty-seven. Born there on July 12, 1939, she grew up knowing the shoe mill as a clock that did not sleep, and she learned a last before she learned a highway. A stitch, she said, is a kind of sentence: it has to arrive complete.

She spent thirty-one years on a stitching line that fed cases before daylight, first as a helper, later as the woman who trained new hands that a rejected pair is not a verdict on a life. She kept a drawer of extra laces and a privately updated list of which lasts actually satisfied which inspector, because the published list was always a week behind the truth. When the office put in a machine that was supposed to replace a person, she learned the machine and then taught it manners.

She married Patrick Peabody in 1960. They raised a son and a daughter in a triple-decker that needed storm windows. Patrick drove a city truck. Hester packed lunches and considered a Sunday roast a civic obligation. After he died in 2009 she still sat with neighbors who had to renew something and did not know where to start.

Friends remember a woman who would stay seven minutes past closing for a person who had taken two buses, who hated a messy stamp pad, and who said you're fine in a way that actually meant the work would get done. She died in Lewiston, in the brick city she refused to apologize for. The line is someone else's now. The patience she practiced there is harder to replace than a last.

Services

A funeral in Lewiston, then a hall with coffee. A gift to a mill-workers' fund or a literacy program is welcome.

NN-OBIT-2026-C200

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