



Irena Zofia Majewska

April 10, 1948 - September 3, 2026

Champaign, Illinois

Irena Zofia Majewska died in Champaign on September 3, 2026. She was seventy-eight. Born there on April 10, 1948, to parents who had come from Kraków by way of a long patience, she grew up in a campus town that still had books at the edges and offices in the middle. She learned English at school and a second set of manners at the table. She never treated either language as a costume.

She spent twenty-eight years in a bindery that treated a spine as a promise: it holds, or the whole story comes apart in the dark. She started packing. She ended as the woman who could tell, from the sound of a press, whether a lot would hold through a late inspector. She kept extra clips for the intern whose morning had already been too long. She would not sign a burn that made the ticket a liar.

She married Jan Majewski in 1970. They bought a bungalow in a neighborhood that later became expensive around them. They stayed. A son and a daughter went through public schools she trusted more than she trusted real-estate talk. After Jan died in 2017 she kept the garden of beets and the habit of walking a neighbor's child to the bus when a shift ran late.

Neighbors remember a woman who swept her sidewalk and yours if the wind had been unfair, who kept a coffee can of paper clips labeled in two languages, and who could sit through a graduation without making it about herself. She liked the quad early, before the heat. She died in Champaign, among fields she had never needed to explain. The extra clips are still in the drawer.

Services

A memorial in Champaign with tea afterward. In lieu of flowers, a gift to a library bindery fund is welcome.

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