



Joan Alice Fenwick

January 28, 1945 - August 29, 2026

Eugene, Oregon

Joan Alice Fenwick died in Eugene on August 29, 2026. She was eighty-one. Born there on January 28, 1945, she grew up knowing the river as a weekday neighbor, and she learned a key ring before she learned a highway. A correct lock, she said, is a form of respect when a building already has enough speeches.

She spent thirty-one years in university housing, first making beds, later keeping the desk that had to catch students who arrived late from a bus and parents who arrived early with a question. She treated a long line as weather. When the office put in a machine that was supposed to replace a person, she learned the machine and then taught it manners. She retired with a pin and a cake she tried to leave early.

She married Walter Fenwick in 1966. He taught history and died in 2010. They raised a son and a daughter in a bungalow that smelled of wool and coffee. Joan kept the walk to the river and the habit of bringing extra pencils to the desk in January. She read the local paper with a pencil and voted in every storm.

Neighbors remember a woman who remembered your return key, who brought cookies at Christmas without announcing a tradition, and who could sit through a budget hearing without making it a personality. She loved a library sale, a good cup of coffee that was never quite hot enough, and the late light on the wet brick. She died in Eugene, in the rain she had always said you could live with if you buttoned your coat. The desk is someone else's now. The patience she practiced there is harder to replace than a catalog.

Services

A service in Eugene, then coffee. A gift to a student emergency fund or the public library suits her.

NN-OBIT-2026-C058

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