



Jorma Kalevi Rantanen

July 7, 1942 - August 23, 2026

Duluth, Minnesota

Jorma Kalevi Rantanen died in Duluth on August 23, 2026. He was eighty-four. Born there on July 7, 1942, he grew up hearing ore as a clock that did not sleep. His father walked a dock. Jorma learned a splice before he learned a highway south. A hold, he said, is a kind of promise: it holds, or the whole story comes apart in the dark.

Thirty-eight years of his life went onto an ore dock that punished hesitation. He arrived early. He did not advertise. Foremen called him because he would shut a chute even when the boat was already promised. He kept a coffee can of stainless hardware and a refusal to charge a village clinic what a catalog said a hose was worth.

He married Aili Rantanen in 1964. They raised two sons in a house that needed a new mudroom every decade. After his hands stiffened he still came out for a favorite boat, moving slower, swearing with more precision.

Friends remember a man who would jump a battery in a wet lot without calling it a favor, who could sit through a long potluck without making the wind a personality, and who owned one good parka. He liked the lake in late April, when the ice finally argued with itself. He died in Duluth, the only latitude he had ever needed. The dock light is off. A lot of small boats still start because he was stubborn about a job.

Services

A memorial in Duluth. A walk to the dock afterward if the weather allows. A gift to a harbor-safety fund suits him.

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