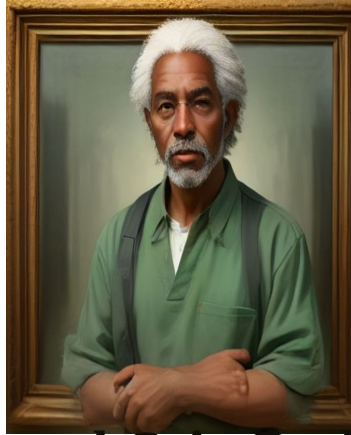




Lemuel Otis Gaskins

September 9, 1955 - August 24, 2026

Newark, Delaware

Lemuel Otis Gaskins died in Newark on August 24, 2026. He was seventy. Born there on September 9, 1955, he grew up knowing the university as a neighbor that never slept, and he learned a mower deck before he learned a syllabus. A fairway, he said, is a kind of promise: it has to be even or the whole story is late.

He spent twenty-eight years on the grounds crew, first as a helper dragging hoses, later as the man who could hear a tired spindle before the logbook admitted it. He did not advertise. Supervisors called him because he would ground a machine even when a commencement was already promised. He kept extra ice water for the student whose morning had already been too long. He charged a fair hour on the side when a church lot needed more mercy than a price list.

He married Anita Gaskins in 1978. They raised a son and a daughter in a bungalow that needed a new roof more often than the budget admitted. Anita taught school. Lemuel packed lunches that could survive humidity. After a bad afternoon he sat in the truck with the radio off until his hands were quiet.

Friends remember a man who brought extra sod to a night shift without staying for thanks, who knew which intern needed a second explanation, and who hummed while he worked as if the turf were a conversation. He loved a late-summer tomato, a clean map of the quad, and the particular quiet after the last game. He died in Newark, in heat he had always preferred to a clean cold. The crew still opens. Someone else will count the flags.

Services

A gathering in Newark in the evening. A gift to a grounds-crew hardship fund or a school breakfast program suits him.

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