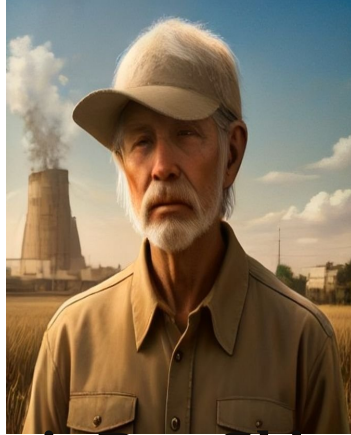




Lonnie Ray Chitwood

February 2, 1952 - August 28, 2026

Enid, Oklahoma

Lonnie Ray Chitwood died in Enid on August 28, 2026. He was seventy-four. Born there on February 2, 1952, he grew up knowing the elevator as a clock and a weather report. He learned a scale before he learned a necktie. A bushel, he said, is a story that has to be true twice: once for the farmer and once for the bin.

He spent thirty-one years as an elevator man, walking catwalks after a harvest and kitchens after a pan left on a burner at home. He did not enjoy the work the way a man usually enjoys a hobby. He enjoyed finishing it correctly. He would not let a widow be rushed. He would not let a contractor invent a moisture that made the register a liar. After a bad afternoon he sat in the truck with the radio off until his hands were quiet.

He married Ellen Chitwood in 1974. They raised a daughter in a two-family that needed storm windows and a son who needed a ride to 4-H at hours no one should be awake. Ellen taught piano. Lonnie packed lunches and considered a Sunday cinnamon roll a civic obligation. After he retired he read the paper with a pencil and argued, fondly, with the letters page.

Friends remember a man who showed up to help move a dryer as if that were the natural use of a Saturday, who could explain a test weight without making it a sermon, and who kept one good coat. He loved a quiet gallery at the museum, a cup of coffee that was never quite hot enough, and the plains when they looked like metal. He died in Enid, the grain city he refused to narrate as a punch line. The elevator is closed. The fairness he practiced there is harder to replace than a bin number.

Services

A memorial in Enid. A gift to a grain-safety fund or the public library suits him.

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