



Loretta Mae Tilghman

February 14, 1950 - September 6, 2026

Salisbury, Maryland

Loretta Mae Tilghman died in Salisbury on September 6, 2026. She was seventy-six. Born there on February 14, 1950, she grew up on the Eastern Shore when a Saturday still meant a crab pot and a church bulletin, and she never treated either as a costume. Her mother packed lunches for a poultry line. Loretta learned that a child's empty tray is not a character problem.

She spent twenty-five years as a school-bus driver, then eight more as the woman who trained new drivers that a railroad crossing is not a suggestion. She kept extra gloves in a crate for the child whose morning had already been too long. When ice glazed the duals she still made the first run, because weather is not an excuse to skip a route. She knew which house needed an extra minute and which parent needed a quiet nod instead of a horn.

She married Calvin Tilghman in 1972. They raised a son and a daughter in a bungalow that needed a new roof more often than the budget admitted. Calvin worked the plant. Loretta packed lunches that could survive humidity. After he died in 2016 she kept his chair for a year and then gave it to a grandson who needed a place to do homework.

Neighbors remember a woman who would sit with a stranger's child until the aunt arrived from Princess Anne, who hated a messy clipboard, and who said you're on time in a way that actually meant the work would get done. She died in Salisbury, in heat she had always said you could live with if you dressed for it. The route is someone else's now. The patience she practiced there is harder to replace than a schedule.

Services

A gathering in Salisbury. A gift to a school-bus scholarship or a Shore pantry is welcome.

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