



Marcus Dwight Pellam

August 11, 1953 - September 4, 2026

Grand Rapids, Michigan

Marcus Dwight Pellam died in Grand Rapids on September 4, 2026. He was seventy-three. Born there on August 11, 1953, he grew up knowing the furniture plants as a clock and a weather report. He learned a stain room before he learned a necktie. A clean finish, he said, is a kind of promise: it has to hold or the whole story is a scratch.

He spent thirty-one years as a finisher, first as a helper, later as the man who could hear a bad coat before the light admitted it. He did not advertise. Foremen called him because he would tell an owner the truth about a rush even when the truth postponed a shipment. He charged a fair hour and a smaller one when a church pew needed more mercy than a catalog. He kept a notebook of finishes, not clients.

He married Inez Pellam in 1976. They raised two children in a brick house that needed a new porch every twenty years. Inez taught Sunday school. Marcus grilled on Sundays and considered a plate of smoked chicken a seasonal obligation. After his knees quit the worst spray booths he still came out for a favorite job, moving slower, swearing less, doing the same honest work.

Friends remember a man who wiped his hands before he shook yours, who could stand in a noise without making it a personality, and who left a booth cleaner than he found it. He loved a quiet porch at dusk, a glass of tea he did not finish, and the sound of a room that had decided to live. He died in Grand Rapids, in the city whose wood had written his calendar. The shop still opens. Someone else will hear the sound that means trouble.

Services

Visitation in Grand Rapids, then a simple service. A gift to a trade-school scholarship or a neighborhood pantry is welcome.

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