



Marvin Earl Blickenstaff

September 20, 1946 - August 25, 2026

Decatur, Illinois

Marvin Earl Blickenstaff died in Decatur on August 25, 2026. He was seventy-nine. Born there on September 20, 1946, he grew up knowing the soybean mill as a clock that did not sleep, and he learned a wrench before he learned a necktie. A line that stops, he said, is a kind of insult, and he liked a job whose mistakes were immediately visible.

For thirty-four years he kept machines alive that other men only blamed. He arrived early. He did not advertise. Foremen called him because he would tell the truth about a bearing even when the truth postponed a shift. He charged a fair hour and a smaller one when a church van needed a lift kit more than a sermon. He kept a notebook of machines, not clients. The notebook had grease on the edges.

He married Inez Blickenstaff in 1968. They raised three children in a brick house that needed a new porch every twenty years. Inez taught Sunday school. Marvin grilled on Sundays and considered a plate of smoked chicken a seasonal obligation. After his knees quit the worst catwalks he still came out for a favorite press, 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 floor 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 motor that had decided to live. He died in Decatur, in the city whose mill had written his calendar. The line still starts. Someone else will hear the sound that means trouble.

Services

Visitation in Decatur, then a simple service. A gift to a trade-school scholarship or a mill-town food pantry is

welcome.

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