



Maurice Leon Pettiford

February 21, 1958 - August 28, 2026

Cincinnati, Ohio

Maurice Leon Pettiford died in Cincinnati on August 28, 2026. He was sixty-eight. Born there on February 21, 1958, he grew up knowing the packing house as a clock that did not sleep, and he learned a rail before he learned a highway. A carcass, he said, is a kind of promise: it has to arrive cold or the whole story is late. He used the word the way the floor used it, without theater.

He spent twenty-four years on a night shift that fed grocery cases before daylight, first as a helper, later as the man who could hear a tired rail before the logbook admitted it. He did not advertise. Managers called him because he would scrap a lot even when the truck was already promised. He kept extra coffee for the clerk whose morning had already been too long. He charged a fair hour on the side when a church supper needed more mercy than a price list.

He married Anita Pettiford in 1981. They raised a son and a daughter in a bungalow that needed a new roof more often than the budget admitted. Anita taught school. Maurice packed lunches that could survive humidity. After a bad afternoon he sat in the car with the radio off until his hands were quiet.

Friends remember a man who brought extra bread 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 floor were a conversation. He loved a late-summer tomato, a clean map of the cooler, and the particular quiet after the last case. He died in Cincinnati, in the heat he had always preferred to a clean cold. The floor still opens. Someone else will count the racks.

Services

A gathering in Cincinnati in the evening. A gift to a night-shift meal fund or a school breakfast program suits him.

NN-OBIT-2026-C178

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