



Norman Neil Schlabachh

May 17, 1954 - January 12, 2026

Rockford, Illinois

In Rockford, on January 12, 2026, Norman Neil Schlabachh died at 71. He was born on May 17, 1954 in a English-American family that measured love in finished chores. Early on, he decided that a paycheck and a handshake should weigh the same.

He sorted broomcorn until grades agreed and pride could return. A broomcorn grade paddle wiped decided what the shed could sell. Colleagues still mention a broomcorn grade paddle wiped.

In 1977 he married Norma. The marriage was not a speech; it was groceries, repairs, and four children walked to school in weather that did not care. When Norma died in 2019, he kept what still worked: the early walk, the small garden, the call on Sundays.

Neighbors remember a porch light left on for anyone walking home late. He preferred the hour before a town fully wakes. Rockford was home enough that he never rehearsed an introduction. The work gloves still keep the shape of a grip.

Services

Services in Rockford will be simple: stories, coffee, and the names of people who showed up. Flowers optional; support for a local clinic or trade scholarship preferred.

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