



Octavia Belle Wormley

August 21, 1948 - September 5, 2026

Washington, District of Columbia

Octavia Belle Wormley died in Washington on September 5, 2026. She was seventy-eight. She was born in the same city on August 21, 1948, in a row house that sat close enough to a streetcar line that children learned a bell before they learned a highway. Her mother pressed church dresses for other women. Octavia learned that a hot plate left on a porch is a form of keeping people upright.

She spent twenty-two years in a federal cafeteria that fed clerks who treated gravy as a weather report. She started on the dish line. She ended as the woman who could tell, from the sound of a steam table, whether the rice would hold through a late hearing. Later she kept the church office, a privately updated list of which keys actually opened which closets, and a refusal to charge a youth choir what a catalog said a ream of paper was worth.

She married Ellis Wormley in 1969. He drove a city bus and died in 2007. They raised a daughter and a son in a brick house with a pecan that dropped more work than shade. After Ellis was gone she kept his saucer on the drainboard for a season, then gave it to a granddaughter.

People on her block remember a woman who froze extra cornbread in coffee cans and left them after a funeral. She disliked a speech, loved a clean steam table, and could tell you which year the hall switched from square pizza to the round kind the students would actually finish. She died in Washington, in heat she had always said was honest. The office still opens. Someone else will count the milk.

Services

A gathering at her church hall in Washington. Friends may bring a covered dish. A gift to a campus meal fund is

welcome.

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