



Orin Wade Fairweather

August 12, 1955 - August 21, 2026

Missoula, Montana

Orin Wade Fairweather died in Missoula on August 21, 2026. He was seventy. Born there on August 12, 1955, he grew up looking at the Rattlesnake the way other boys looked at a clock. His father read timber. Orin learned that a mill is not a metaphor. It is a set of rules that do not care how late you are for supper.

He spent thirty-one years as a millwright, first as a groundman, later as the man who would climb when a wet wind had already made the job a rumor. He did not romanticize the work. He said a night jam was a country with its own weather. He taught younger crews that a lockout is not a suggestion, and that you do not leave a chain for the next shift to find in the dark. He charged a fair hour and a smaller one when a widow's service drop needed more mercy than a tariff.

He married Denise Fairweather in 1977. They raised two daughters in a ranch house that needed a new stove every few winters. Denise kept the books for a cousin's garage. Orin grilled in the driveway and considered a Griz loss a private grief. After he retired he still came out when a neighbor's well pump died, moving slower, carrying the same seriousness.

Friends remember a man who checked the sky before he checked his watch, who could sit through a long offering at church without looking at a phone, and who hummed while he worked as if the line were a conversation. He loved the late light on the Clark Fork, a plate of trout he did not finish, and the particular quiet after the chain came back. He died in Missoula, under the mountains that had always been in the window. The mill still closes a shift. Someone else will climb the next one.

Services

A service in Missoula. A gift to a mill-workers' memorial fund or a neighborhood pantry suits him.

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