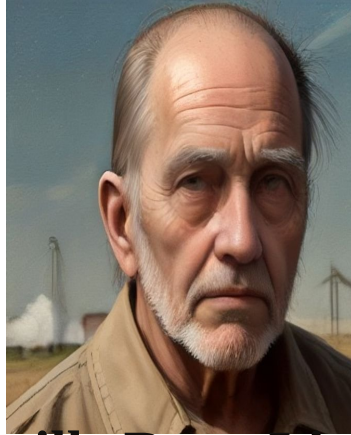




Orville Dean Lichty

October 21, 1940 - August 20, 2026

Salina, Kansas

Orville Dean Lichty died in Salina on August 20, 2026. He was eighty-five. Born there on October 21, 1940, he grew up knowing the elevator as a clock and a weather report. He learned a scale before he learned a necktie. A bushel, he said, is a story that has to be true twice: once for the farmer and once for the bin.

He spent thirty-five years as an elevator man, walking catwalks after a harvest and kitchens after a pan left on a burner at home. He did not enjoy the work the way a man usually enjoys a hobby. He enjoyed finishing it correctly. He would not let a widow be rushed. He would not let a contractor invent a moisture that made the register a liar. After a bad afternoon he sat in the truck with the radio off until his hands were quiet.

He married Ellen Lichty in 1962. They raised a daughter in a two-family that needed storm windows and a son who needed a ride to 4-H at hours no one should be awake. Ellen taught piano. Orville packed lunches and considered a Sunday cinnamon roll a civic obligation. After he retired he read the paper with a pencil and argued, fondly, with the letters page.

Friends remember a man who showed up to help move a dryer as if that were the natural use of a Saturday, who could explain a test weight without making it a sermon, and who kept one good coat. He loved a quiet gallery at the art center, a cup of coffee that was never quite hot enough, and the Smoky Hill when it looked like metal. He died in Salina, the grain city he refused to narrate as a punch line. The elevator is closed. The fairness he practiced there is harder to replace than a bin number.

Services

A memorial in Salina. A gift to a grain-safety fund or the public library suits him.

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