



Queen Esther Holsey

August 16, 1943 - September 4, 2026

Albany, Georgia

Queen Esther Holsey died in Albany on September 4, 2026. She was eighty-three. Born there on August 16, 1943, she grew up knowing pecans as a rumor that paid and a church bulletin as a legal document. She learned a steam table before she learned a highway. A tray, she said, is a kind of sentence: it has to arrive complete.

She spent twenty years in a pecan plant that smelled of hulls and coffee, then another decade running a church kitchen that fed people who treated gravy as a weather report. She started washing hotel pans that never quite came clean. She ended as the woman who could tell, from the sound of a pan, whether the rice would hold through a late funeral. She kept extra milk without making a speech about it. When a storm closed the plant she still opened the kitchen, because weather is not an excuse to skip a meal.

She married Howard Holsey in 1964. He sold insurance and died in 2003. They raised a son and a daughter who still argue about who got the last piece of caramel cake. Queen Esther kept the garden of cannas, and the habit of leaving a casserole on a porch without a speech. She sat through long meetings the way other people sit through weather.

Grandchildren remember a woman who corrected their thank-you notes more than their homework, who kept a biscuit tin of paper clips, and who could name every auntie in the sanctuary by the hat she no longer wore. She died in Albany, in the heat she had always said you could live with if you dressed for it. The kitchen is someone else's now. The patience she practiced there is harder to replace than a huller.

Services

A funeral in Albany with one familiar hymn, sung slowly. A gift to a church benevolence fund is welcome.

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