



Roosevelt Dwight Gilliard

June 9, 1950 - August 30, 2026

Hattiesburg, Mississippi

Roosevelt Dwight Gilliard died in Hattiesburg on August 30, 2026. He was seventy-six. Born there on June 9, 1950, he grew up knowing pine as a rumor that paid and a pickup as a set of honest problems. He learned saws the way other boys learned baseball statistics. A mill, he believed, was a set of honest problems. People were harder, but he liked them anyway.

He ran a filing bench in a pine mill for most of his adult life. He did not advertise. He did not need to. Word moved along the rail: Roosevelt will tell you if you do not need the tooth. He kept a handwritten ledger and a jar of extra files. He hired a neighbor's kid every summer and taught him that a set is not a suggestion. When the big chains arrived with televisions in the waiting rooms, he kept the radio on an AM station and a pot of coffee that was never quite fresh and never empty.

He married Denise Gilliard in 1972. They raised two sons in a house with a shed that was cleaner than the living room. Denise worked at the clinic. Roosevelt grilled on Sundays and considered a Saturday in the pines a civic duty. After the mill slowed he still came out when a neighbor's well pump died, moving slower, charging less.

Customers remember a man who wiped his hands before he shook yours, who would jump a battery at dusk without calling it a favor, and who could diagnose a wander from the curb. He liked the leaf at evening, a plate of fried catfish he did not finish, and a church he stood through in the back because his knees had opinions. He died in Hattiesburg, the pine town that had always been home. The bench is down. A lot of saws in the county still run because he was stubborn about a job.

Services

A memorial in Hattiesburg. The family welcomes stories in the hall, and a contribution to a youth trades program if you insist on doing something extra.

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