



Selmer Olaf Tollefson

December 16, 1940 - August 21, 2026

Minot, North Dakota

Selmer Olaf Tollefson died in Minot on August 21, 2026. He was eighty-five. Born there on December 16, 1940, he grew up knowing winter as a work schedule, not a conversation. His father kept a grain truck running in weather that punished hesitation. Selmer learned a socket set before he learned a highway south.

He spent most of his adult life in a commissary warehouse at the edge of town, first as a line kid dragging pallets, later as the man who could hear a tired forklift before the logbook admitted it. He did not fly for a living. He kept other people's inventories from becoming stories. Sergeants called him because he would hold a lot even when the order was already promised. He kept a coffee can of hardware and a refusal to charge a chapel supper what a catalog said a hose was worth.

He married Ingrid Tollefson in 1963. They raised two sons in a house that needed a new mudroom every decade. Ingrid taught at the elementary. Selmer packed her lunches with the same seriousness he packed a toolbox. After his hands stiffened he still came out for a favorite lift, moving slower, swearing with more precision.

Friends remember a man who would jump a truck at thirty below without calling it a favor, who could sit through a long potluck without making the cold a personality, and who owned one good parka. He liked the river in late April, when the ice finally argued with itself, and a slice of pie he never quite finished. He died in Minot, the only latitude he had ever needed. The warehouse light is off. A lot of small machines still start because he was stubborn about a job.

Services

A memorial in Minot. A gift to a rural food pantry or a chapel meal fund suits him.

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