



Thelma Jean Smalls

August 4, 1936 - August 12, 2026

Manchester, New Hampshire

Thelma Jean Smalls died in Manchester on August 12, 2026. She was 90. Born on August 4, 1936, with African American roots that shaped the table more than the flag. She learned early that a day is something you finish, not something you wait for.

He heard a bad loom the way a musician hears a wrong note. An oilcan with a bent spout fixed more than machines; it fixed paychecks. Colleagues still mention an oilcan she kept behind the frames.

She married George in 1961. They kept a house that stayed modest when the neighborhood did not. They raised two daughters through public schools and ordinary weather. After George died in 2019, she kept the routines that still made sense: the walk, the garden, the Sunday call.

Neighbors remember someone who knew every child's name on the block. She liked early mornings before the heat or the noise. She died in Manchester, among streets she never needed to explain. The radio is still tuned to the station that played while work got done.

Services

A memorial gathering in Manchester with coffee afterward. In lieu of flowers, a gift to a local workers' fund, clinic, or neighborhood library is welcome.

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