



Thelma Jean Yates

April 16, 1938 - August 7, 2026

Washington, District of Columbia

Thelma Jean Yates died in Washington on August 7, 2026. She was 88. Born in Washington on April 16, 1938, 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.

She made change for badges and briefcases with equal courtesy. A drawer balanced by feel meant the day was honest. Colleagues still mention a change drawer she balanced by feel.

She married George in 1965. 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 a porch light left on for anyone walking home late. She liked early mornings before the heat or the noise. She died in Washington, among streets she never needed to explain. The key is still under the same brick.

Services

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

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