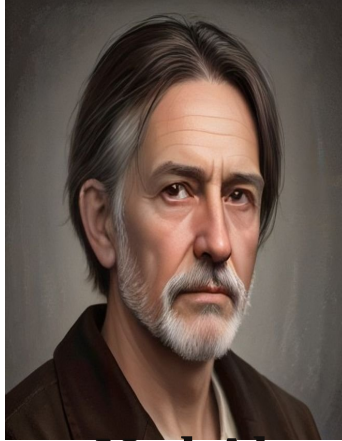




Thomas Ned Abernathy

September 3, 1951 - September 4, 2026

Lexington, Kentucky

Thomas Ned Abernathy died in Lexington on September 4, 2026. He was seventy-five. Born on a farm in Fayette County on September 3, 1951, he learned a hoof before he learned a classroom. School kept him until sixteen. The barn kept him after that. He became a farrier because a horse that cannot stand cannot work, and because he liked a job whose mistakes were immediately visible.

For forty years he drove a dented truck from farm to farm with a forge that smelled of coal and rain. He did not advertise. Trainers called him because he would tell an owner the truth about a sore foot even when the truth postponed a race. He charged a fair price and a smaller one when a 4-H child brought a pony that needed more kindness than iron. He kept a notebook of animals, not clients. The notebook had no index. He could find a page by the smell of the paper.

He married Ruth Abernathy in 1973. They raised two sons in a brick house that needed a new porch every twenty years. Ruth taught second grade. Ned grilled on Sundays and considered burgoo a seasonal obligation. After his back quit the worst barns he still came out for a favorite mare, moving slower, swearing less, doing the same honest work.

Friends remember a man who wiped his hands before he shook yours, who could stand in a stall without making the horse nervous, and who left a farm cleaner than he found it. He loved a quiet paddock at dusk, a glass of ale he did not finish, and the sound of a nail set right. He died in Lexington, in the county whose grass had written his calendar. The truck is parked. A lot of horses in the Bluegrass still travel because he was stubborn about a shoe.

Services

Visitation in Lexington, then a simple service. A gift to a large-animal rescue or a youth riding program is welcome.

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