



Wendell Ray Goodnight

September 27, 1949 - August 28, 2026

Fort Collins, Colorado

Wendell Ray Goodnight died in Fort Collins on August 28, 2026. He was seventy-six. Born there on September 27, 1949, he grew up looking at the foothills the way other boys looked at a clock. His father sold feed. Wendell learned that a sack of oats is not a metaphor. It is a set of weights that do not care how late you are for supper.

He ran a two-bay feed store off the highway for most of his adult life. He did not advertise. He did not need to. Word moved along the ditch: Wendell will tell you if you do not need the extra bag. He kept a handwritten ledger and a jar of extra twine. He hired a neighbor's kid every summer and taught him that a scale 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 Goodnight in 1973. They raised two daughters in a ranch house that needed a new swamp cooler every few summers. Denise kept the books for a cousin's garage. Wendell grilled in the driveway and considered a Rams loss a private grief. After he retired he still came out when a neighbor's well pump died, moving slower, carrying the same seriousness.

Friends remember a man who checked the sky before he checked his watch, who could sit through a long offering at church without looking at a phone, and who hummed while he stacked as if the sacks were a conversation. He loved the late light on the foothills, a plate of green chile he did not finish, and the particular quiet after the last truck left. He died in Fort Collins, under the mountain that had always been in the window. The store sign is down. A lot of barns in the county still run because he was stubborn about a job.

Services

A service in Fort Collins. A gift to a 4-H scholarship or a neighborhood pantry suits him.

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