



Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Quewanncoii Casanova Stephens Sr.

September 26, 1944 - January 30, 2024

Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Quewanncoii Casanova Stephens, 79, passed away surrounded by the love of family, friends, and mentees on January 30, 2024. Stephens dedicated 23 years of his life as an Army Officer, serving in elite units such as Green Beret, Special Forces, and Ranger. He was also Airborne, Master Parachutist (he had over 100 jumps), and a Jump-master. He served two tours in Vietnam at the height of the civil rights movement, overcoming countless obstacles to effectively lead his Soldiers. His Soldiers always came first.

Born in Washington, DC, to EmmaRhaye Potts (Mitchell), a mathematics teacher, Stephens was raised in Plant City, Florida and attended Marshall High School. Attended Florida A & M University (third generation) where he was Commissioned an Army Second Lieutenant before serving in Vietnam. He later earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Social Science from Campbell College in North Carolina and his Master of Education in Counseling and Human Resources from Boston University.

Stephens was commissioned an Armor Officer and departed for the Republic of Vietnam War. His first assignment was the 3rd Platoon, 2nd Armored Battalion, 11th Armored Cavalry (Blackhorse) regiment. It was during this assignment that he was wounded in action during the TET Offensive and remained hospitalized for a period of three months due to his injuries and was

awarded the Purple Heart. When he returned to the Republic of Vietnam to serve in the 44th Special Tactical Zone, 4th Corps, 44th Special Technical Zone, he served under Colonel David Hackworth, one of the most decorated Veterans in the military, author of "About Face" where he wrote about COL Que's athletic prowess as a football quarterback in the "Rice Bowl" of 1971.

COL Que served in numerous military assignments worldwide to include Fort Bragg, North Carolina where he attended and completed the Special Forces Officer Course, and Bamberg, Germany where he commanded Company B, 3rd Battalion 35th Armor. When he returned stateside, he was assigned to the Special Forces Officers Course (SFOC) as the Officer in Charge of Training (OIC), a position usually reserved for Infantry Officers, where he prepared officers to command Special Forces units. At this assignment, he completed the Command and General Staff College, Psychological Officers Course, and Jumpmaster School. He then found his first love and that was to coach Pop Warner football. As the head coach, he led the Ft. Bragg Packers to the Pop Warner Support Bowl, another feat never accomplished. The game was seen around the world because it was televised prior to the Super Bowl in 1980.

Another true love was mentoring future leaders. He served as Assistant Professor of Military Service and later Professor of Military Science at Prairie View A & M University. He was later reassigned to West Virginia State College, now West Virginia State University (WVSU), where he commissioned some of the nation's finest officers. The program at WVSU had begun to decline, and LTC (Ret.) Stephens turned it around, producing two of the nation's top cadets on two occasions.

Stephens' was the recipient of numerous military decorations, to include the Purple Heart, Bronze Star with 4 Oak Leaf Clusters, Meritorious Service Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster, Army Commendation Medal with "V" device and 5 Oak Leaf Clusters, Ranger Tab, Jumpmaster Award, and Special

Forces Tab to name a few.

While at WVSU, COL Que served as an assistant football coach and in numerous positions to support the team. In 35 years of service, he only missed one football game, and that was due to the need for medical treatment. He gave his all to the team, serving as a Chaplain, counselor, mentor, photographer, and filling in wherever assistance was needed. He was always with the team, positively affecting the lives of the young men.

After military retirement, "COL Que's" leadership was recognized by two Governors (Caperton and Manchin) to serve in critical positions such as Executive Director of the Human Rights Commission (1980-1994) and West Virginia State's Parole Board (1994 – 2008). He was selected as part of the Leadership West Virginia Class of 1993 and was a Governors Civil Rights Day Honoree in 2008. He was a champion of diversity and promoted human rights for all, receiving several special recognitions as a person concerned about the human rights of citizens throughout the State by numerous groups. He was constantly sought out to speak on matters concerning rights of people, race relations, and issues dealing with young people.

An extremely hard worker, Stephens worked with the WV Division of Juvenile Services as the Quality Control Manager, After Care Supervisor, and Treatment and Program Manager for 18 southern counties. He worked until his death as a Community Resource Supervisor for the Bureau of Juvenile Services. In his position, Que oversaw aftercare services for youth reentering their community. He and his staff worked with youth and families from the time they were committed until a year post release. He ensured these youth had the educational, employment, mental health, medical and other needs met. His job was significant to him because it gave him purpose as he helped youth have a second chance after incarceration. He often spoke to schools encouraging students to do well and avoid the juvenile correction system,

handing out his card and offering his help in advance. Although he just met the students, he would tell them he loved them and believed in them. He was a staunch youth advocate and truly believed in mentorship and support.

Stephens was a member of numerous organizations dedicated to service to include life membership in Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Incorporated. He was initiated in the Upsilon Psi chapter at Florida A & M University in 1964, and was a very active member of the Xi Alpha chapter where he was recognized as “Father of the Year” for his mentorship and support within the chapter. He was also past president of Rotary, International, and participated in numerous service projects. He was inducted into the WVSU ROTC Hall of Fame and the WVSU Sports Hall of Fame for his 35 years of dedicated service to the “Yellow Jacket Nation” as an assistant football coach, photographer, and mentor to countless students, football players, and ROTC cadets.

COL Que was known for his love of photography, singing, working with youth, and serving on numerous boards that changed lives such as being appointed by the Governor to serve on the State of West Virginia Military Service Academy Board and entities that addressed issues that impacted the welfare of others to include serving as an ex-officio member of the Women’s Commission and serving in numerous suicide prevention roles. He loved serving as a Deacon at First Baptist Church in Charleston, WV, where he was also in charge the photo ministry and sang in the mass choir. One of his greatest loves was serving as a member of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Male Chorus where he sang bass. The group travelled extensively, sharing the joy of the Lord with their delighted audiences.

A loving father of three, Stephens was very proud of his children; Lieutenant Colonel Eurydice S. (Stephens) Stanley, PhD, Quewanncoii C. Stephens II, and Quinton Cy Stephens. He is survived by his daughter Eurydice, grandchildren Grace and Christian Stanley, his partner of 16 years Nona

Black, son and daughter in love Joe Black and Lilla Atkins, granddaughter Chloe Black, Uncle Clarence Richard “Dick” Potts (Mary) and a host of loving cousins, nieces, and nephews. His family was not limited by blood – it was extensive due to countless adopted “family” from his work, church, and numerous civic and Veteran organizations to include the American Legion, Prince Hall Freemasons, and Shriners. He was preceded in death by his mother, EmmaRhaye P. Mitchell, sister, Attoma “Renee” Calloway, brother, Wallace Lampkins, and both of his sons. The family rejoices knowing they are all now happily reunited in Heaven.

A reception celebrating Stephens’ life will be held at West Virginia State University Friday, February 9, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. in the Wilson Student Union. Funeral services will be held at First Baptist Church of Charleston, where he faithfully served as a Deacon for many years on February 10, 2024 starting at 10:30 a.m. LTC (Ret.) Stephens will be interred at Arlington National Cemetery.

“COL Que” lived a full life doing exactly what he wanted to do whenever he wanted to do it. We all should be so blessed! He never met a stranger as he travelled the world and remained a person concerned about the welfare of others, always encouraging them to take care of themselves. He wrote that he did not see himself as special but as a person whose life has been enhanced by a love for mankind which was nurtured by his maternal grandmother who continued to say to him throughout his early development “to love your fellow man/woman and do whatever it takes to make others feel good about themselves. You will never know if that person will provide assistance to you someday.” He lived his life every day with that thought. If you have a memory of COL Que to share with the family, please send it to QueStephensMemories@gmail.com. It would be most appreciated.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to the

Mitchell/Stephens Army ROTC Endowment #1633 at Florida A & M University.
https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fmy.famu.edu%2Fdonation%2Frotcendowment%3Ffbclid%3DIwAR0UaY06jTb7_fk88x7hvILdnbe52fXISuBxUwe90mu2Qc6JUJsfqVyclzE&h=AT3WL2yXH3x218nfodCO8GFuy_9oezgam0aOp29VX6Cla4T9v2IsaiGGrs9Cw0Z0eXXZ-2djRCYY4hqBRmqelFUFDnKJJpfCCwpjGLG5Gxl7bdB9_fi0LCiNbsABQM4Ri1U

Previous Events

Gathering of Family and Friends

FEB **9**. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

West Virginia State University, Wilson Student Union
301 Washington Ave
Dunbar, WV 25064

Memorial Service

FEB **10**. 10:30 AM (ET)

First Baptist Church
432 Shrewsbury Street
Charleston, WV 25301

Tribute Wall



“ I met Col Que during the Special Forces Qualification Courses. I was a civilian assisting in training the students that Col Que was instructing. He stayed at our home and ate meals with us on numerous occasions. On one occasion his eldest son spent a couple nights with us so he could see what his father did. Que was always a friendly and professional gentleman. I still have the newspaper clippings he sent me from the Texas ROTC program and from West Virginia. As busy as he was he still remembered us here in North Carolina. Men like Col Que do not come around often. He will be greatly missed.

Danny Deberry - April 10, 2024 at 08:27 PM

ES

Thank you, Danny...could you please share those clippings with me? This is COL Que's daughter Eurydice. My email is info@dreurydice.com. Thank you!

Eurydice Stanley - September 27, 2024 at 05:56 PM

CJ

“ Carlton "C.J." Jackson lit a candle in memory of Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Quewanncoii Casanova Stephens Sr.



Carlton "C.J." Jackson - March 04, 2024 at 04:01 PM

MI

“ My deepest sympathy to the family on the passing of Que. We worked together at the WV Human Rights Commission. I admired him and his leadership skills. He taught me a lot. I am sorry I was out of town for his services. Mike Kelly

Mike - February 18, 2024 at 11:57 AM

CL

“ We are deeply saddened by the loss of our beloved Brother Que! We were in constant contact daily with talk about the RATTLEERS Family and football! We were all at FAMU 1963-1966 when those eyes and that golden voice made him special to all of us, plus he was a Que and Military!! Very popular on Campus too!! Always a great Leader!!Fast froward to our daily conversations and the football team!! We all looked forward to his coaching skills during the games in our posts on messenger!! Most to the time he called for firing somebody off the team which was hilarious until in the end, we usually won the game anyway!!Go RATTLEERS!! I was just texting him the other day before he passed and as sick as he was, he always texted back, assuring that he was okay,dealing with the situation he was in! Our daily chats were always very colorful with him ! Our Brother, Our Friend , Our RATTLEER!! Rest Que!! You made us proud and you made us Smile!
Charles and Carolyn Speed Lightys, Irene Walker, Wanda Hayes , RATTLEERS Class of 1966



Carolyn Speed Lightys - February 09, 2024 at 07:47 AM

CL

Please add Conchita Russell to our FAMU RATTLEERS texting groupClass of '66' 🍀🍀🍀🍀💚💚💚💚

Carolyn Speed Lightys - February 09, 2024 at 10:25 AM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Qewanncoii Casanova Stephens Sr..*



February 08, 2024 at 08:45 PM



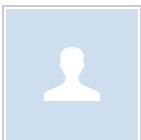
“ *Coach Clifton Moore, Tallahassee,FL planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Qewanncoii Casanova Stephens Sr..*

Coach Clifton Moore, Tallahassee,FL - February 08, 2024 at 08:45 PM



“ *Que became my big brother during the Summer of 1965 when he came to New York to work at the Worlds Fair. He became a brother/son to the Lightsy Family and will remain that FOREVER. I will miss him so, our long talks, our shared laughs and our shared secrets. He was always there for us/me and his family should know just reach out we/I will provide any support possible. With much love and condolences. Frances Lightsy*

Frances Lightsy - February 08, 2024 at 07:17 PM



“ *Garden Cross was purchased for the family of Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Qewanncoii Casanova Stephens Sr..*



February 07, 2024 at 09:33 AM

1C

“ 1980 Ft. Bragg Packers - the Champs planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Qewanncoii Casanova Stephens Sr..

1980 Ft. Bragg Packers - the Champs - February 07, 2024 at 09:33 AM

LB

“ I was deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Colonel Stephens. Please accept my heartfelt condolences during this difficult time. Colonel Stephens was indeed a remarkable individual, known for his generosity and kindness. I fondly remember the years when I served as a cheerleading coach at West Virginia State University, and Colonel Stephens' unwavering support and dedication left a lasting impact on me and my team. His willingness to take time out of his schedule during the games to capture precious moments of my cheerleaders speaks volumes about his selflessness and genuine character. Colonel Stephens' photographs not only captured the essence of those special moments but also served as cherished memories for my team members. His presence was truly a blessing to all who had the privilege of knowing him, and his legacy of kindness will continue to live on in the hearts of those he touched.

Please know that my thoughts are with you and Colonel Stephens' loved ones during this time of mourning.

With deepest sympathy, Lisa Bradley

Lisa Bradley - February 06, 2024 at 12:37 PM

GD

First of all, I would like to say to that family that I am truly sorry for your loss.

One memory that truly stuck out in my mind was when I was a senior at PVAMU, it was the fall of 1984. I just left the financial aid office and I was informed that my financial aid was cut in half and I had no idea how I could afford to stay in college. As I was walking across campus with my head down, heading to my dorm, Que stopped me and asked me "what was wrong". At that time I proceeded to tell him that my aid was being cut in half, Que asked me for the paperwork which I had in my possession. At that time he took that paperwork and walked away without saying anything. To my complete surprise and shock, my school tuition was paid in full thanks to Que. For many years I would tell that story to many of my friends and family about how Que blessed me and my family.

Fast forward to 2020, it was COVID and many employers sent employees home to work. I googled Que's name and found an article in the Charleston Gazette-Mail talking about Que. I reached out to the writer (Sandy Wells) and I asked her if she could put me in contact with Que. She did do that and when we talked on the phone (for approximately 1 hour), we would laugh about OUR unique eye color, we reconnected and the rest is history. I would text him at least 3-4 times a week, keeping him informed on current events, pitchers of my cooking and sports.

I would always invite him to come to Vegas to hang out with me and he'd always say (one day I will come to Vegas to see you and your family)

Again, thank you for allowing Que to be a part of my life and his memory will be forever in my heart & soul. My GOD Bless that family.

Gregory Drew - February 06, 2024 at 01:28 PM