



# Stephenson, Bill

AUG 12, 1942 - OCT 30, 2025



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**B**illy Joe “Bill” Stephenson, 83, of Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, passed away peacefully on October 30, 2025, at Town Village Senior Living in Tulsa.

Bill was born on August 12, 1942, in Henryetta, Oklahoma, to his mother, Esther Myra Veters Stephenson, and father, Paul Jones Stephenson. As the sixth of eight children—Paul Edwin Stephenson, Patsy Ruth Stephenson Casey, Wanda Jean Stephenson Evington, James Dale Stephenson, Walter Lynn Stephenson, Charlotte Ann Stephenson Cornelius, and Evelyn Jane Stephenson Thompson—Bill grew up in humble surroundings, where he learned early the values of hard work, humility, and perseverance.

After graduating from high school, Bill proudly served his country in the United States Navy. His time in service instilled in him a deep sense of confidence and purpose, which later led him to pursue his goals in higher education. Bill attended Northeastern State University, where he earned his bachelor’s degree in education. He immediately went on to receive two master’s degrees—in Counseling and in School Administration—from the University of Tulsa, all while working full-time at McDonnell Douglas.

On January 23, 1965, Bill married the love of his life, Deanna Durbin of Dewar, Oklahoma. Their partnership lasted 56 wonderful years, filled with laughter, devotion, and countless memories. Together, they made their home in Broken Arrow, where they raised their two children, Michelle and Darren.

Bill’s lifelong dedication to education led him to an inspiring 30-year career at Tulsa Community College, where he began as a college counselor and advisor and rose through the ranks to become the Dean of Student Services at the Metro Campus. He also taught U.S. and Chinese history at both TCC and Oklahoma State University, where his deep knowledge and passion for teaching left a lasting impression on students. His love for history gave him a remarkable talent for bringing stories to life, captivating those fortunate enough to learn from him. The love of



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education that shaped him continues through the knowledge, curiosity, and encouragement he instilled in his children and grandchildren.

A man of many interests, Bill enjoyed writing, playing chess, golfing, watching movies, and cooking—especially his famous pot roast dinner. Bill, along with his wife Deanna, loved entertaining friends and hosting get-togethers filled with laughter, stories, and good food.

Bill also had a spirited passion for horse racing and playing poker. He studied racing forms like a seasoned analyst, working diligently to develop an algorithm that could predict winners. His commitment to understanding the intricacies of the sport earned him the role of unofficial betting advisor among friends. And then there were his poker nights with his buddies—where his bluffing skills were legendary, though rarely successful, since they could see right through him.

After retiring, Bill found his greatest joy in spending time with his grandchildren—Chase, Ashlyn, Tobias, and Luke. His love of storytelling continued through the adventurous tales he created for them, filling their imaginations with wonder and laughter. Whether he was inventing games, teaching them to cook, or simply enjoying a movie together, every moment with their Poppy was wrapped in love and filled with joy.

Bill was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Deanna Stephenson. He is survived by his daughter, Michelle, and her husband, David Shales; his son, Darren Stephenson, and his wife, Gretchen; his four grandchildren, Chase, Ashlyn, Tobias, and Luke; and his two siblings, Charlotte Cornelius and Jane Thompson, along with many extended family members and dear friends.

Bill Stephenson was a man of intelligence, integrity, humor, and heart. He was a teacher, mentor, counselor, storyteller, husband, father, grandfather, and friend. His life made an impact that will continue to ripple through all those who knew and loved him. He will be deeply missed and fondly remembered.

Celebration of Life honoring Bill will be at 12:00 p.m. Friday, November 21, 2025, at the home of Michelle and David Shales.




# Events


**Stephenson, Bill**

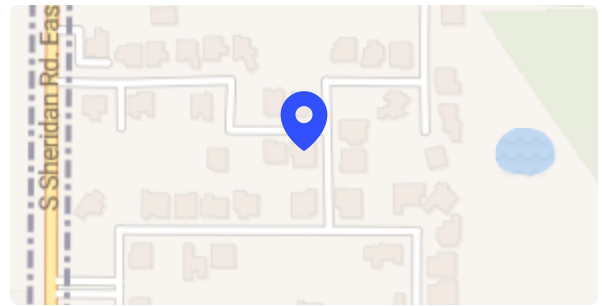
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## Gathering Family Home

 **Friday**, November 21, 2025

 12:00 PM CT

 **The Family Home**  
6682 E. 122nd S., Bixby OK 74008





## Tribute Wall

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**Anonymous** sent a Fiery Lily and Rose to the Stephenson family.

November 19 at 3:26 PM



**Your Amn Family** planted a Memorial Tree in honor of Bill.

November 19 at 3:26 PM



**Sharon Sawyer** posted:

May God send blessings and comfort to you, Deanna, kids, and sisters. Bill was such a good friend and neighbor to Tom "Tank" and his mother, as you kids were growing up! Tom had many good childhood memories that he talked about. Tom chose Bill to be his best man at our wedding. Deanna, you were one of my Dewar school and Baptist church heroes, when growing up. And, you and Bill continued to influence hundreds of kids and young adults throughout your work in education. Peace be with you all! Sharon Mordecai Sawyer

November 7 at 1:01 PM



# Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Bill by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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