

John Henry Stephens was born November 15, 1936, in Breckenridge, MN, the son of LeRoy and Rufina (Dreyer) Stephens. He grew up in Breckenridge, MN where he attended St. Mary's grade school and graduated from Breckenridge High School. John continued his education at the North Dakota State College of Science in Wahpeton where he graduated with two degrees. He furthered his education at Moorhead State University, earning his Bachelor's and Master's Degree.

Soon after high school, John joined the army. He was stationed at Fort Knox, KY and was quickly promoted to Sergeant. As you may have heard, he claims to have seen Elvis on base! Upon his return to Minnesota, he completed his duty, serving in the National Guard.

Before his teaching career, John worked on the Great Northern Railroad, starting as a fireman and working his way up to engineer. John loved running the big engines! When he heard the train whistle, it brought back fond memories.

On August 1, 1964 John was united in marriage to Pauline Hanson. The couple made their home in Algona, IA where John began a career in teaching. Two years later John and Polly moved to Alexandria, MN to be closer to family. John taught at Jefferson High School for one year, then moved "across the pavement" to Alexandria Technical College, where he led the Legal Secretary Department. For the next thirty years he enjoyed the camaraderie of the staff and students at the college. He retired in 1996.

In his early years, John was very active in his church, serving on the parish council, and being a lector. He also sang and played guitar at many liturgies, including weddings and funerals. John enjoyed sharing his love of music with his son Patrick, playing guitar together at church, and singing with his daughter Sara.

John was a member of the Elks Club in Alexandria. In his early days, he had the ability to play the piano, sing, and entertain his friends at any given time. Anyone who knows John knows his language could be quite colorful!!! He had a great sense of humor and was always ready with a one-liner - the life of the party.

John's great love was being at his cabin, enjoying the beauty of the Earth. He was an avid outdoorsman, fishing and boating in the summer; pheasant, duck, and deer hunting in the fall and winter. Road trips were very special: Glacier National Park, Yellowstone; plus the Duluth and Phoenix areas. He cherished his kids and entertaining his grandkids; they all called him Papa. Others knew him as Rooster; perhaps for being half Irish, half German and half omery.

On Sunday, June 2, 2019, John died at the age of eighty-two years. He was preceded in death by his son, Gregory John Stephens; and four sisters, infant twins, Mary and Ann Stephens, Patricia Olson and Sharon Heley. John is survived by his wife, Polly of Alexandria; son, Patrick (Julie Goodrich) of Prior Lake, MN; daughter, Sara (Jack) Volz of St. Paul, MN; grandchildren, Kali, Carson, and Dominic Stephens, Ashliegh and Emily Volz; and several nieces and nephews.

Special thanks to the staff of Diamond Willow for their loving care to John. John enjoyed the never-ending humor with his friends/caregivers.

In Loving Memory

John Henry Stephens

April 10, 1922



March 18, 2019



Memorial Mass

Church of St. Mary
Alexandria, Minnesota
Friday, June 28, 2019
2 PM

Celebrant

Reverend Father Steve Binsfeld

Honorary Pallbearers

Kali Stephens	Carson Stephens
Dominic Stephens	Ashliegh Volz
Emily Volz	The Boys from Breck
Larry Anderson	Craig Bear
Duanne Bowen	Joe Brekel
Roger Buscher	Nick Gaulrapp
Wayne Haben	Ron Hill
Ellsworth Holm	Kai Hunt
Jerry Irsfeld	Jim Irsfeld
Tony January	Richard Lordeman
Larry McCoy	Joe Partington
LeRoy Poetz	Frank Starke

Dave Tehle

Interment

St. Mary's Cemetery
Alexandria, Minnesota

Military Honors

Alexandria Veterans Honor Guard

The Day God Called You Home

*God looked around His garden
and found an empty space.*

*Then He looked down upon the earth
and saw your tired face.*

*He put his arms around you,
lifted you to rest.*

*God's garden must be beautiful,
for He only takes the best.*

He knew that you were suffering.

He knew you were in pain.

*He saw the road was getting rough,
and the hills were hard to climb.*

*So He closed your weary eyes,
and whispered, "Peace be thine".*

*It broke our hearts to lose you,
but you did not go alone.*

*For part of us went with you,
the day God called you home.*

