



## Thomas C. Stephens

July 12, 1950 - July 29, 2024

Thomas Charles Stephens, 74, of Fort Wayne, went home to be with Jesus on Monday, July 29, 2024, at Christian Care Retirement Home in Bluffton after a lengthy battle with Alzheimer's disease. He was born on July 12, 1950, in Waltham, Massachusetts, to the late William Charles Stephens and Grace Vera Stephens.

Tom graduated from Yuma High School in Yuma, Arizona in 1968. He enlisted in the Air Force in 1972 and served faithfully until his retirement in 1993, achieving the rank of Captain. Throughout his more than two decades of military service, Tom received awards and honors too numerous to mention here for his devotion and heartfelt service to his country. After completing his military service, he worked many more years for the US Postal Service, until his retirement from there in 2013. Tom knew the value of a dollar and made sure to always provide for his family. His faith and his family were the two most important things in his life, and he walked faithfully with Jesus throughout his adult years, passing that legacy on to his children and his children's children. Tom was also a lifelong jokester, and even after dementia robbed him of his ability to communicate verbally, he still often found ways to bring a smile to the faces of all who came in contact with him. In addition to Jesus and his family, Tom loved traveling the world, the Boston Red Sox, reading, sardines, and chocolate covered cherries (not necessarily in that order). He will be deeply missed for his cheerful demeanor and playful

attitude, as well as his intentionality in how he carried himself, and his love of God, country, and his fellow man.

Tom married the love of his life, his wife Judy Stephens on November 16, 1997 in Wabash, Indiana. She preceded him in death in 2020. He is survived by his sister, Sharon (Brian) Pace of Yuma, Arizona; four step-children, son Chad Cochran, of New York; daughter Elizabeth (Timothy) Bork, of Bluffton, Indiana; son Joshua Cochran, of Fort Wayne, Indiana; and daughter Jennifer (Lane) Sander, of Bluffton, Indiana. He is also survived by a nephew, Bryan Pace Jr., a niece, Crystal (Jason) Ward, and his five grandchildren, Alanis Fry and Auden, Winston, Maverick, and Valor Sander.

The family will be hosting a celebration of life service at Sonlight Wesleyan Church, Bluffton, Indiana on Friday, August 2nd at 6pm, with visitation one hour prior. A graveside service will follow. Pastors Lyle Breeding and Lane Sander will officiate. Arrangements have been entrusted to the care of the Lemler family of Thoma/Rich Lemler Funeral Home in Bluffton. The family has requested in lieu of flowers that memorials be made in Tom's memory to the Tunnel to Towers Foundation.

Friends can send online condolences to the family at [www.thomarich.com](http://www.thomarich.com).

# Cemetery Details

## Elm Grove Cemetery

3500 East State Road 124  
Bluffton, IN

# Previous Events

## Visitation

AUG 2. 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM (ET)

Sonlight Wesleyan Church  
2350 S State Road 1  
Bluffton, IN

## Celebration of Life Service

AUG 2. 6:00 PM (ET)

Sonlight Wesleyan Church  
2350 S State Road 1  
Bluffton, IN

# Tribute Wall



“ *Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Thomas C. Stephens*

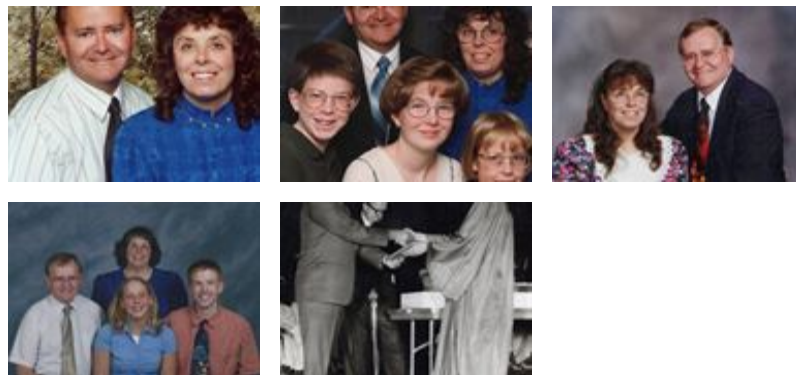


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**Thoma/Rich,Lemler Funeral Home** - August 03, 2024 at 01:29 PM



“ *11 files added to the album Life Tributes*



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**Thoma/Rich,Lemler Funeral Home** - August 01, 2024 at 03:57 PM



“ 71 files added to the album *Life Tributes*



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**Thoma/Rich, Lemler Funeral Home** - August 01, 2024 at 10:56 AM

MA

“ *I will miss him in the Golden Apple very much! I would take him for walks in the hallway every Friday afternoon...and for fun we would march down the hall...he thought that was fun. He loved sitting outside on the patio in the sunshine. He sure made me laugh ....i will miss you Tommy.*

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**Margo** - July 31, 2024 at 10:57 PM

DK

“ *Drew, Michelle, Amelia, & AJ Korporal purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Thomas C. Stephens.*



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**Drew, Michelle, Amelia, & AJ Korporal** - July 31, 2024 at 05:42 PM

CW

“ *My favorite Uncle!! We had so much fun traveling and going to water parks and seeing some of God's beautiful creation. Tho I haven't seen him in years I visited on the phone. Thankful he's not suffering and is with our Lord! See you again, Uncle Tom!!!*

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**Crystal Ward** - July 31, 2024 at 09:46 AM