



Mr. Kemphus Stephens

August 24, 1940 - March 28, 2021

Kemphus Stephens, "Kemp", age 80, of Milwaukee, Wisconsin entered eternal life on March 28, 2021.

Kemphus was born on August 24, 1940 in Winston-Salem North Carolina to the union of John Atlas Sr. and Ruthel Stephens. He was raised with 7 other brothers. He confessed a hope in Jesus Christ at an early age.

Kemphus also spent time in Lumberton, North Carolina. He enjoyed spending time with his family there. Kemphus worked at R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company. He attended Hilly Branch School and Winston-Salem State University. Kemphus entered the U.S. Army in 1965 where he remained in active service until his honorable discharge. Subsequently, he married Betty Stephens on August 9, 1969 in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. The couple moved to Milwaukee, Wisconsin to start a family.

Kemphus was a member of Pilgrim Rest Missionary Baptist Church. He worked for the Milwaukee County Transit System for more than 20 years. During his time as a bus driver, he showed kindness toward everyone that he encountered. Kemphus was known by many names.

He was known by "Kemp", "Mr. Stephens", "Big Stephens", "Daddy", "Papa", and "Max Ivy". The name that best described him was "hospitable". He loved making Salmon patties, greens, hot water cornbread, and other food for all who knew him.

Kemphus was a devoted husband, brother, father, grandfather, uncle, and so much more. In his later years, he was affectionately dubbed "The Don" by his

immediate family because of his excellent ability to direct and supervise the tasks in the house. He was funny, kind, friendly, helpful, and caring. He exuded strength. Kemphus enjoyed gardening, bowling, shooting pool, playing checkers and ping-pong, watching sports, and spending time with his family. Most of all, he enjoyed the time spent with his wife, Betty. They were partners in life and now partners in the life eternal.

Kemphus loved his entire family and never met a stranger. It is certain that many people will always remember the man who lived in the brick house on a corner who gave out barbecue, watermelon, and other food to those who passed by. He will remain the patriarch of his family through the memories of those who love him.

Kemphus was preceded in death by his wife of 50 years Betty Stephens, parents, John Atlas Sr. and Ruthel Stephens; brothers, Tyrus, Tremus, Memphis, Dwight, and Dwaxton Stephens. He leaves to cherish his memory: daughter, Erica Johnson; son, Kerric Stephens; daughter-sisters, Jacqueline E. Byrd and Jacqueline J. Byrd-Harris (Boyce), grandchildren, Lawson Adams; Gene Johnson, Alexia Johnson, and Milania Bella; brothers, John Atlas Jr. (Endreana), Tyro (Minnie), sisters-in-laws, Connie Stephens (deceased), Jessie Bell-Hutley (deceased), Wanda Stephens; Barbara Bennett; Marilyn Stephens, Delois Stephens, brothers-in-law; Melvin (Cynthia) Nash, Nathaniel Nash, and Alvin (Jewel) Nash; best friend (Eugene Stephens), nieces, nephews, cousins, godchildren, Kamie (Jay), Jasmine, Imani, Devajanae, Joshua, Latrell, and Zyana, and a host of other special friends and family. Northwest Funeral Home has been entrusted with arrangements.

Cemetery Details

VA Union Grove Cemetery

21731 Spring Street
Union Grove, WI

Previous Events

Visitation

APR 5. 12:30 PM - 1:30 PM (CT)

Northwest Funeral Chapel
6630 W. Hampton Ave
Milwaukee, WI

Funeral Service

APR 5. 1:30 PM (CT)

Northwest Funeral Chapel
6630 W. Hampton Ave
Milwaukee, WI

Tribute Wall

LE

“ *My papa was an amazing person; I love him and miss him. I know he is with God in heaven so I'm not worried. <3*

Lexia - September 07, 2025 at 03:30 PM

WT

“ *We will miss Kemp and his thoughtfulness, kindness and his conversations about a good life. His positive spirit and happiness will surely be missed but never forgotten. He was more than a Cousin, he was a special friend*

Winslow Taylor - April 06, 2021 at 11:06 AM

SV

“ *Kemp, I will never forget you. You were such a kind hearted man. It was fun shooting pool with you and hanging out with you, Scotty and your brother Dwaxton (We called him Lil Kemp) Rest Peacefully. My prayers and condolences to the family.*



Sonia Virgil - April 05, 2021 at 06:23 PM

LP

“ *Sending our love, and praying for the Stephens family.*

Love, Lisa & Tim Parson



Lisa Parson - April 05, 2021 at 03:37 PM

JT

“ I will miss you Cousin Kempfus! I always enjoyed your visits to Newark and seeing you in Winston Salem! You were a blessing to all you encountered! Sending prayers! Rest in Peace!

Jacquelyn Taylor - April 05, 2021 at 02:33 PM

LN

“ Today and always, may loving memories bring you peace, comfort, and strength. Please accept our most sincere sympathies for the loss of your father. Sending healing prayers and comforting hugs.

Love Always,
Darrell and Mona Stephens Nevels

Lisa Nevels - April 05, 2021 at 01:53 PM

DS

“ We will miss my brother-in-law (loved like a brother) Kempfus, very much.
My prayers are with the entire family.
Love,
Delois Stephens

delois Brown stephens - April 05, 2021 at 01:26 PM



Yvonne
Robinson

“ I will miss Kempfus and our children hone calls.
He was my mothers cousin whom I met in 2015 at our family reunion. Kem his may you rest in Peace.

Love Cousin,
Yvonne

Yvonne Robinson - April 05, 2021 at 11:25 AM

EN

“ Prayers for the Stephenson family. Mr. Kempfus is my brother in law and such a previous man. He loved my sweet potato pie. I will truly miss him and my husband will as well. He was married to my husband's sister Betty. They are both missed. Much love to Jackie , Erica, and Kerric and the entire family. Much Love..



Elder Cynthia Nash - April 04, 2021 at 09:47 PM

DJ

“ My heartfelt condolences to the Stephen's family for the loss of Mr. Kempfus. I met Betty and Jackie in NYC in NYC and we all became fast friends. We have kept in touch all these years and Mr. Kempfus was virtually as friendly honoring our chance meeting he called me on Betty's phone 3 weeks ago and we chatted he reminded me how much Betty loved me as a friend and I returned the sentiment. I was looking forward to meeting him in person but God had other plans. I am praying for the family understanding, comfort and healing that only God will give. I love you all and know I'm your servant in prayer and deeds. Call me anytime ♥

Deana Jeffrey - April 04, 2021 at 08:00 PM

EM

“ Heartfelt prayers and condolences to the family of Mr. Kempfus Stephens.



Erica McCarter - April 04, 2021 at 07:42 PM

EM

“ *Erica McCarter lit a candle in memory of Mr. Kempfus Stephens*



Erica McCarter - April 04, 2021 at 07:37 PM

GT

“ *Mom and I always enjoyed your visit to Newark! You always found us whenever we visited Winston! We had a great time at the McArthur Reunion in Lumberton! R.I.P. Miss your smile. Aunt Gussie and Denise*

Gussie Dennis n Denise Taylor - April 04, 2021 at 06:39 PM



“ *Serenity Wreath was purchased for the family of Mr. Kempfus Stephens.*



April 04, 2021 at 07:57 AM

CW

“ *To the family of Kempfus Stephens .
Sharing in your sadness as you remember Kemp.
i hope you feel surrounded by much love.
sending healing prayers and comforting hugs with deepest
condolences.*

CHESTER WILLIAMS - April 03, 2021 at 05:45 PM



“ *Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Mr. Kempfus Stephens.*



April 02, 2021 at 08:08 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Mr. Kempfus Stephens.*



April 02, 2021 at 09:25 AM