

The Boston Globe

Douglas Stephens; provided housing for disabled

By Andrea Levene
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

When a car accident left their son in a coma for more than nine months, Douglas Stephens and his wife knew they had to do something. Taking advantage of Mr. Stephens's expertise in real estate, they started a nonprofit company offering low-income housing and care for survivors of brain injury.

"We wanted to provide something for our son when we were no longer able to care for him," Carrol (McKay) said. "We also wanted to help other people in the process."

Mr. Stephens, 64, longtime executive vice president of Cummings Properties, died Monday of pancreatic cancer in his Andover home.

A native of Medford, Mr. Stephens graduated from Tufts University in 1960 with a bachelor's degree in economics. That same year he married Carrol. In 1966 he accepted a management position at Old Medford Foods Inc., a company headed by his friend and fra-

ternity brother, William Cummings.

"Doug was very predictable, quiet, and dependable," Cummings said yesterday. "He was an adviser to me and it was very reassuring to be with Doug. I think that he was the most selfless person I've ever known."

In 1972 Mr. Stephens switched to Cummings Properties, also owned by his friend, and took the title he would hold for more than 30 years.

In addition to serving as executive vice president, Mr. Stephens was also a trustee of the company's Cummings Foundation Inc., which, among other things, established New Horizons at Choate LLC., an assisted living residential complex for senior citizens.

In 1983, a car accident left Mr. Stephens's son, Scott, then 17, physically disabled and unable to speak.

"There was no housing available for someone with his disabilities," said Mr. Stephens's daugh-

ter, Susan Throckmorton. "They wanted to provide for him. They knew how hard it was."

So, in 1991, Mr. Stephens and his wife cofounded Supportive Living Inc., an organization that manages two housing facilities for survivors of brain injury: Warren House in Woburn and McLaughlin House in North Reading.

"They started it from nothing," said Throckmorton, of Jacksonville, Fla. "It was their dream."

Mr. Stephens served as the organization's vice president for executive finance.

"He would come home at night time and we would do work together," said his wife, the organization's president. "It was something he gave a lot of effort."

A third supportive living facility is being planned in Lexington. Mr. Stephens hoped to provide housing and care for as many survivors of brain injury as possible.

"I know it was my dad's dream to have an endowment fund set up for people who couldn't afford to



DOUGLAS STEPHENS

pay," Throckmorton said. "They don't want anyone to be turned away."

In addition to his wife, daughter, and son, now of Woburn, Mr. Stephens leaves another daughter, Sheryl DeMaine of Salem, N.H.; a brother, Edward Stephens III; and five grandchildren.

A funeral service will be held today at 11 a.m. in the West Parish Garden Cemetery in Andover.

IN MEMORIAM



DOUGLAS STEPHENS
1939-2004

Cummings Properties' Executive Vice-President

The Cummings Properties family mourns the loss of its executive vice-president, Douglas Stephens, 64. A 32-year employee of the firm and a member of the Cummings Foundation board of trustees, Doug passed away on May 17, 2004 after a valiant, seven-month battle with pancreatic cancer.

During his long, wonderful tenure at Cummings Properties, Doug warmly touched the lives of all of those with whom he came into contact. His intelligence, wit, sense of humor and ready smile were long fixtures in our offices and will never be forgotten. His spirit will live on at Cummings Properties in the hearts and minds of his friends and colleagues.

Doug is survived by Carrol Stephens, his wife of 44 years, their three children, Susan, Scott, and Sheryl, and their five grandchildren, all of whom were with him when he died at their Andover home.

For those wishing to do so, contributions may be made in Doug's memory to the "**Stephens Memorial Endowment Fund**," at Supportive Living, Inc., 17 Warren Avenue, Woburn, MA 01801. This is a superb local area support organization built by Doug and Carrol to provide long-term group housing for survivors of traumatic brain injuries, with locations in Woburn, North Reading and Lexington, MA.

A wake will be held on Wednesday, May 19 from 1:00 to 5:00 PM and 6:00 to 9:00 PM at McLaughlin-Dello Russo Funeral Home, 60 Pleasant Street, Woburn, MA. The funeral service will take place Thursday, May 20 at 11 AM at the West Parish Cemetery Chapel in Andover, MA.

Douglas Stephens YMCA Teen Center



In recognition of Doug's devotion to assisting others, and in particular his work helping young adults overcome obstacles, the brand new North Shore YMCA Teen Center in Beverly will be named in Doug's honor. Now under construction, the 25,000 square foot facility is slated for completion late this summer. While Doug will always have a place in our hearts, the naming of this facility will share his legacy with an even wider audience.

Remembering Doug...

Together today, we celebrate the life of one of the most caring and compassionate people most of us will ever know. And we come here together to thank Doug, and honor him, for his lifetime legacy of hard work, dedication, loyalty, and kindness. For me, I will most-of-all remember his extraordinary selflessness.



Doug Stephens
(1939 - 2004)

Douglas Stephens was a devoted husband, father, brother... grand-father, uncle, and father-in-law... Or, he was our very dear colleague, our old friend, our best friend, or maybe, our new friend... And every one of us knows how special Doug was.

Doug was my Tufts fraternity brother, 48 years ago. There too, he was the quiet guy everybody liked. Without benefit of any double promotions, Doug graduated from Medford High School, by the way, at age 16, and from Tufts shortly before

his 21st birthday. Six months after that, he and Carrol were married in December 1960.

A few years later, Doug became my work colleague and confidant... for the next 38 years. Most recently, he was executive vice president of an organization where 460 staff at all levels, simply adored him.

I remember August 28, 1966, the day we first started working together, except that I wasn't around that week. Doug joined Old Medford Foods as its treasurer just after the Company moved to Woburn, and one day after Joyce and I left the country on our honeymoon!

Doug started signing the Company's checks that very first day, and hundreds of thousands of checks later, Doug's was the only signature the bank ever knew. He was so grateful when electronic fund transfers finally came along, instead of his having to face a big pile of payroll checks every Wednesday morning.

Several years ago, I happened to sign a few checks, when Doug and Carrol were away... But every single one of them was returned by the bank, because they were not written by Doug!

Doug and Carrol were devoted first to each other, and then very soon to their wonderful growing family. And consider for just a

bit about what Carrol told me a few weeks ago... In all those years, she said, she and Doug never had an argument! Never even once in all that time!

I think that most of us guys eventually get the message that it doesn't pay to argue with our wives... But just think how smart Doug was... He must have known that, even before he was married!

Doug never talked much publicly about his Christian beliefs... Instead he lived them... every single day. And, like Doug, many of us believe that death is a doorway to our eternal home. Life has changed, but it has not been taken away.

Harold Kushner, author of *Why Bad Things Happen to Good People*, recently wrote a book about the 23rd psalm, and the meaning of "the shadow of death." Rabbi Kushner compared dying to going through a dark tunnel. "There has never been a tunnel so long that it did not ultimately emerge into daylight," he wrote, "or a night so dark that it did not ultimately yield to the dawn."

Most of us believe that Doug must have found a very short tunnel. And that he lives-on, **now**, in an eternal world, more beautiful than we can even imagine. And we share a faith in Doug's real and continued presence among us.

Where Doug's parting has left huge voids, fill those voids with remembrances... remembrances of his friendship and of his love. For it will truly be by thinking about him, and talking about him often, that we will keep him alive, and will keep him with us.

As most of you know very well, Doug was someone who was never "down." He brought his sense of humor and cheery personality with him always...even deep into his terrible illness. How many people ever saw Doug look at anything, except in its best possible light?

Certainly Doug worked tirelessly for Cummings Properties, and he worked the same way, for both of the New Horizons communities. And then, for the last 10 or 15 years, anyway, he also went home to work tirelessly with Carrol for Supportive Living, Inc.

Warren House in Woburn and the Bernie McLaughlin House in North Reading are marvelous testimonies to how two dedicated leaders have radically changed the lives of dozens of brain injury survivors and their families. The opportunities offered at both of the SLI facilities, are an incredible attestation to the great good Doug and Carrol have brought.

No mere words of sympathy will ease the pain of Doug's loss, but the huge void itself will preserve our respective bonds with Doug, as we keep his memory alive.

We pay tribute here to Doug this day, as we shall in our hearts for the many tomorrows. We thank you for your love, Doug, and thank you for being such an important part in all our lives.

Bill Cummings, May 20, 2004