

Larry Eugene Stephenson

1922 - 2013



Stephenson, Larry Eugene, the son of Floyd Earnest and Capitola (Jones) Stephenson, died Sunday, Jan. 27, 2013, in Wichita, Kan.

He was born Nov. 1, 1922, in Headrick, Jackson Co., Okla. and remained there during his first 12 years of school, graduating as Salutatorian of his class. From there he attended college first in Altus, Okla. and then in San Antonio, Texas until the beginning of WWII, when he joined the US Army Air Corps. He served on Iwo Jima and Okinawa and then with the Occupation Forces in Japan.

Upon separation from the Army, Larry returned to college attending the University of Oklahoma, where he majored in journalism. He was named the outstanding senior journalism student and awarded a scholarship to study polls with Elmo Roper and George Gallup. He was editor of Sooner Magazine, the OU alumni publication.

With the beginning of the Korean War, Larry once again entered the Army serving with NATO forces in Europe. Later he rounded out 26 years in the Army with the 45th Infantry Division of the OKNG during the Vietnam War. He was commander 158th Artillery Battalion retiring at Lt. Colonel.

Larry married Virginia Bray in 1949, and they are the parents of three children, Larry Kent (Sheryl), Patricia Allene (Craig) Weinbrenner and Randall Craig (Lisa). Additionally ten grandchildren, Cullen, Reese, Bo, Jacob and Kyle Stephenson, Derek, Brandon and Hayden Weinbrenner, Lara (Alex) Barrientes, Greg Simpson. Additionally nine great-grandchildren.

Larry was a Senior VP of Fidelity Bank, NA, of OKC and while there graduated from the Stonier Graduate School of Banking at Rutgers University in New Jersey. Later he served as President, Chairman and CEO of Security Bank and Trust in Ponca City, Okla., having moved to Ponca in 1970.

In 1980, he accepted an appointment in the Reagan administration as Oklahoma State Director of the Farmers' Home Administration, where he served for the next four years.

In Ponca, Larry was Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Westminster Village, Chairman of the Bicentennial Committee, Chairman of the Cherokee Strip Centennial Committee, President of the Ponca City Rotary Club, District Governor of District 5750 of Rotary. Rotary Chairman for raising funds for the Child Care Center in Oklahoma City following the bombing of the Murrah building; named Rotarian of the Year for 1992-93.

He led a Youth Study Exchange team to Japan and later a Group Study Exchange team, also to Japan. Larry was founder and first president of the Ponca City Historical Society, Chairman of the Marland Mansion Acquisition Commission; Chairman of the Marland Mansion Estate Commission (two terms), President of United Way of Ponca City; President of the Ponca City Art Association (two terms), Trustee of Ponca City Art Association, Member of the Vestry and Budget Chairman - Grace Episcopal Church, Corporate Treasurer - Grace Episcopal Church, Member of Ponca City Industrial

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Development Foundation, Ponca City Millennium Committee member, Ponca City Literacy Council member and Treasurer of Ponca City Salvation Army, Larry was named Ponca City Chamber of Commerce Outstanding Citizen in 1976 and also DAR Outstanding Citizen that same year.

Larry supported his alma mater, the University of Oklahoma, serving as President of the OU Dad's Association in 1971 and becoming a member of the Quarter Century Club in 2012.

A memorial service is planned for 2:00 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 9, at Grace Episcopal Church, 109 N. 13th St., Ponca City, Okla.

In lieu of flowers, it is suggested that contributions be made either to the church in his memory or to the Rotary Foundation, One Rotary Center, 1560 Sherman Ave., Evanston, IL 60201, to help eradicate polio worldwide.

Baker Funeral Home, Valley Center. www.bakerfhvc.com