



Stephen Michael Stanley

November 20, 1926 - January 30, 2025

Stephen Michael Stanley was called home to be with the Lord on January 30, 2025 in Austin, Texas at the age of 98. He was born in Miami, Florida to Snowie Mahaffey Stanley and Henry Smith Stanley on November 20, 1926 and named Smith Mahaffey Stanley. Noting that having three last names was a challenge, in 1953 he officially changed his name to Stephen Michael Stanley. The decision to keep the same initials reflects his thoughtful and practical nature as well as his desire to continue to honor his parents.

Steve was a true patriot. He enlisted in the U.S. Navy at the age of 17, the day after he graduated from high school, to serve in WWII. A veteran of both WWII and the Korean War, Steve served in the Air Force as well as the Navy. It was during this time working with radar and electronics that he shifted his interest from medicine to engineering. Building on his knowledge of these technologies, Steve earned a Bachelors of Electrical Engineering from the University of Miami and studied Technical Management at the University of California. Steve found his calling in the field of aerospace. His career spanned five decades during which he was employed at Philco-Ford, Ford Aerospace and United Space Alliance, from which he retired in 2002. He worked on a wide range of projects, from the communication system for Mission Control and computer systems aboard the Space Shuttle, to ground support systems for unmanned satellites and the International Space Station. Steve managed many teams and was acknowledged for his leadership during the heyday of the space program, helping build the NASA we know today.

Steve married Mary Jo Balshaw Wieser in 1964. They lived and raised their family outside of Houston until 2005, when they relocated to Central Texas to be closer to their oldest daughter. Steve adored his wife and was dedicated to demonstrating his love for her until she passed in 2017.

Incredibly industrious, resourceful, and productive, Steve was a man in motion. While navigating his engineering career, he also managed real estate interests, started several businesses, and completed multiple home renovations. He continued to stay active and

help others after his retirement to Sun City in Georgetown, Texas. He read in elementary schools, volunteered with the Kiwanis Club and veterans groups, and attended Aviation Club meetings. Steve was a lifelong learner and enjoyed researching his wide range of interests.

Quick with a smile and a kind word, Steve was a loyal friend and neighbor who was known for his generosity and gentle countenance. Most of the time, Steve was content to let others have the spotlight and to be a valued listener. When prompted, he would relay his stories and experiences, such as how he witnessed the singular flight of Howard Hughes' Spruce Goose from the deck of a naval carrier or that he participated in the evolution of electronic computers from WWII and room-sized machines, to the personal computers and handheld devices we use today.

Steve was a beloved father, granddad, and "Pops" (great-granddad). He leaves two loving daughters and their husbands, Desiree Stanley-Payne and Rich Payne and Sherrie and Bob Frachtman; three cherished grand-children, Adrienne, Brandon (Natalie) and Julian (Leah); and four treasured great grand-children, Gabriel, Levi, Lily, and Gemma; and many others fortunate enough to have known him. In addition to his wife, Mary Jo, Steve was predeceased by his son, Randy Wieser, and his parents and sisters and brother.

The family would like to thank the compassionate medical/dental professionals who cared for Steve including Joyce Tseng, AGCNS, Dr. Todd Smith, Dr. Mark Sweeney, and his Hospice Austin team of angels as well as his exceptional caregivers in his later years at Brookdale Gaines Ranch and Silverleaf Eldercare-Arboretum. He was loved by all of them in large part due to his kindness and humility. We are also thankful for his special friendships with Jean Pehrson and Myra Eppright, both of whom brought much joy to his life.

A graveside service was held in Houston on February 2, 2025 at Forest Park-Lawndale Cemetery where Steve was laid to rest, along side his beloved wife, Mary Jo, with military honors. A Celebration of Life gathering is being planned in Austin this spring at a date to be determined.

For those who might want to make a contribution in Steve's memory, please consider Hospice Austin (<https://www.hospiceaustin.org/get-involved/donate/>) or Honor Flight Austin (<https://honorflightaustin.org/donate/>) or a cause meaningful to you.

Cemetery Details

Forest Park Lawndale

6900 Lawndale St
Houston, TX 77023

Previous Events

Graveside Service

FEB 2. 2:00 PM - 2:55 PM (CT)

Forest Park Lawndale
6900 Lawndale St.
Houston, TX 77023

Tribute Wall

DE

“ 7 files added to the album *Last Chapter (97 and 98 years old)*



desireestanleypayne - February 07, 2025 at 08:57 AM

DE

“ 9 files added to the album *Last Chapter (97 and 98 years old)*



desireestanleypayne - February 07, 2025 at 01:16 AM

DE

“ 14 files added to the album *Birthdays*



desireestanleypayne - February 07, 2025 at 01:06 AM

DE

“ 1 file added to the album *Children*



desireestanleypayne - February 07, 2025 at 01:01 AM

DE

“ 10 files added to the album *Special Smiles*



desireestanleypayne - February 07, 2025 at 12:52 AM

DE

“ 37 files added to the album *Life*



desireestanleypayne - February 07, 2025 at 12:39 AM

DE

“ 5 files added to the album *Grandchildren and Great-Grandchildren*



desireestanleypayne - February 07, 2025 at 12:31 AM

DE

“ 15 files added to the album *Celebrations*



desireestanleypayne - February 07, 2025 at 12:22 AM

DP

“ 8 files added to the album *Military*



Desiree Payne - February 06, 2025 at 11:02 PM

DP

“ 3 files added to the album *Work Related*



Desiree Payne - February 06, 2025 at 10:59 PM

DP

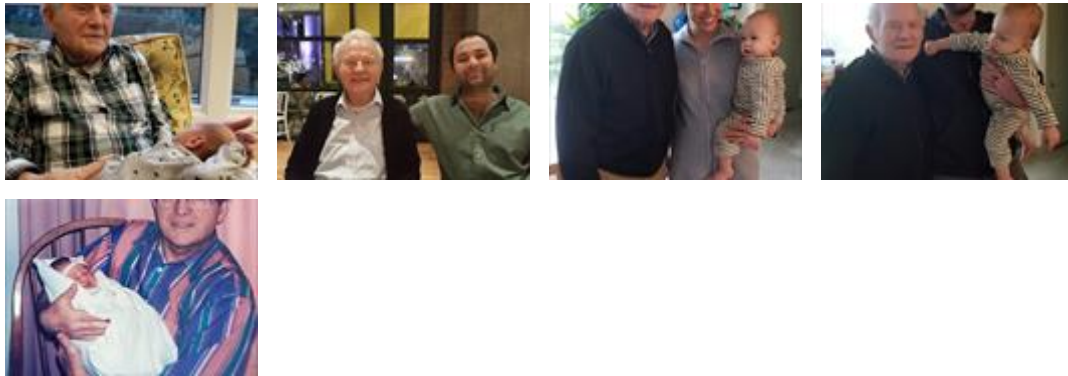
“ 1 file added to the album *Celebrations*



Desiree Payne - February 06, 2025 at 10:55 PM

DP

“ 30 files added to the album *Grandchildren and Great-Grandchildren*



Desiree Payne - February 06, 2025 at 10:45 PM

DP

“ 1 file added to the album *Children*



Desiree Payne - February 06, 2025 at 10:38 PM

DP

“ 15 files added to the album *Childhood and Young Adult*



Desiree Payne - February 06, 2025 at 10:28 PM

AZ

“ Sweet Steve,

Thank you for your kind and gentle presence and helping me walk in my purpose these last couple of months. It's been an honor to get to know you and your daughters - your legacy lives on through them, and the strength & love they exude is a testament to how great of a father you were. I'll miss you, fly high king!

*Love,
Ashley*



Ashley Zepeda - February 06, 2025 at 07:51 PM

DW

“ My dearest Steve,
Although you are deeply missed. I know you are in a much better place. Probably doing your "honey-do list" for Mary-Jo. (smiley face). I am so grateful to share the last couple years with you. The highlight of my day was "there is that voice" leading to our morning cups of coffee to start our day! Ill miss Our conversations about Miami, iguanas and history! Our walks, waving at every single car that passed by. You reminding me to not "over water" the plants. As I still would (not on purpose of course). The joy of seeing Bubbas face light up when y'all hugged. You are an exceptional man and I feel so very blessed and lucky to know you. I'm honored to call you family. I love you.

Your Sweet friend,
Danielle Walker

Danielle Walker - February 03, 2025 at 12:47 PM

DP

Daneille,

You were a precious angel for our dad. The special bond you had with him was an answer to our prayers. The bond you two developed went beyond our earthly understanding as it was instant! The intentionality in which you interacted with and encouraged our dad brought sweet smiles to his face, was beautiful to witness, and helped maintain his quality of life this side of heaven. Saying good bye is harder for those who know us and love us so, but hopefully knowing you now have an angel watching over you from heaven (named Steve) will add peace to your spirit and joy to your heart today and always.

Much Love,
Desiree and Sherrie

Desiree Payne - February 06, 2025 at 04:03 PM

“ *Eulogy for Stephen M. Stanley*
02/02/25 - Rich Payne (son-in-law)

Part 1

I loved Steve Stanley.

But I also really liked him. And I admired and respected him. He was a very special man.

As I was preparing to talk about him today, I spent a lot of time thinking about what made him so special. I've identified 5 things.

First, it's very fitting that this is called a funeral service, because service was incredibly important to Steve. He joined the Navy at 17, the day after he graduated. He had a passion for flying and really wanted to be a pilot. It never worked out for him, but it was not a lack of determination. Steve entered the military multiple times, both the Navy and the Air Force, and is a veteran twice over - WWII and the Korean war.

In addition to serving his country, he served his community. When he saw a need, Steve got involved in neighborhood issues, he cared about his neighbors.

And Steve served his family! He adored his wife, Mary Jo, and loved serving her. Sometimes that was literal - serving her a cup of coffee or toting her bags. But primarily, he was always working to make her visions (and such grand visions they were) into reality.

He dearly loved his children and grandchildren, and served them too. Often, this manifested as being a provider. I experienced this personally with dinners, trips, tickets, outings. For his great-grandchildren, he served them as a role model, delighting in their curiosity and responding to them with gentleness and kindness. Steve seemed to derive a lot of joy by serving. You could say he had a servant's heart.

Speaking of heart...

I'm convinced that Steve was a medical miracle. His heart was so big, there was no way his chest should have been able to contain it!

He was kind to me from the very beginning. We had a lot in common, both being introverted engineers. We could enjoy each other's company in silence, with fewer than a dozen words spoken in an hour! When I would relate good news or a success, he would say "great job, I knew you could do it! We are proud of you!". When I shared a setback or challenge, he responded "Don't worry, I'm sure you will figure it out. You are smart and resilient". But it wasn't just me, he was generous like this to everyone - and so encouraging.

Even as his memory started to go, his outlook stayed positive. "No, I don't remember what I had for breakfast, but I'm sure it was delicious!".

He was kind of like that song Home on the Range- "And never was heard a discouraging word". I mentioned this to Desiree, and she said they used to sing that on car trips all the time growing up.

One of the ways Steve encouraged his friends and family alike was by listening. We all know he tended to be quiet, but he was an "active listener" before there was a name for it. His generosity was often quiet as well. He didn't like to draw

attention to himself with his giving.

That was his heart. And hearts and minds go together.

Steve had an amazing mind. He was an electrical engineer, and combining that with his passion for flying resulted in a career in aerospace that spanned 5 decades. The obituary lists some of the impressive projects he was involved with. Steve was incredibly curious about a wide range of topics. He was always researching something. In his later years, it was often stocks or health and nutrition. Steve always asked about my work and would send me articles he thought I would find interesting. He also liked to tinker. Apparently, he developed one of the first prototypes of a cordless phone. But being so busy, he never quite got around to patenting it.

See Part 2

Rich Payne - February 02, 2025 at 09:59 PM

*Part 2**After Heart and Mind comes Body*

Like many of that Greatest Generation, service and duty were synonymous with providing and work. And I'll tell you, that man worked. From his engineering job to managing their apartments and renovating their houses. When I met him, he was almost 70, and I had trouble keeping up with him. Steve wasn't a large person, but oh, was he strong. He always seemed to be in motion - in the yard, out on errands, up on the roof, down in the flower beds - it made my head spin! I know where Desiree's get-up-and-go comes from. He was well into his 80s before I saw him sit down to watch a TV show.

That leaves Spirit. Steve was a deeply spiritual man, although I didn't appreciate that until his later years. He was always accepting of others. He had a deep faith which he nurtured by going to church and reading the bible. He dearly loved his weekly bible studies and theological discussions with Pastor Mark at Brookdale. I came to see that his faith was the foundation upon which the rest of his life was built.

So when I put this all together - His Service, Heart, Mind, Body and Spirit, I realized that Steve was a "yes" man. Not a sycophant, but someone who really said "yes" to life.

**"Steve, do you want to go to down to the activity room and hear a talk on someone's trip to Borneo?" - YES*

**"Steve, can Desiree have the cheerleaders over for a party?" YES*

**"How about an outing to the Ice Cream Museum?" YES*

** 5 years ago he visited us in NC. I asked "Steve, it's New Years Eve, do you want to go see a minor league hockey game with me?" He had never been to a hockey game in his life. But he was a YES, and we had a great time!*

Now, maybe there were times he should have said "no", and set some boundaries, but that's the risk you run when you are a Yes man.

Steve modeled living out his ideals:

He showed up,

He served,

He listened,

He encouraged,

He loved,

He said YES to life.

That is the man we are honoring today, Steve Stanley

Rich Payne - February 02, 2025 at 10:01 PM