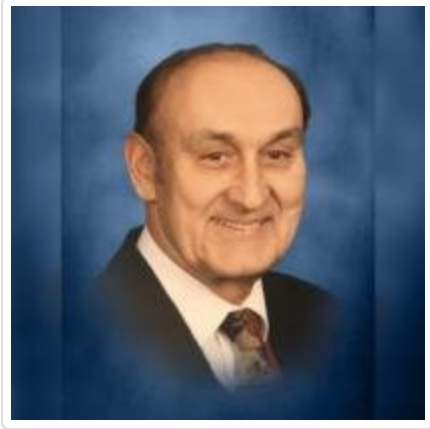




Stephen Mucha

August 29, 1921 - October 18, 2023

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If all the world's a stage, Stephen Mucha played many roles in his 102 years.

Husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, stepfather, step-grandfather, singer, actor, golfer, writer, engineer, businessman, churchgoer, serviceman, sports fan, photographer, lover of jokes, and teller of stories.

His entrance (to use Shakespeare's word) took place on Aug. 29, 1921, in Carteret, N.J. His exit, from natural causes, was on Oct. 18, 2023, in the apartment he shared with Carol Ann Copper, his beloved wife of 43 years, at Cambridge Senior Living in Moorestown, N.J.

Steve and Carol were musical soulmates. By his count, they performed together, singing and playing dulcimers and autoharps, at 1,729 performances over decades, even into his 90s, mostly at nursing homes. They composed songs, did plenty of gigs with the Greater Pinelands Dulcimer Society, and were longtime choir members at St. Paul United Methodist Church in Willingboro. Under the name Musical Muses, they self-published a CD titled Ever a Dulcimer Moment. The week before he died, the 102-year-old even played a harmonica duet with his 2-year-old great-grandson.

Other accomplishments also deserve a spotlight. He helped create a pioneering type of 3-D camera as a Navy engineer during World War 2, then worked on the first successful tandem rotor helicopter.

A dedicated golfer, Steve wrote a book, *How to Break 100*, published by Walker and Co. in 1982. (His key tip was the "check-it swing." Step back, take a swing, noting where the grass gets clipped, then stand so the ball is at that striking point, reducing mis-hits.) His self-published second book, *Advice From a 90-Year-Old Man* (available on Amazon), shares stories from his childhood, tips on saving money, lessons from his adult years, plus a few favorite jokes.

Raised by Czechoslovakian immigrants John and Mary (Valo) Mucha, Steve and his older brothers, John and Paul, grew up during the Depression. The family got by thanks to Dad's carpentry skills and a family store where little Stephen helped sell penny candy. Steve graduated from Carteret High School in 1939, then from the Casey Jones School of Aeronautics in Newark, N.J., in 1942.

His two older brothers were already serving in World War 2. Paul received a Silver Star for saving comrades during the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, and John served in Europe, including the Battle of the Bulge.

After joining the Navy, Steve trained around the country, then took on a couple of innovative projects at the Philadelphia Navy Yard. He helped turn the ideas of inventor Douglas Winnek into a working 3-D camera. Reports say it was used to study nuclear blasts. Steve also worked on the first successful tandem rotor helicopter, designed by aviation pioneer Frank Piasecki of Philadelphia. Steve was honorably discharged as an ensign from the Navy in 1946, and later as a lieutenant from the Naval Reserves in 1954.

He was proud of his service, attending meetings at the local American Legion

post in his 90s, and, in his final years, habitually wearing his "World War II Veteran" cap.

At Swarthmore College, Steve enjoyed acting, photography and tennis, majored in mechanical engineering, met first wife Shirley Bryan, and got his bachelor of science degree in 1949.

They raised four children, Janet, Peter, James and David, mostly in Cherry Hill N.J. Steve had his own company, serving as a manufacturer's representative, with offices in Cherry Hill, Pennsauken and Merchantville for many years. The family enjoyed summers at their house in Surf City, and took occasional camping trips, usually in the Poconos. Over the years, Steve stayed involved with photography, community theater, and sports, playing golf and avidly rooting for Philadelphia sports teams.

Steve and Carol met through a singles group, "Parents Without Partners," married in 1980, settled into their house in Pennsauken, and became inseparable. They played tennis together, spent lots of time with their families (and assorted cats), attended and often performed at church together, regularly attended plays at the Ritz Theatre in Oaklyn, and read hundreds of books to young schoolchildren as volunteers for the BookMates program.

In his last few years, as Steve's eyesight faltered due to macular degeneration, and his frailties made walking difficult, Carol often sat with him (and their cats) for hours on a loveseat recliner, reading him books and magazines. This continued when they moved to Cambridge in Moorestown in the spring of 2023.

Steve's kind-heartedness was often on display in the many jokes he told to family and strangers alike. Though some were punny "dad jokes," he favored

little stories with a nice punchline. His charm and good humor even made nurses feel better while he was hospitalized recovering from life-threatening maladies.

In his last years, his standard line, which made visitors of all kinds smile, was (more or less), "Boy, you look great today!"

Beloved husband of Carol Copper. Loving father of Janet Horton, Peter Mucha (Anne), James Muchovej (Angela), and David Mucha (Thalia). Loving stepfather of Sandra Johnson (Ken), Scott Anderson (the late Marta), and Steven Anderson (Monika). Stephen is also survived by seven grandchildren, seven step-grandchildren, and one great-grandson. He was predeceased by his parents, John and Mary Mucha, brothers John and Paul, and first wife Shirley Holder.

Special thanks to home health aides of Caring Senior Services, especially Shawn Collins, as well as the many vigilant and attentive caregivers of Cambridge Senior Living, Bayada Home Health Care, and Compassus Hospice Services who helped and comforted Steve in his final months. Gratitude also to Efren and Lilibeth Carandang, and other helpful neighbors in Pennsauken.

Family and friends are invited to ceremonies to celebrate his life on Saturday, Nov., 18, 2023, at St. Thomas' Episcopal Church, 212 N. Main St., Glassboro, NJ. A church service at 2:30 p.m. will be followed by a burial service in the church's cemetery with military honors. In lieu of flowers, donations in memory of Stephen Mucha can be made to the Ritz Theatre in Oaklyn, BookMates, or the East Pennsauken United Methodist Church.

Previous Events

Church Service

NOV **18.** 2:30 PM - 3:30 PM.

St. THomas Episcopal Church

Graveside Burial

NOV **18.** 3:30 PM.

Inactive - St. THomas Episcopal Church Cemetery

Tribute Wall

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“What a wonderful and kind man. He was always so full of knowledge and quick to tell a joke! I enjoyed working for him for years. He was a wonderful Boss! He gave me a job when I needed it and worked around my children's schedule so I could be there when they needed me. I will be eternal grateful for those memories. He always had a smile on his face, and always found the positives in everything. I'm sure he will be missed by many! Rest in peace my friend. Diane Fletcher

Diane Fletcher - July 08, 2024 at 10:20 AM