



## Johnny Harrell Stevens

February 12, 1952 - November 19, 2024

Johnny Harrell Stevens died on Tuesday, November 19, 2024, Lexington Medical Center in West Columbia, SC.

He was born February 12, 1952, in Conway and was the son of the late Acie Curtis Stevens, Jr. and Carolyn Cox Stevens of the Good Hope Community in Horry County. He was the paternal grandson of the late Acie Curtis Stevens and Fancy Lee Stevens and maternal grandson of the late Bardy A. Cox and Maude Watts Cox.

Mr. Stevens attended the public schools of Horry County and graduated from Conway High School in 1970. He attended Coastal Carolina University and graduated from St. Andrews Presbyterian College in 1979 with a BA Degree in Political Science. While in college, he served on various student government committees and was on the Dean's Honor Roll and a member of the St. Andrews Honor Society. Upon graduation, he attended the USC School of Law and later worked in a legal capacity with the corporate office of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of South Carolina.

In 1983 he began a career in public service with the State of South Carolina. As a specialist with the SC Vocational Rehabilitation Department, he was instrumental in the development of innovative policies that enabled many clients to receive services such as vehicle modifications and various types of adaptive equipment. He was also involved with family adjustment counseling and the administration of various independent living services throughout South Carolina.

During his career with the Department and with funding from the National Institute of Disability and Rehabilitation Research, he authored several publications in the field of assistive technology and received special recognition from the Center for Rehabilitation Science and Biomedical Engineering at Louisiana Tech University.

In the late 1980's he worked on various planning committee and volunteer capacities to help gain strong support in South Carolina for the Americans with Disabilities Act which was later signed into law by President George H.W. Bush in 1990. In 1992, he was tapped to implement the politically sensitive mission of transitioning the SC Independent Living Program to a consumer controlled Statewide Independent Living Council with members appointed by the Governor.

In 1993, he earned a master's degree in Rehabilitation Administration from the University of South Carolina. Later that year, he was recruited to assist in the initial start-up and development of the state's first Traumatic Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Division at South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs in Columbia. He was instrumental in the design, writing and implementing both a Medicaid waiver program and a statewide family support policy to assist and enable individuals with disabilities to live in their own homes with as much independence and dignity as possible.

He retired in 2004 and was presented the outstanding State Service Recognition Award from the Governor and a joint recognition award from both of the state agencies in which he had served. In 2005, Governor Mark Sanford appointed him to the South Carolina Spinal Cord Injury Research Fund Board at the Medical University of SC. After retirement, he continued to do various consulting on a private basis in the field of disability issues and services. He was also a founding member of the SC Disabilities Research Commission and the SC Spinal Cord Injury Association. He served on the SC Assistive Technology Advisory Panel, Medicaid Infrastructure Grant Advisory Committee, Assistive Technology Loan Program Committee and the Human Rights Committee at the Richland-Lexington Disabilities and Special Needs

Board. He was an FCC Licensed Amateur Radio operator and a lifelong member of the Good Hope Baptist Church.

He is survived by his wife of 42 years, Debra Jeanne Hart Stevens, a brother Garry Curtis Stevens (Sylvia) of Irmo, SC, a nephew, Spencer S. Stevens as well as numerous cousins, close friends and professional associates.

The graveside service will be private. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Good Hope Baptist Church Cemetery Fund.

Please sign a guestbook at [www.goldfinchfuneralhome.com](http://www.goldfinchfuneralhome.com)

Goldfinch Funeral Home, Conway Chapel is in charge of arrangements.

# Cemetery Details

## **Woodlawn Cemetery**

Whispering Woods Road  
Conway, SC 29526

# Tribute Wall

SB

“ My thoughts and prayers to John’s family. John and Debra are both truly amazing people. I worked with John for many years, helping families with vehicle modifications to help with their mobility needs. He will be missed.

---

**Sara Bradstream** - November 28, 2024 at 03:17 PM

LJ

“ I am sad to hear about Johnny. I was freshman and he was an older upper classman. We both lived in Suite 6 of Orange Dorm at St. Andrews. He was such a good guy. I was so very young. I learned things from him. I talked with him and had a great time. The fact that he was in wheel chair was never a topic of conversation. It just was part of him and it never limited him from anything. As the academic year came to close he asked me to take care of his younger brother, Garry, who was going to be a freshman. I told him I would. Garry and I became best friends. Undoubtedly their parents did a great job raising two very fine, wonderful individuals. The world is a better place for both Johnny and Garry. Lee L

---

**Lee Lambert, Jr** - November 28, 2024 at 08:09 AM

BH

“ We will all miss John. He was my friend and an exceptional advocate for our brothers and sisters with disabilities. Such a wonderful person. Condolences to Debra and all John’s family.  
Bill Hayes

---

**Bill Hayes** - November 27, 2024 at 05:59 PM

BE

“ Johnny Stevens will always be our friend. He will long be remembered for his work to enable handicapped citizens in South Carolina to live as independently and normally as possible. Johnny will be missed by many. Our symathy to Debra and his Family.  
*Billy Ray and Jane East'*

**Billy East** - November 25, 2024 at 04:36 PM



“ My prayers go out to Johnny’s family and Aunt Carolyn. Although I had not seen him in many years, Johnny was my 1st cousin and an inspiring human being. He will be missed but he left an amazing imprint on everyone who knew him from the amazing life he led. God Bless ❤️



**Brenna Brantly** - November 24, 2024 at 04:14 PM

JC

“ Janet Cox lit a candle in memory of Johnny Harrell Stevens



**Janet Cox** - November 23, 2024 at 11:23 PM

CN

“ Cathon Johnson Nobles lit a candle in memory of Johnny Harrell Stevens



**Cathon Johnson Nobles** - November 23, 2024 at 10:47 PM



“ *Sylvia Richardson lit a candle in memory of Johnny Harrell Stevens* ”



---

**Sylvia Richardson** - November 23, 2024 at 01:53 PM