



## Estelle Stephney

December 5, 1933 - December 28, 2024

Estelle Stephney, a loving mother, grandmother, and cherished community member, passed away peacefully on December 28, 2024, at the age of 91. Born on December 5, 1933, in Harlem, New York, Estelle was the beloved daughter of Nieves and Bernardino ("Johnny") Bonilla. Her family roots run deep, with her maternal grandfather being the notable 19th-century Cuban political activist Juan Bonilla. Estelle was the proud sister to John ("Juanito"), Roberto ("Bobby"), and Socorra. Estelle and Socorra found time to speak with one another almost every day of their lives.

Raised in a close-knit, loving family, Estelle's childhood was spent between Harlem and the Bronx. She later graduated from New York City's Central Commercial High School and was soon employed as a bookkeeper for Metropolitan Life Insurance. She always maintained a quiet, introspective nature during her youth, but it was clear from the start that her greatest

gift would be her love and devotion to those around her.

In 1961, Estelle married Theodore ("Ted") Stephney. The two embarked on a honeymoon road trip from New York to California and back. Together, they raised three children: William ("Bill"), Daniel ("Dan"), and Deborah ("Debbie"). The family first lived in Harlem and later moved to the Bronx for a short time, before settling in Hempstead, Long Island in 1965.

Estelle was known for her dedication to her family, always putting the needs of her children first. She was a Hall of Fame mother, an all-star parent who created a warm and safe environment not just for her children, but for the entire community. As a stay-at-home mother, she devoted herself to raising her children. In order to keep the same hours as her children, she decided to seek employment with the Hempstead school district. She began working as a teaching assistant, then became the secretary to several elementary school principals and eventually held a clerical position in the district's business office, where she remained until her retirement in 2007.

Estelle was a remarkable woman with a deep love for life and an appreciation for the arts. She enjoyed music by artists like Johnny Mathis, Gladys Knight, Frank Sinatra and various jazz and Latin music artists. Believe it or not, Public Enemy was also a favorite

group of hers. She had a beautiful voice and loved to sing. She found joy in attending concerts, Broadway shows, visiting museums and shopping. She also loved to drive. Her vibrant personality shone through in every aspect of her life, and her sense of humor grew sharper in her later years. She could have easily hosted a podcast of her own, and her wit and insight will be greatly missed by all who knew her.

Her love of family extended far beyond her own children. A devoted neighbor and friend, she was affectionately called “one of the mothers of the neighborhood,” helping raise and care for the children on Brown Avenue in Hempstead. Her nurturing spirit created countless memories for those she touched — from trips to Kennedy Park to Saturday morning junior bowling leagues, to supporting her children’s musical aspirations as they rehearsed in the basement, dreaming of becoming the next Earth, Wind & Fire or Parliament/Funkadelic.

Estelle’s strength was unparalleled. She faced her health challenges with grace and resilience, never allowing them to define her. Her beautiful smile was present even during her most difficult times. She was a voracious reader, especially enjoying romance novels, and she

remained an engaged viewer of MSNBC, The Young and the Restless, The Bold and the Beautiful and Judge Judy. An excellent cook, Estelle prepared a variety of cuisines, always ensuring her family and friends felt loved and nourished.

She is survived by her three children: Deborah Stephney, Daniel Stephney, and William Stephney; her grandchildren Dakota Stephney, Naya Stephney, Trevor Stephney and Jabari Canada-Stephney; her sister Socorra Ferrer and her brother John Bonilla; her brother-in-law Rigoberto Ferrer; daughters-in-law Annette Stephney and Tanya Cepeda-Stephney; and many loving nieces, nephews, cousins, and dear friends. Estelle's legacy will live on in the hearts of all those who had the privilege of knowing her.

Estelle's family would like to thank the many caregivers and loved ones who provided support during her final days.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JAN 4. 12:00 PM - 3:00 PM (ET)

Hungerford & Clark Funeral Home  
110 Pine St.  
Freeport, NY 11520

## Prayer Service

JAN 4. 2:30 PM (ET)

Hungerford & Clark Funeral Home  
110 Pine St.  
Freeport, NY 11520

## Private Cremation

JAN 6.

Private

# Tribute Wall

WC

“ *With Love, Tasha & Cameron purchased the Sweet Tenderness for the family of Estelle Stephney.*



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**With Love, Tasha & Cameron** - January 03, 2025 at 08:51 PM