

# Remembering

## O. Earl Stephenson, Jr.

### Angier & Black River Fire Department — North Carolina

Classification: Volunteer

Rank: Firefighter

Date of Death: May 9, 2007

Age: 61

Earl, better known as “Big Earl” to all of his friends, was with the Angier-Black River Fire Department for 21 years as a volunteer firefighter. The fire department was a big part of his life, and he loved it.

He was born on April 17, 1946, in Harnett County, North Carolina, to Ottis E. Stephenson, Sr. and Leona Ferrell Stephenson. Earl grew up learning the auto mechanic trade from his father and worked for Sherrill’s Wrecker Service for 20 years. He was employed with the North Carolina Museum of Natural Science when he passed away unexpectedly from a heart attack.

Earl was a gentle, loving man with a big heart and a big smile, who loved his family. He was a devoted son and wonderful brother to his sisters, Ann, Molly and Becky, and a loving uncle to his nieces and nephews. He was always there, ready to talk, ready to listen, seemingly with all the time in the world. He kept promises and made time for other people. He was a true friend.

He was a big NASCAR fan and enjoyed going to the races with friends. He loved to cook, especially on the grill; he was famous for his pork barbecue, ribs, and chicken. He loved having family functions and especially his family beach trips. Holidays were always very special to him.



At the museum where he worked, they set up a scholarship in his name for a deserving student to attend their summer camp, and his name is listed in the memory wall just outside the museum. There is also a scholarship set up in his name for a high school graduate who has an interest in becoming a firefighter.

We never knew how much of an impact Earl made on the lives of others. He was never one to brag or boast about himself. He always stood to the side and watched.

“Big Earl” is going to be missed by all that knew and loved him. We love you and know that you are sitting with our mother and the angels.