

# Stephens plans to honor his hero, the late McGlockton

By Elliott Almond, Mercury News

The anchor of Stanford's defensive line lost his footing when learning about the recent death of Cardinal assistant coach Chester McGlockton.

Terrence Stephens, a big-hearted nose guard from Gaithersburg, Md., took it as hard as any member of the fourth-ranked team.

"He couldn't drive, he couldn't talk," his mother, Tracey Stephens, recalled.

"He was hysterical."

Later that November day, Stephens sat alone in front of "Coach Chester's" office at Stanford to reflect on how much the man meant to him. McGlockton, a four-time Pro Bowl defensive lineman for the Raiders, died at age 42. The Alameda County Coroner's office expects to announce the cause of death early next month.

Stephens has a tribute planned when Stanford (11-1) faces No. 3 Oklahoma State (11-1) next Monday in the Fiesta Bowl.

"I want the whole country to see just how much he meant to us," said Stephens, a 6-foot-2, 295-pound junior.

An intimidating player described as moody and negative in the locker room, McGlockton had changed since leaving the NFL eight years ago. He returned to college to earn a degree and found a calling as a low-level assistant with Stanford while living in San Ramon with his wife and two daughters.

McGlockton taught more than the mechanics of pass rushing. He offered the classroom of life.

"I really wish he was here to continue that because I think I was just starting to scratch the surface of what he had to say,"  
Advertisement  
Stephens said. "But now it's my own duty."

"He's got a piece of my heart, and I think that is where the motivation will come from."

Stephens joined senior receiver Chris Owusu a few days before Christmas to visit local homeless shelters as another way to honor his fallen friend.

Although it took discipline to qualify for Stanford, Stephens said he felt rudderless until McGlockton arrived last year.

His father never was part of his life although living nearby in Maryland, Tracey Stephens said. Stephens gravitated toward a male role model like McGlockton. The only child of a single mother has forged a similar relationship with Quince Orchard High coach Dave Mencarini.

Tracey Stephens laughs when reflecting on how it has turned out.

"He was nerdy, always fixing computers," she said. "He wasn't athletic. He wasn't outgoing. He woke up one day and said, 'I know how to do all these things.'"

By then Stephens was an eighth-grader playing organized football for the first time. He wasn't an instant success. Stephens' nickname in ninth grade was "Pillow."

"As in as soft as a pillow," Mencarini said.

Mencarini persuaded Stephens to join the wrestling team to build discipline and confidence. Stephens reached the state tournament twice, finishing second as a junior in the heavyweight division.

He also showed talent in singing, another activity Stephens initiated without formal training. He auditioned for "American Idol" but was rejected. "I have never watched the show since," said Tracey, who works at a preschool in Maryland.

When it became clear Stephens had options to play college football, the mother asked him to stay close to home. Stephens wanted to head west.

"Mommy, it's Stanford," he said.

"I don't care, you're not going," she replied.

They didn't speak to each other for two weeks. But once Tracey visited the school, she relented.

**STANFORD FOOTBALL CLIPS December 27, 2011**

After two rocky seasons, it didn't seem Stephens would replace graduated Sione Fua at nose guard. But at fall camp everything changed.

"With Terrence, we saw it in him," coach David Shaw said. "Sometimes as a young player you don't know until you just go as hard as you can. You think you're kind of doing it, we say, "No, we know there's more. We know you can do better. We know you can be more physical, get off the ball quicker, we know you can get better penetration. This year we've seen it with some consistency."

Stephens has 11 tackles and a half a sack, but his main job is to draw two blockers so linebackers are freed to wreak havoc in the backfield.

Perhaps one reason for the improvement is the fact Stephens sleeps better these days. In July, he had surgery to correct sleep apnea, a common breathing disorder. It has allowed Stephens to have more energy for football and the classroom.

He just achieved his best grades since arriving on campus. It's one more example of McGlockton's influence on Stephens to not waste time.

"Chester taught me to go wherever God takes you," the player said. "The rest of what I do as a player will be for him. Every time I think about taking a step backward, I've got to think about what he would think."

There's no going backward for Stephens, a psychology major interested in forensic psychology. Foremost is playing in the NFL. Stephens also wants to eventually move to the South to work with special needs children. Then there's the plan to earn a law degree.

"I'm sure he is going to do them all," his mom said.

Coach Chester wouldn't have it any other way.