

Patricia Stephens



My name is Patricia Margaret Stephens. My parents are the late Daniel Paul Stephens and Rita Rose Stephens (Howe). My siblings are Shirley Stephens Morris, Daniel Gordon (D), Deborah Rose, Jean Elizabeth, Edgar Robert, Bryon, Donald Michael (D), Denise, Derrick and Kelly Stephens Elwell. My maternal grandparents were the late Ernest John and Bridget (Maloney) Howe and fraternal grandparents were the late Paul Stephens and Maggie Prosper. We have family connections in Eskasoni, Pot'lotek, Membertou, Millbrook, Pictou Landing and Sipekne'katik.

I am the mother of 3 sons, Robert Stephens, Albert Francis, Jr., and Karl Francis. I am the grandmother of 4 granddaughters and 2 grandsons and the great grandmother of 1 great-grandson. My family is the most important part of my life and I am blessed to have great relationships with my children and their families.

I am a survivor of the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School, attending in the 1960's. I remember the first day I arrived and was taken to the refectory and a nun brought me a bowl of cereal to eat and I realized I was alone and my parents weren't coming back to get me. I remember the feelings of loneliness and being homesick and missing my parents and younger siblings, everyday for the next 5 years, until I finally went home, when the school closed in 1967.

I remember the worst day at residential school, when I was 10 years old and the nun took me and my siblings into a room and told us that our father had committed suicide while he was incarcerated. I carried that pain and stigma with me for over 50 years until I experienced a bitter sweet revelation and learned that my father was a victim of murder at the Truro jail. His death was not deemed suspicious by authorities and no one was ever charged, but I know that my father did not die by suicide. My father was a veteran and a strong L'nu man, who was impacted by the war, which also affected his life and our family.

The best thing about the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School is that many of students I met from the reserves in the Maritimes, are my 'ressie family' and I have made life-long friendships and we have formed a strong bond and friendships and that is something that no one can ever take away.

After leaving the residential school, while growing up in Boston, during my teen years, I was rebellious and used alcohol and drugs, like many other survivors, to cope with my childhood and experiences in the IRS and the changes in my family life. I learned about life the hard way and found myself in an abusive relationship as a teenager. I was pregnant and on my own and stayed in this situation too long before I finally ended it and moved on with my son, Robert, who was born on January 28, 1973, to make a better life for us.

In my 20's, I went back to school and found a job with the Boston Indian Council(B.I.C.) where there were many Indians who came from across the USA and Canada. I met up with other survivors and family members who were also working at B.I.C. and we had a lot of fun together. I even went to the

Patricia Stevens Modeling school, located in the heart of Boston. My son and I were happy and were doing well during this time.

In my 30's, I went to a Computer Program and got a job as a Payroll Clerk for the State of Massachusetts. The employment ended when I got pregnant with my second child, who was born on December 16, 1987.

I was a stay at home Mom and had my 3rd son, Karl, who was born on April 10, 1992. I raised my sons in Boston, until I moved back to Canada, in 1998. I believed it was the best thing I could do for my children, to bring them home to be connected to their families and to our homelands.

In my 40's, I returned to school and later was employed as an Assistance Women's Support Worker in the Mi'kmaq Family Healing Centre in Cape Breton. I really loved my job there and feel I made a positive impact in some families lives. I left my job in 2006 when I received a new home in Millbrook, NS where I was brought up and moved my family to my home community.

I've accomplished many certifications during my years of working and going to training and schools, as a young adult, in my early 20's and 30's. I am a Certified Nursing Assistant with a CNA. I have a CAA Computer Training Program, Electronic Training Program, Modeling School.

As a senior, I attended the Eastern College Barbering Program at age 62 and I graduated in May 2018. I have a dream of opening a Mi'kmaq Barber Shop in Millbrook with my son Karl, who also graduated from the Barbering Program with me. I hope to see you when we open our barber shop in the future. Just goes to prove that you can do anything your heart desires and succeed, at any age.

I would like to say to the young people, "practice one of the fruits of the Spirit which is Forgiveness, as it will help you with inner Peace". It will help you to live a good life, and you will never be held back from fulfilling your dreams!!

Wela'lin.