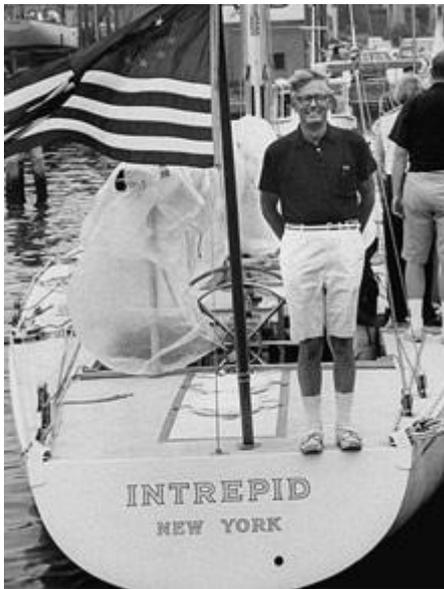


From The Daily Telegraph, London

Olin Stephens

Leading designer of racing yachts who produced 2,200 boats, among them six winners of the America's Cup.

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Stephens on perhaps his finest yacht, during America's Cup trials Photo: GETTY

Olin Stephens, who died on September 13 aged 100, was the most revered yacht designer of the 20th century.

Together with his brother Rod and the yacht broker Drake Sparkman, he founded the New York naval architectural practice, Sparkman & Stephens.

The "S&S" design tag was carried by more than 2,200 racing and cruising yachts, including six successful defenders of the America's Cup – an unsurpassed record.

Among his clients was Sir Edward Heath, who had four of his five *Morning Clouds* created by the Manhattan firm.

Olin Stephens was also intimately involved in most of the major handicapping systems employed in offshore racing, not least because he could spot flaws in the most arcane mathematical formulae yet still appreciate what such algorithms could mean for the aesthetics and seaworthiness of a yacht.

The Stephens brothers made their name in 1931 when they raced the 52ft yawl *Dorade* in the Transatlantic Race. While passing the Scilly Isles they signalled the Coastguard station "Which am I?", and received back, "You are first".

It was the start of a six-decade domination of both offshore and inshore racing classes, and after winning that year's Fastnet race as well they were given a ticker-tape welcome home in New York.

The son of an anthracite trader, Olin James Stephens II was born in the Bronx on April 13 1908, nine months after his brother Rod.

He started to study Naval Architecture at Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1926, but withdrew after contracting jaundice. On recovering he took an apprenticeship at the Henry Nevins boatyard on City Island, designing a six-metre class yacht.

He was 23 when he completed the lines of *Dorada*, his Design No 7. And while he drew the yachts with a blend of artistry and science, Rod applied the eye of a great seaman to their gear, layout, construction and fit-out.

In 1937 Starling Burgess invited Olin Stephens to help create *Ranger*, the New York Yacht Club's defender for that year's America's Cup. It trounced *Endeavour II*, Sir Tom Sopwith's British challenger, and, in doing so, established itself as the "super J" class yacht.

Though the design was a collaborative effort, the prime responsibility for it was a closely guarded secret until Burgess received the credit on his death in 1947. But *Ranger* had also benefited from studies that Stephens carried out at the Stevens Institute in New Jersey, doing test-tank work that is now the norm for America's Cup yachts.

While Olin was employed to design fast boats for the US Navy during the Second World War, Rod designed the amphibious DUKW, a sea-going truck of which General Motors produced 21,000.

The DUKW proved so vital to the invasion of Sicily in 1943 that General Eisenhower called for a commendation to be given to the officer in the War Department responsible. But the department had nothing to do with it, except to make its path difficult. Rod Stephens and two other civilians, Palmer Cosslett Putnam and Dennis Puleston, were the designers.

When the America's Cup races at last resumed after the war in 1958 it was in the smaller 12-metre class, and for the next 12 years Stephens was at the peak of his powers. *Columbia* and *Constellation* defeated the 1958 and 1964 British challengers *Sceptre* and *Sovereign* before Stephens developed, for the 1967 match, *Intrepid*, which was arguably his finest yacht.

He split the functions of keel and rudder by dividing its underbody into a keel to carry the ballast and a separate rudder to steer it with. Fast and nimble, it won again in 1970; and all subsequent 12-metres followed *Intrepid's* concept.

Stephens also designed another successful Cup defender, *Courageous*, steered by Ted Hood and then by Ted Turner to victory in 1974 and 1977, before producing his final 12-metre, *Freedom*. Its dominance in 1980 marked Stephens's recent retirement from the day to day work of S&S.

Stephens's record of six America's Cup winners exceeded that of Nathanael Herreshoff's five American defenders from 1893 to 1920.

Besides his Cup work, Stephens was a prolific designer of day boats, such as the Lightning and Blue Jay classes, and S&S boats dominated the Bermuda, the Fastnet and the Sydney-Hobart races. When Ted Heath encountered him at the 1969 London Boat Show Stephens mildly

assured him that he would find a sister ship to the S&S 34 class "satisfactory", and Heath went on to win that year's Hobart race in the first *Morning Cloud*.

Although Stephens's shy demeanour, gentle voice, shuffling movement and a bow tie in New York Yacht Club colours did not impress many on first acquaintance, he drove a dashing Porsche and was a talented modern artist, having studied under Yasuo Kuniyoshi in the 1940s.

On retiring from business he took up teaching mathematics at a local college and learned to use computers. At 91, he wrote a modest autobiography, *All This and Sailing Too*.

In it he wrote: "I was lucky. I had a goal. As far back as I can remember all I wanted to do was to design fast boats."

Some of his early yachts, such as *Dorade* and *Stormy Weather*, have been painstakingly restored at the Italian Argentario shipyard. When the New York Yacht Club celebrated Stephens's 100th birthday, he had been a member for 78 years.

Olin Stephens is survived by two sons and a daughter.

From The Independent, London

Olin Stephens: America's Cup yacht designer

Friday, 19 September 2008

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Olin J Stephens Jnr, the doyen of modern yacht design, who has died aged 100, developed the Sparkman & Stephens design house on 5th Avenue, New York, with his brother Rod, and dominated yacht racing for much of the 20th century.

Stephens produced more than 2,000 designs during a career that spanned five decades and his brilliance at the drawing board led to eight America's Cup victories as well as a succession of ocean race-winners. He was inducted into the America's Cup Hall of Fame in 1993 and was presented with a lifetime achievement award by the International Sailing Federation last year.

Among his designs were four Morning Clouds for Edward Heath. The first won the Sydney Hobart Race in 1969, only the second foreign owned yacht to do so.

The story of Olin Stephens' success began with the 1931 Transatlantic race when the 52ft American yawl Dorade he had designed for his father and which he co-skipped with Rod, won the race outright. The family tasted victory at Plymouth again that season by winning the heavy-weather Fastnet race. The following year Dorade also won the Transpac race, and took second place in the 1933 Bermuda Race.

Those successes set the two Stephens brothers on a meteoritic rise. S&S yachts dominated the racing scene for the next 50 years and underpinned every US defence of the America's Cup from 1937 to 1980.

Olin also did a tremendous amount of work to harmonise the yacht racing rules on both sides of the Atlantic by merging the American CCA rule with that of the Royal Ocean Racing Club to form the International Offshore Rule (IOR).

The sons of a successful New York coal merchant who had the foresight to sell out just before the Great Recession, Olin and Rod were brought upsailing dinghies at the Larchmont YC. Olin entered the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1926 but was forced to drop out during his freshman year due to illness, while Rod served an apprenticeship at a rigging company. After his recovery, Olin began work as a trainee draftsman under another noted American yacht designer, Phil Rhodes.

In 1929, Olin and Rod went into partnership with Drake Sparkman, a successful yacht broker, to form Sparkman & Stephens Inc (S&S). Sparkman, a born salesman, fronted the operation while Olin ran the design office and Rod provided the structural and rigging expertise. Their first project was a 21ft junior keelboat whose design, now named the Manhasset Bay One Design, can still be seen on Long Island Sound.

During the Second World War, the two brothers developed the famous DUKW (nicknamed the DUCK). More than 21,000 units were built and served in large numbers during the D-Day landings. Fitted with a light steel body over a standard GMC six-wheel truck, these vehicles had a design life in combat of 24 hours, so it is remarkable that so many remain in use decades later.

Olin also made his mark designing maxi yachts, including Jim Kilroy's fabled American yacht Kialoa III, which broke the Sydney-to-Hobart Race record in 1975 and held that mark for 21 years, together with the first two Whitbread round the world race-winners, the Swan 65 Sayula II in 1973 and the Dutchman Conny van Rietschoten's first Flyer, which won the 1977-78 race. Rod Stephens, who died in 1995, was the practical side of the partnership and his knowledge of construction, engineering and rigs made him the perfect foil for his brother

Olin started out designing boats using a rule of thumb, but his constant quest to prove and quantify led him to develop a method for evaluating a design by towing models in test tanks. It was this work that brought Olin into the America's Cup game. In 1936 the American railroad pioneer Harold S "Mike" Vanderbilt brought Stephens together with W Starling Burgess as a design team to produce the J-Class Ranger, a yacht that so dominated the 1937 America's Cup season that she spelt an end to the J-Class era.

Olin continued to take a keen interest in Metre rule boats, designing the Gold Medal-winning six-metres Goose and her near sister Llanoria, at the 1948 and 1952 Olympics. From there it was a short step to produce 12-metre yachts when the Class was adopted for the 1952 America's Cup. That first year, the defence trials were dominated by the S&S designed Columbia, sailed by

Briggs Cunningham. Another S&S yacht, Constellation, won in 1964, followed by Intrepid in 1967 and 1970.

In 1974, Olin produced another great boat in Courageous, which won the Cup that year and again in 1977 when skippered by the media mogul Ted Turner. Freedom, Olin's 1980 design, then beat them both in the hands of Dennis Conner and went on to retain the Cup against Alan Bond's Australia.

Looking back on what he viewed as a lucky and rewarding life, Olin would often quote the final paragraph in his autobiography: "In all phases of my work I was conscious of the need for balance, and I did my best to find balance in both the long and the short view. Broadly I think I can say that I applied the principles of balance in design, in business and in the pleasures I enjoyed."

Barry Pickthall

Olin James Stephens, yacht designer: born New York 13 April 1908; married (one son); died Hanover, New Hampshire 13 September 2008

From The Guardian, London

Olin Stephens

US designer of racing yachts - one of the most influential of the 20th century

- Bob Fisher
- [The Guardian](#),
- Monday September 15 2008
- [Article history](#)

Olin J Stephens II, who has died aged 100, was the most influential yacht designer of his generation, not only by virtue of his creativity, but also because of his involvement with the administration of the sport through the creation and maintenance of handicap systems for offshore racing yachts.

Stephens' long list of successes includes victories for his designs in eight America's Cup matches between 1937 and 1980, a period when only one other designer produced a winner. Naturally, Stephens was highly sought-after by the top yacht-owning syndicates of the New York Yacht Club, a body of which he had been a member since 1921. He was inducted into the America's Cup Hall of Fame in 1993. In those years, too, his designs were foremost in offshore races all over the world. Transatlantic and Fastnet race victories were followed by others, but the impact of Dorade, the 52-foot yawl he designed for his father in 1931, cannot be overstated.

It set the standard by which Stephens would be judged, both for its success in winning both the Transatlantic and Fastnet races of that year, and for the attention to minute detail - the cabin ventilators that eliminated water from going down below were to a pattern devised by Stephens and subsequently known as "Dorade" ventilators.

Stephens navigated as well as skippered Dorade both for the Transatlantic and for the Fastnet a few weeks later. A crew that also included his father and brother drove the boat hard, particularly on a spinnaker run out to the Fastnet Rock, and rounded in the company of larger, and potentially faster, yachts. Their efforts were rewarded with a corrected time victory. They arrived home in New York with the yacht in a cradle on the deck of the liner Homeric and were treated to a ticker-tape parade. The success was a driving force behind the growth of Sparkman & Stephens, the firm that Stephens had established with yacht broker Drake Sparkman.

During the 1930s, Stephens designed a wide range of day racing boats, particularly in the six-metre class, where his innate sense of the relative values of the scientific figures of drag and lift, combined with the restrictions of the rules, provided him with the style of problem he loved to solve. It resulted in a string of successes that were to provide his pathway to the America's Cup.

It was as a result of a sailing association with the amateur designer Clinton Crane that his America's Cup ambitions were first realised. Crane secured for him a place in the afterguard of his design Weetamoe, a J-class yacht that would compete in the selection trials for a defender of the cup in 1934. Stephens had already completed a study of this class and been photographed with the model of his design for the front cover of Scribner's magazine.

Racing against Yankee and the eventual trials and cup winner, Rainbow, Stephens claimed that the value of the season was not lessened by Weetamoe's inability to win: he gained insight in the cut and thrust of the design competition when the boats were altered in search of greater speed, since he was able to discuss proposed changes with Crane and see them effected at the famous Herreshoff yard in Bristol, Rhode Island.

He watched that summer as Harold Vanderbilt's Rainbow narrowly defeated Thomas Sopwith's Endeavour in a successful defence of the cup. He saw how the British boat was the faster, even though Sopwith lost, and began his planning for the next cup races. For these he combined his talents with the well-established Starling Burgess, and using the facilities of the testing tanks of the Stevens Institute at Hoboken, New Jersey, the two produced the wonder boat, Ranger, which defeated Sopwith's Endeavour II easily in four straight races.

After the second world war, during which Stephens designed fast frigates and destroyers for the US navy, he enjoyed a growing practice that designed many of the finest ocean racers and was able to move seamlessly from the days of wood and steel construction, through aluminium to glassfibre.

In 1958, the America's Cup was restored, although the giant J-class had given way to the smaller 12-metre class yachts. Sparkman & Stephens was a first stop for potential defenders. Their pre-war design Vim provided a benchmark that all the new boats found difficult to beat, but it was the latest Stephens creation, Columbia, skippered by Briggs Cunningham, that triumphed and also defeated the British challenge with Sceptre with consummate ease.

There was no new Stephens boat for the next Cup races, but in 1964 he produced Constellation, which swamped the challenge from Britain with Sovereign by massive margins.

But it was in 1967, for the next cup, that Olin produced his masterstroke. Until that time, the rudders of 12-metre craft had been mounted on the back of their ballast keels, but Stephens, when he drew Intrepid, attached the rudder to a separate skeg further aft. It allowed greater accuracy of steering with less drag, and became a standard of future designs. Intrepid defended successfully that year, and again in 1970.

In 1974 Stephens designed the first aluminium-built defender, Courageous, which won when skippered by Ted Hood that year, and again three years later in the hands of Ted Turner. Stephens' final cup triumph came with Freedom in 1980 in the hands of Dennis Conner. Shortly after that Stephens, aged 70, handed over his yacht design business to younger men.

Stephens travelled widely and was particularly happy in Tuscany at Porto San Stefano where, in the Argentario yard, many of the yachts of his design were restored by craftsmen who delighted in his company. Stephens was treated with God-like reverence there.

He said of his work: "In any design the most important factors of speed seem to be long sailing lines and large sail area, with moderate displacement and small wetted surface. Then comes beauty, by which is meant clean, fair, pleasing lines. Though per se beauty is not a factor of speed, the easiest boats to look at seem the easiest to drive."

Olin's father had encouraged him and his elder brother, Rod, to sail. In his autobiography, *All This and Sailing Too*, written when he was 91, he opens: "I was lucky. I had a goal. As far back as I can remember I wanted to design fast boats ... That commitment drove me to learn and understand (to the extent I could), and this is something I still enjoy."

Stephens always claimed that his experience on the water was far more valuable than any schooling. Born in New York, he was almost certainly the most successful dropout from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. After high school, at his parents' insistence, he attended MIT, but in his freshman year he withdrew due to illness - jaundice - and never returned.

Instead, he embarked on the first steps of his career as a junior draughtsman with a yacht design firm in New York. He said later that, while this was excellent grounding, he would not recommend it in an era when computer modelling and performance prediction are scientific tools for the yacht designer. Nevertheless he continued to pursue knowledge, learning calculus in his eighties and mastering the internet. His wife predeceased him, and he is survived by his son, Olin III.

• Olin James Stephens, yacht designer, born April 13 1908; died September 13 2008

From www.Sailing.org

Obituary: Olin J STEPHENS II (USA)



Olin STEPHENS has died aged 100
©John Gichigi/Getty Images/ISAF

Obituary

It is with great sadness ISAF reports that Olin J Stephens II, legendary yacht designer died on 13 September 2008 aged 100.

Recognizing Olin's immense impact in yacht design and the world of sailing, Olin was one of six inaugural inductees in 2007 into the [ISAF Sailing Hall of Fame](#).

Over a prolific career spanning more than 50 years, the Olin STEPHENS signature was stamped on the drawings of over 2,000 boats, including eight boats which would win the America's Cup. As well as his famous designs, Olin's love for the sport also manifested beyond his professional life, in his dedicated service to the International Sailing Federation (ISAF) and in other areas of sailing administration.

Born in New York in 1908, Olin's love affair with sailing and boat design developed during summers spent on the New England coast. Sparkman & Stephens, the company he helped to form aged just 21, made an instant impact on the sailing world with their innovative design for the 52 foot ocean racer Dorade. Dorade went on to win both the Transatlantic and Fastnet races in 1931 and Sparkman & Stephens became a name synonymous with innovative, fast and elegant design. These principals were perfectly demonstrated in the legendary J-Class Ranger, a collaboration between Olin and Starling BURGESS, which successfully defended the 1937 America's Cup and began Sparkman & Stephens' long running association with that event.

Alongside his design work, Olin was a member of, or consultant to, the IYRU (which became ISAF in 1996) Keelboat Committee from 1963 into the 1990s. He headed the Offshore Racing Congress (ORC) committee that developed the International Offshore Rule, known as the IOR. He was also active in the creation and maintenance of the successor to the IOR, the International Measurement System (IMS) and served two terms as the Chairman of the Offshore Racing Council's International Technical Committee.

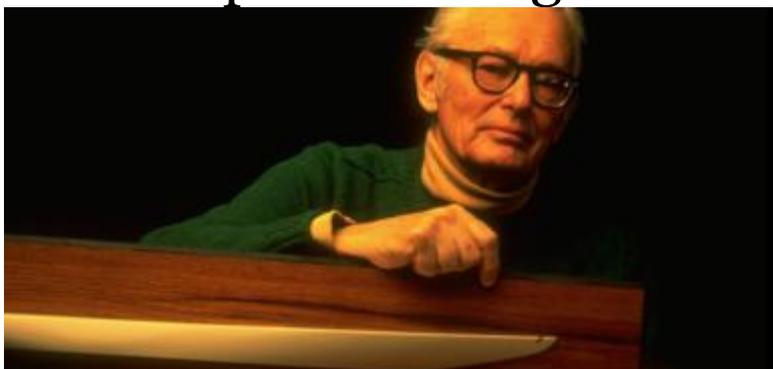
Olin's talent and dedication brought him many awards. In 1992 he was awarded the ISAF Beppe Croce Trophy, presented for outstanding voluntary contribution to the sport of sailing. The following year he was inducted into the America's Cup Hall of Fame. During ISAF's Centenary year in 2007, he was named as one of six inaugural inductees into the ISAF Sailing Hall of Fame and, aged 99, he personally accept his award at the Induction dinner in Estoril, Portugal to a resounding reception.

ISAF extends our sincere sympathy and condolences to Olin's family and friends.

From The Times, London

From The Times
September 18, 2008

Olin Stephens: designer of racing yachts



(Kip Brundage / Woodfin Camp / Time Life / Getty)

Stephens with a half model of *Ranger*, the first America's Cup winner he designed. 'The easiest boats to look at,' he said, 'seem to be the easiest to drive'

Olin Stephens was the best-known and most successful yacht designer of the 20th century; his boats changed the face of ocean racing and did much to popularise the sport. The most notable of the ocean-racing successes achieved by his company, Sparkman & Stephens, included no fewer than eight America's Cup winners, between 1937 and 1980, along with a host of cruising boats, one-off racers and naval craft.

Olin Stephens was born in 1908. He was brought up in Scarsdale, New York, but loved to spend the summers sailing in Long Island Sound and off Cape Cod, with his father, a second-generation coal merchant, and his brother, Roderick. By his teens he was a successful racing sailor with a fascination for naval architecture and construction. From high school he enrolled in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1926, but in his freshman year he became ill with jaundice and had to drop out. Despite his subsequent success in his chosen field, he always felt he would have benefited from more training in mathematics and engineering.

His brother, Rod, had gone straight to work at the Henry B. Nevins shipyard to learn boatbuilding. Inspired by his example, Stephens started his career, aged 19, as a draughtsman, first at Henry J. Gielow and later with Phillip Rhodes.

His career as a designer began in earnest at 19 when one of his designs was built for the Manhasset (NY) Yacht Club. His first designs were mainly for small racing boats in the International Six and Eight (metre) classes. These smaller boats gave him the opportunity to experiment: new features could be changed relatively easily, and his brother's expertise in construction and rigging played an invaluable role in his experimentations. Throughout his career Stephens favoured the narrow hull and deep keel construction, and almost all his boats were constructed using techniques developed at Nevins.

In 1929 the Stephens brothers went into partnership with the ship broker Drake Sparkman. Backed by their father, they set up their office next door to the Nevins yard. It was an inauspicious time to start out in business — the Great Depression was just beginning — but the firm continued to design and develop new boats. One, *Cherokee*, won the Anglo-American Cup in 1930.

Sparkman & Stephens's first big success was a 52ft yawl commissioned by the brothers' father. Their biggest boat to date, this \$20,000 racing yacht was created from one of the 23-year-old Stephens's designs. Narrow, low on the waterline and lightweight, she was called *Dorado*. On her first test she won the highly publicised Trans-Atlantic race in 1931, beating some of the bigger boats by two days. This victory immediately established the firm's reputation, and its name would become a byword for fast, handsome and seaworthy yachts for the next 70 years.

In 1935 another racing yacht, *Stormy Weather*, from the youthful team at Sparkman & Stephens and built by Nevins, won both the Newport-Bergen and the Fastnet races. It was designed when Stephens was still only 25 and was skippered by his brother Rod. By now it was clear that this small group was changing the face of the sport.

During the war the company designed military and naval craft, including the hulls for the DUKW amphibious truck and the amphibious Ford GPA jeep, and it has fulfilled many other military contracts.

In 1949 Commander John Nicholas Brown commissioned *Bolero*, as the largest modern ocean racer of her day, her aesthetics as important as her functionality, both of which were exemplary — "The easiest boats to look at seem to be the easiest to drive," Stephens said.

Over the years, the Sparkman & Stephens name also became synonymous with the America's Cup, starting with *Ranger*, one of the J-class boats Stephens assisted on, which won the America's Cup in 1937. He went on from that early success to produce eight winners of his own. In addition Stephens holds the record for the most Bermuda Race winners, 14 in all.

Stephens was often consulted in the compilation of international measurement rules for ocean-racing competitions, as yachts changed over the years. In 1965 he was awarded the Nathaniel G. Herreshoff Award for his contribution to sailing by National Yacht Racing Union. Into his nineties he was an active member of the Ocean Racing Congress, the governing body for international yacht racing, founding its international technical committee (chairman, 1969-73 and 1976-79).

Sparkman & Stephens designed numerous one-off boats, and many thousands of examples of its sail and power boats are still in active use. It has offices in New York and Fort Lauderdale, and in addition to successful operations in marine engineering, brokerage, chartering and insurance of yachts, it has been the training ground for many of today's yacht designers. Stephens was always generous and interested in fostering the success of younger talent.

He retired from the company in the 1980s, but continued to design boats and software for yacht design, and he was still in great demand as an international speaker at technical conferences, and as an adviser to America's Cup syndicates and rules committees.

In 1998 *Dorada* was restored by a new owner and Stephens was invited to join her crew, which he did with enormous enthusiasm and skill. Well into his nineties he was teaching mathematics at Dartmouth College. He was a trustee of the Mystic Seaport Museum. He published his autobiography, *All This and Sailing, Too*, in 2000. It began: "I was lucky: I had a goal. As far back as I can remember I wanted to design fast boats."

Stephens's wife predeceased him, and he is survived by their two sons.

Olin Stephens, yacht designer, was born on April 13, 1908. He died on September 13, 2008, aged 100

From LA Times

Olin Stephens dies at 100; yacht designer known for America's Cup winners



Olin Stephens wrote: "I was lucky: I had a goal. As far back as I can remember, I wanted to design fast boats."
By Aaron Kuriloff, Bloomberg
September 16, 2008

Carlo Borlenghi / Associated Press

Olin Stephens, a naval architect who designed eight America's Cup winners, along with thousands of cruising and racing yachts, has died. He was 100.

The senior member of the New York Yacht Club, Stephens died Saturday in Hanover, N.H., US Sailing reported on its website, without giving a cause of death.

Stephens produced designs for more than 2,200 boats, including Dorade, which won the 1931 transatlantic race, and America's Cup defenders including Ranger, Columbia, Constellation, Intrepid, Courageous and Freedom.

"I was lucky: I had a goal," Stephens wrote in his 1999 autobiography "All This and Sailing Too." "As far back as I can remember, I wanted to design fast boats."

Olin J. Stephens II was born April 13, 1908, in New York City and learned to sail during family vacations on Cape Cod, according to John Rousmaniere, who wrote a chapter on Stephens for "Encyclopedia of Yacht Designers." He enrolled at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology before dropping out after his first year because of jaundice.

Stephens sailed regularly at Larchmont Yacht Club in New York, racing 6-meter yachts. His first published design appeared in the January 1928 edition of Yachting magazine, and he worked as a draftsman and apprentice to other designers until 1929, when he joined with Drake Sparkman in 1929 to form Sparkman & Stephens Inc.

The company's fourth boat, the 52-foot yawl Dorade, won the 1931 transatlantic race by two days, then won the United Kingdom's Fastnet Race with a crew that included his brother, Rod. When they returned to New York, the family received a ticker-tape parade.

Stephens worked on a failed America's Cup campaign in 1934 before Harold Vanderbilt hired him to help design a boat for the 1937 race. Ranger was the last of the J-Class yachts to compete for the Cup, beating Endeavor II.

Stephens eventually designed boats that won eight of nine America's Cups between 1937 and 1980. He also produced ocean racers that won numerous other regattas in Europe and the U.S., and helped create day-racers such as the Lightning, a three-person dinghy still used in international competition, and the Blue Jay, a smaller version of the Lightning still used for youth training.

He retired in 1978 and moved to Hanover, where he took mathematics classes and helped teach an engineering course on sailing at Dartmouth College. He continued to design boats and was inducted into the America's Cup Hall of Fame at the Herreshoff Marine Museum in Bristol, R.I., in 1993. In 2004, he received US Sailing's National Sportsmanship Trophy.

He is survived by his sons, Olin Stephens III and Samuel R. Stephens; his sister, Marite Sheridan; and his grandson, Olin J. Stephens IV. His brother, Rod, died in 1995.

From Washington Post

Olin J. Stephens II; a Top Innovator In Yacht Design and Competition



The Dorade, a transatlantic race winner, helped

launch Stephens's career. (Courtesy Of Sparkman And Stephens)

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By [Joe Holley](#)

Washington Post Staff Writer

Friday, September 19, 2008; Page B07

Olin J. Stephens II, 100, the premier yacht designer of the 20th century who revolutionized the sport of yacht racing, died Sept. 13 in Hanover, N.H. No cause of death was reported.

Mr. Stephens said he thought beautiful boats sailed better, and his designs -- more than 2,000 of them -- were considered unparalleled in their grace and good looks. He achieved renown in the early 1930s as the young designer of several notable racing yachts. In 1937, the Stephens-designed Ranger won the America's Cup competition, marking the first of eight victories in the prestigious contest with boats of his creation.

He won a second America's Cup competition when the race resumed after World War II. Among his winning boats were Columbia (1958), Constellation (1964), Intrepid (1967), Courageous (1974) and Freedom (1980).

"He came along at a breakthrough time in technology," said John Rousmaniere, an author of books about sailing and the editor of Mr. Stephens's autobiography. "There was new technology, new sails, new hardware. He took old shapes and combined them with new high-tech forms of construction, wooden with a lot of metal."

The son of a prominent coal merchant, Olin James Stephens II was born in the Bronx, N.Y., on April 13, 1908, and grew up in nearby Scarsdale. He spent his summers sailing in Long Island Sound and off Cape Cod with his father and brother, Roderick E. Stephens, who would grow up to be an acclaimed boat builder.

Advertisement

"I was lucky: I had a goal. As far back as I can remember, I wanted to design fast boats," Olin Stephens wrote in his memoir, "All This and Sailing, Too" (1999).

Bowing to his parents' wishes, he attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1926 but dropped out after contracting jaundice. Working on his own at home, he studied drafting, trigonometry and boat design.

His real education came while working as an apprentice draftsman at the Henry Nevins boatyard on City Island in the Bronx, where he learned to design boats that were seaworthy, fast and comfortable for the crew.

In partnership with a successful yacht broker, Drake Sparkman, and with financial backing from his father, he founded a firm, Sparkman and Stephens, in 1928. His brother joined the company as a boat builder.

Sparkman and Stephens enjoyed almost immediate success by winning the 1931 Trans-Atlantic race aboard the Dorade, a Stephens-designed 52-foot yawl. The Dorade, with Mr. Stephens at the helm, beat its nearest rival by two days in the race to Plymouth, England. The boat then won the Fastnet, England's premier ocean race, and a string of other contests.

The Trans-Atlantic victory, capped by a welcome-home ticker tape parade, launched Mr. Stephens's long career. His boats continued to win races in England and the United States throughout the 1930s, and commissions from wealthy yachtsman unfazed by hard times kept the company afloat during the Depression.

Before the Dorade, ocean yachts were usually built along the lines of the lumbering fishing boats of the time. Mr. Stephens's boat was light, breathtakingly slender and, in the view of traditionalists, dangerous-looking. It became the racing-yacht prototype for the next several decades.

Olin J. Stephens II; a Top Innovator In Yacht Design and Competition



The Dorade, a transatlantic race winner, helped launch Stephens's career. (Courtesy Of Sparkman And Stephens)

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In an interview with the New York Times in 2001, Mr. Stephens credited his younger brother with much of the firm's early success.

"I was more a generalist," he said, "and he was very good on details. Rod made sure the boats were well built and equipped, and I think that had as much to do with our success as any particular hull geometry I might've been responsible for." (Rod Stephens died in 1995.)

In 1937, Mr. Stephens collaborated with naval architect Starling Burgess to build Ranger. Owned by Harold S. Vanderbilt, the 135-footer was the last of the expensive and majestic J-Class yachts to compete for the cup, beating Endeavor II.

Rousmaniere said Mr. Stephens was "always open-minded and scientific," noting that he was one of the first designers to take advantage of tank-testing sailboats.

By towing 6-foot-long models through a tank at the Stevens Institute of Technology -- in Hoboken, N.J., across the Hudson River from his New York office -- he could measure speed, resistance and leeway (a sailboat's sideways movement). In later years, he came to rely on computer modeling.

During World War II, Mr. Stephens and his brother designed boats and amphibious craft for the military.

The America's Cup races resumed in 1958, and Mr. Stephens remained a central figure until 1980, when he designed Freedom, the last 12-meter yacht to successfully defend the cup. He also holds the record for the most Bermuda Race winners, 14.

Mr. Stephens retired in 1980 and moved to Hanover, where he took calculus classes, helped teach an engineering course on sailing at Dartmouth College and read deeply in philosophy.

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He also was a serious artist. He took up painting in 1935 and studied in New York under the modernist artist Yasuo Kuniyoshi. He told The Washington Post in 1958, before the domination of computers, that yacht design was at least 50 percent art.

And he continued to design boats, many of which are still in the water. His "woodies" from the 1930s are considered classics.

Mr. Stephens's wife of 63 years, the former Florence Reynolds, died in 1993.

Survivors include two sons, Olin Stephens III of Newfane, Vt., and Samuel R. Stephens of Keene, N.H.; a sister, Marite Sheridan of California, Md.; and a grandson.

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Olin Stephens II, 100, renowned yacht designer



Olin J. Stephens II

designed six sailboats that defended the America's Cup. One of his first and most famous designs was for the renowned "Dorade," (right) a ketch that won a transatlantic race in 1931. (apfile 2003)

By Barbara Lloyd

New York Times News Service / September 19, 2008



Text size

NEW YORK - Olin J. Stephens II - one of the most prominent naval architects of the last century, a designer who created more than 2,200 cruising and racing yachts over decades of innovation in sailing - died Saturday in Hanover, N.H. He was 100.

His son, Olin J. Stephens III, confirmed the death.

From Mr. Stephens's drawing table came the lines of yachts as diverse as Dorade, a 52-foot yawl that prompted a ticker-tape parade in New York after winning the 1931 Trans-Atlantic Race, and Ranger, a 135-foot J-class sloop that Mr. Stephens designed with Starling Burgess for the 1937 America's Cup races.

He was also instrumental in designing five other successful America's Cup defenders: the 12-meters Columbia in 1958; Constellation, 1964; Intrepid, 1967; Courageous, 1974; and Freedom, 1980.

"When you consider the changes in yacht design throughout Olin's career, it's pretty unbelievable," said Jim Pugh, a naval architect whose firm, Reichel-Pugh, was part of the design team for the 1992 Cup winner, America3. "Looking at the history of Olin's designs, it transcends the different eras."

Mr. Stephens's quiet demeanor and scholarly appearance cloaked a rugged determination where boats were concerned.

With his brother, Roderick Stephens Jr., Olin Stephens worked on most of the important yacht-racing projects of his time. During World War II, he was involved in designing amphibious landing craft and minesweepers for the armed forces, his son Olin III said.

Roderick Jr. preferred the hands-on aspects of boating, rigging a sailboat and organizing the deck layout. Olin Stephens was the office artist who worked with a slide rule and, eventually, a calculator.

Naval architects today develop yachts through three-dimensional computer graphics. Mr. Stephens mastered the computer and turned to the broader concerns of yachting safety only after his official retirement in 1978 from Sparkman & Stephens, the New York naval architecture firm that he founded in 1929 with the yacht broker Drake Sparkman.

Still active into his 90s, Mr. Stephens helped refine modern sailboat handicapping systems, which use mathematics and performance to judge a sailboat's capability and, in particular, how they affected a boat's seaworthiness.

Mr. Stephens was born April 13, 1908, in the Bronx, but his family moved to Scarsdale, N.Y., five years later. His father, Roderick Sr., was in the coal business and was not particularly interested in boats. Several summers on Cape Cod prompted him to buy a 16-foot sailing dinghy for his sons.

In 1926, Mr. Stephens enrolled at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to study naval architecture, but within a year he became ill with jaundice and withdrew. His interest in yacht design stayed strong enough, however, that a year later, while working as an apprentice at the Henry Nevins boatyard at City Island in the Bronx, Mr. Stephens designed his own version of a 6-meter yacht. By the time he was 23, he had designed the yacht *Dorada*.

Mr. Stephens and his team are one of two yachting groups to have been treated to a ticker-tape parade in New York. The other was Dennis Conner and his Stars & Stripes crew, which won the America's Cup in 1987.

Mr. Stephens was inducted into the America's Cup Hall of Fame at the Herreshoff Marine Museum in Bristol, R.I., in 1993.

His wife of more than 50 years, Florence Reynolds, died in 1993. Besides Olin III, who lives in Newfane, Vt., he leaves another son, Samuel R. Stephens, of Keene, N.H.; a sister, Marite Sheridan of California, Md.; and a grandson.

Mr. Stephens continued to design boats and was putting the final touches on plans for a 36-foot coastal cruising boat two weeks ago, said Bruce Johnson of Sparkman & Stephens.

Yet Mr. Stephens was content to spend much of his retirement gardening and painting at homes in Vermont and New Hampshire. In the 1940s, he had studied in New York under Yasuo Kuniyoshi, a renowned painter.

Mr. Stephens, who never owned a boat after *Dorada*, said he did not find the transition to country life all that difficult.

"It's really a matter of being too busy," he said in a 1988 interview for *Cruising World* magazine. "To the extent I had the time and interest, I wanted to sail only in the new boats." ■

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Boating Business

Olin J Stephens passes away

15 Sep 2008

OBITUARY: Sadly, the news of the death of Olin J Stephens at the age of 100 came through yesterday afternoon, Sunday September 14.



Olin J Stephens: the last of a great era of yacht racing and design – picture: Sail World

Olin James Stephens II (April 13, 1908 – September 13, 2008) has been described as the best-known and most successful yacht designer of the 20th century. He was born in New York, but spent his summers with his brother Rod(eric) learning to sail on the New England coast. He also attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology for a term.

His name is well known in connection with the America's Cup, as he assisted W. Starling Burgess on the J-Boats of the late 1930s, including *Ranger*, which won the America's Cup in 1937, defeating Great Britain's *Endeavour II* in four races.

In addition, he helped design six 12metre defenders which made up all the defenders that won the America's Cup from 1958 with *Columbia* to 1980 with *Freedom*, with the exception of *Weatherly* in 1962. He has also designed many successful offshore and stock boats, including *Dark Harbor 20*, which he designed in 1934. His brother is also a well-known yacht designer with whom he founded the renowned yacht-designing firm Sparkman & Stephens. Mr Stephens was working in the Nevins shipyard in 1928 working as a drafter when he first met Drake Sparkman. Together they set up an office next door to Nevins in 1929. Since retiring from the company he lived in Hanover, New Hampshire, where he spent his final years writing computer programs for designing yachts. He was awarded the Nathanael G. Herreshoff Award by the North American Yacht Racing Union in 1965 for his contributions to sailing and, in 1993, he was inducted into the America's Cup Hall of Fame. Several years later, in 2000, he wrote the autobiography *All This and Sailing Too*. In 2007 he was named as one of six inductees to the inaugural ISAF Sailing Hall of Fame. He is currently ranked member number 1 on the New York Yacht Club Member Seniority List. He celebrated his 100th birthday in July this year.

Yachting World

Olin Stephens dies



Yachting World, 15 September 2008

Olin J. Stephens, who celebrated his 100th birthday on April 13, 2008, died on 13 September. Stephens was unarguably the most influential yacht designer of the 20th Century and his boats were both fast and undeniably good looking. His first success was with *Dorade*, followed by what many consider to be his prettiest boat, *Stormy Weather*. He also was responsible for eight of the nine America's Cup winners between 1937 and 1980.

For a full obituary see the November issue of *Yachting World*.

The San Diego Union-Tribune.

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OBITUARY

Olin J. Stephens II; prominent naval architect; 100

By **Barbara Lloyd**
NEW YORK TIMES NEWS SERVICE

September 20, 2008

Olin J. Stephens II, one of the most prominent naval architects of the last century, a designer who created more than 100 yachts, died at his home in Hanover, N.H. Stephens, who lived in Hanover, was 100.

His son Olin J. Stephens III confirmed the death.

From Mr. Stephens' drawing table came the lines of yachts as diverse as *Dorade*, a 52-foot yawl that prompted the 1937 America's Cup races, and the 135-foot J-Class sloop that Stephens designed with Starling Burgess for the 1937 America's Cup races.

He was also instrumental in designing five other successful America's Cup defenders: the 12-Meters *Columbia*, *Freedom*, *Weatherly*, *Enterprise* and *Intrepid*.

"When you consider the changes in yacht design throughout Olin's career, it's pretty unbelievable," said Jim P. ...

winner, America3. “Looking at the history of Olin’s designs, it transcends the different eras.”

Mr. Stephens’ quiet demeanor and scholarly appearance cloaked a rugged determination where boats were concerned.

With his brother, Roderick Stephens Jr., Olin Stephens worked on most of the important yacht-racing projects, including minesweepers for the armed forces, his son Olin III said.

Roderick Jr. preferred the hands-on aspects of boating – rigging a sailboat and organizing the deck layout. Olin III said.

Naval architects today develop yachts through three-dimensional computer graphics. Stephens mastered the technique in 1978 from Sparkman & Stephens, the New York naval architecture firm that he founded in 1929 with the yacht designer

Still active into his 90s, Mr. Stephens helped refine modern sailboat handicapping systems, which use mathematical formulas to judge a boat’s seaworthiness.

Olin James Stephens II was born April 13, 1908, in the Bronx, but his family moved to Scarsdale, N.Y., five years later. Yet several summers on Cape Cod prompted him to buy a 16-foot sailing dinghy for his sons.

In 1926, Olin Stephens enrolled at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to study naval architecture, but he was not strong enough, however, that a year later, while working as an apprentice at the Henry Nevins boatyard at City Point, he had designed the yacht Dorade.

Mr. Stephens and his team are one of two yachting groups to have been treated to a ticker-tape parade in New York City for America’s Cup in 1987.

Mr. Stephens was inducted into the America’s Cup Hall of Fame at the Herreshoff Marine Museum in Bristol, Conn.

His wife of more than 50 years, Florence Reynolds, died in 1993. Besides Olin III, who lives in Newfane, Vt., he has a daughter in California, Md.; and a grandson, Olin J. Stephens IV of Stratton, Vt.

Mr. Stephens continued to design boats in recent years and was putting the final touches on plans for a 36-foot racing

Yet Mr. Stephens was content to spend much of his retirement gardening and painting at homes in Vermont and New York, a renowned painter.

Mr. Stephens, who never owned a boat after Dorade, said he did not find the transition to country life all that different.

“It’s really a matter of being too busy,” he said in a 1988 interview for *Cruising World* magazine. “To the extent you can be busy, you’re



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Love & Ware sailing off Merimbula in 2006 Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race
Daniel Forster/Rolex

Most CYCA members would have read or heard of the great American naval architect Olin J Stephens of 100. Obituaries highlighted his role as the d Cup defenders and to yachting worldwide, as a advisor.

Little mention was made, however, of his contr of ocean racing in Australia and New Zealand, r designer of winners of the Sydney Hobart Yacht

Olin Stephens was the world's most successful designers of the 20th century. His designs from naval architects, Sparkman & Stephens, have v races of the world and his 12-metre class yacht the America's Cup eight times.

S&S designs have been the Overall Winner of t eight times, including the famous *Love & War* v did so again in 1978 and, remarkably, for a thi famous Line Honours winner of the Hobart Race which set an elapsed time record in 1975 that

The sailing creations of Olin Stephens are distinctive and most pleasing to the eye of the beholder. With few, if any exceptions, they are beautiful boats with fine lines – and they can sail fast!

When he retired from the design business in the 1980s, Stephens had created more than 2000 boats, many of which still grace the waters today – and still win races!

Olin's first success was with the design of the ocean racing yacht *Dorada*, launched in 1930. A yawl, she won the much-publicised Trans-Atlantic Race and the Fastnet Race in 1931 outright, and gained a class win in the Bermuda Race. In 1936 she added the Transpac to her record. A new era of yacht design had begun.

In the post-World War II years, yacht owners around the world looked towards Sparkman & Stephens for their ocean racing designs. The New Zealand-owned *Rainbow II* was the first to win a Sydney Hobart Race, in 1967, followed by British Prime Minister Edward Heath's *Morning Cloud* (1969), *Pathfinder* (1971), *Love & War* (1974, 1978), and *Kialoa III* (1977 – following her record-setting line honours win in 1975) and *Challenge II* (1983) and then, remarkably *Love & War* again in 2006.

Kialoa III, a 79-foot maxi ketch, was the most advanced maxi yacht of her time. In addition to the owner Jim Kilroy also sailed her to victory in the TransAtlantic, Bermuda, Transpac and China Sea R Maxi World Championships during the early 1980s. Edward Heath's *Morning Cloud* went on to be the concept for the highly successful production line of Jon Sanders, sailing the S&S34 *Perie Banou*, was the first man to circumnavigate Antarctica, circling handed and non-stop in 1981-82.

Challenge II was an innovative 45-footer, with Olin Stephens creating the modern fractional rig for Owner Lou Abrahams not only won the Hobart Race but was also in an Australian winning team at t

Another highly successful S&S design for an Australian owner was *Stormy Petrel*, designed to the In and winner of the 1971 One Ton Cup in New Zealand.

Condensed from an article by Peter Campbell in the June/July 2008 edition of *Offshore Yachting*, ma birthday in April.

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BREAKING NEWS/UPDATES

Updated at 8:24 a.m., Monday, September 15, 2008

Obit: Hall of Fame racing yacht designer Stephens dies at 100

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By Aaron Kuriloff
Bloomberg News Service

Olin Stephens, a naval architect who designed eight America's Cup winners along with thousands of cruising and racing yachts, has died. He was 100.

ADVERTISEMENT

Stephens, the senior member of the New York Yacht Club, died Sept. 13 in Hanover, New Hampshire, US Sailing reported on its Web site, without giving a cause.

He produced designs for more than 2,200 boats, including Dorade, which won the 1931 transatlantic race, and America's Cup defenders including Ranger, Columbia, Constellation, Intrepid and the

"I was lucky: I had a goal," Stephens wrote in his autobiography "All This and Sailing Too." "As far back as I can remember, I wanted to design fast boats."

Olin J. Stephens II was born on April 13, 1908, in New York City and learned to sail during family vacations on Cape Cod, according to John Rousmaniere, who wrote a chapter on Stephens in "The America's Cup" published by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology before dropping out after his first year because of jaundice.

Stephens sailed regularly at Larchmont Yacht Club, in New York, racing 6-meter yachts. His first published design appeared in the January 1928 edition of Yachting magazine and he worked for the club until 1929, when he joined with Drake Sparkman in 1929 to form Sparkman & Stephens Inc.

The company's fourth boat, the 52-foot yawl Dorade, won the 1931 transatlantic race by two days, then won the U.K.'s Fastnet Race, with a crew that included his brother Rod. When the boat returned to New York, it was the centerpiece of a parade.

'Perfection'

Fellow designer and critic Uffa Fox wrote that Dorade's "success does not lie so much in any special point, but in the perfection of every detail."

Stephens worked on a failed America's Cup campaign in 1934 before Harold Vanderbilt hired him to help design a boat for the 1937 race. Ranger was the last of the J-Class yachts to compete in the

Stephens eventually designed boats that won eight of nine America's Cups between 1937 and 1980. He also produced ocean racers that won numerous other regattas in Europe and the Americas, including a three-person dinghy still used in international competition, and the Blue Jay, a smaller version of the Lightning still used for youth training.

Dartmouth

Stephens retired in 1978 and moved to Hanover, where he took mathematics classes and helped teach an engineering course on sailing at Dartmouth College. He continued to design boats and worked at the Herreshoff Marine Museum in Bristol, Rhode Island, in 1993. In 2004, he received US Sailing's National Sportsmanship Trophy.

"I started my career with the tools of observation and intuition to which quantitative analysis has been gradually added," Stephens wrote. "Whenever possible I studied lines and tried to sail them."

He is survived by his sons, Olin Stephens III and Samuel R. Stephens; his sister, Marite Sheridan; and his grandson, Olin J. Stephens IV. Releases from US Sailing and New York Yacht Club are available on request. For more information, call 603-883-2222 or visit [www.usailing.org](#).
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