



Dennis Stevens, Ed.D.

U.S. Coast Guard Veteran · Educator · Visual Artist · Systems Thinker
Ed.D., College Teaching of Art · M.A., Instructional Technology · B.F.A., Studio Art



Founder, Sempergeist Institute (Conway Cultural Development Corp.)

Creator, Poewell — Visual Storytelling Platform for Veterans

Principal, Penelope Mimetics LLC (SDVOSB)

New York, NY · dennis-stevens.com

MILITARY SERVICE

Dr. Stevens served in the **United States Coast Guard** and is recognized as a **Service-Disabled Veteran**. His military service instilled values of mission clarity, collective responsibility, and dignity under duress — convictions that animate every professional and scholarly endeavor. He is an alumnus of **Save-A-Warrior Cohort 0268** and **Warrior PATHH Cohort MTTAWP051**, intensive residential programs for veterans navigating moral injury and post-traumatic growth.

EDUCATION

Ed.D., College Teaching of Art — Teachers College, Columbia University (2010)

Doctoral research explored symbolic cognition, meaning-making through image and ritual, and the role of art in psychological and cultural repair — foundations directly embedded in Poewell's AI-assisted therapeutic environments and Sempergeist's creative placemaking model.

M.A., Instructional Technology / Distance Education — San José State University (2006)

Graduate study in the design of technology-mediated learning environments, informing Dr. Stevens's approach to scalable, human-centered digital platforms for veterans and first responders.

B.F.A., Studio Art — Clemson University (1999)

Undergraduate foundation in visual art practice, forming the aesthetic and perceptual sensibility that underlies his work in symbolic world-building and visual storytelling.

PUBLICATIONS & SCHOLARSHIP

Sacred Descent of the Warrior

A guide for veterans navigating grief, moral injury, and transformation through mythic wisdom and ritual structure.

Memoir of an Esteemed Dipteran (nom de plume)

A philosophical fable exploring perception, identity, and systems thinking.

***Extra/Ordinary: Craft and Contemporary Art* (Duke University Press — contributor)**

Essay examining craft, cultural identity, and contemporary artistic practice.

Essays include: *From Alignment to Orientation: Embodiment, Meaning, and the Symbolic Turn in AI*; *The Four Terrains of Loss*; *Healing and Repair: Trauma in a Forgotten Lineage*.

ORGANIZATIONS & VENTURES

Sempergeist Institute

A 501(c) nonprofit (operating as Conway Cultural Development Corporation) serving veterans and first responders through art, ritual, and visual storytelling. Its mission supports meaning-making, moral repair, and long-term healing — moving beyond clinical frameworks toward embodied, culturally grounded processes of recovery.

Poewell

A constitutionally governed visual storytelling platform offering AI-assisted imaginal environments and peer cohort participation. Poewell provides nonverbal pathways for meaning-making, preserving participant autonomy and dignity through ritual grammar and metacognitive scaffolding. Designed for veterans navigating profound loss and moral complexity.

Penelope Mimetics LLC

Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business (SDVOSB) through which Dr. Stevens delivers consulting, research, curriculum design, and program development services to mission-aligned organizations.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- AI governance & symbolic cognition
- Veteran healing, moral injury & meaning-making
- Creative placemaking & community arts
- Narrative therapy, ritual structure & grief
- Constitutional systems design
- Political theory, epistemology & design ethics
- Visual art, craft theory & cultural identity

CURRENT WORK

Dr. Stevens is developing an ambitious multi-dimensional initiative combining a research institute, publishing imprint, and interactive digital platform — designed to equip veterans, first responders, and seekers of meaning with tools for self-authorship in an era of fragmentation, moral complexity, and rapid technological change. The initiative rejects passive self-help frameworks in favor of grounded inner sovereignty.

RECOGNITION & AFFILIATIONS

- Save-A-Warrior Cohort 0268 alumnus
- Warrior PATHH Cohort MTTAWP051 alumnus
- SDVOSB-certified, Penelope Mimetics LLC
- Ed.D., Teachers College, Columbia University
- Duke University Press — published contributor