

Tony Henriquez

by Doug Kent

What does Peter Pan, an MBA, country and western dancing, rodeos, and tennis have in common. Let's read on to find out.

Mr. April was an only child born in Pinar Del Rio on January 9, 1947. He attended school and had a very uneventful childhood until he reached the age of 15. A good student with interests in math and science, he was fortunate enough to visit Miami for one month at the tender age of 10. However, circumstances changed and at age 15, he was part of Operation Pedro Pan and was one of 70,000 children that the Catholic Charities sponsored to come to this country unaccompanied by their parents. His first stop was Camp Matecumbe, located in Miami. Remember, he is 15 years old, knew very little English, and was now a resident of a foreign country that he once visited. This program reunited children with parents as they immigrated into the United States or with relatives already in this country, or placed them with foster homes anywhere throughout the USA. Mr. April was sent to Albuquerque, New Mexico where the Marist Brothers ran a home for 40 boys. Here he finished high school and was able to write home and make monthly calls to his parents. Can you imagine the loneliness and homesickness that he must have experienced?

After High School Mr. April, along with two other boys enrolled at the University of New Mexico, where a very special family rented an apartment for them near campus. A chemistry and math major, Mr. April attended for one year. In 1965 his uncle had established a business in Puerto Rico, and sent Mr. April a ticket for a visit. One day Mr. April saw a man in a park in the old section of the city and followed him to a gay bar. He had a great time at the bar so he decided to stay in Puerto Rico and work for his uncle. In 1966 his parents immigrated to Puerto Rico and finally Mr. April was reunited with his parents. There was only one thing wrong, he was now very independent and parental control did not work very well.

In 1967 Mr. April attended the University of Puerto Rico as a part time student in business administration, while continuing to work for his uncle. In February 1970, while on a trip to St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands, Mr. April saw a person of interest (Richard). They met and managed to stay together for the next 36 years.

In June of 1970 they moved to Boston and Mr. April received his Bachelors in Accounting and Masters Degree in Finance and Investing. A series of positions with various financial institutions involved moves to Atlanta, Charlotte, Richmond and back to Charlotte. In 2006 his beloved Richard passed away after a long illness. He continued to work until 2008, when he decided to retire from Wachovia Securities. Through no fault of his own, a close friend asked him to do some contractual work, consolidating merging banks. In January 2011, Mr. April finally called it quits, where he now lives comfortably in his condo at Palm Aire.

In 1990, Mr. April was a founding member of the "Southern Country Group" which was a country western dancing group within the gay community around Atlanta. In 1992 he was one of the founders of the "Southeast Gay Rodeo Association" where he was the treasurer from 1993 to 1995 and coordinated the first two gay rodeos in the southeast. He has an interest in Latin dancing and music, and is a follower of some select Latin "Telenovelas". A member of Prime Timers for the past four and a half years, he participates in the tennis group and other social activities.

