

## John Dowd

by Doug Kent

It took the record cold winters of 2004 and 2005 to shake loose two lifelong Boston residents to accept the warm balmy winters of Fort Lauderdale. The path to this transition began in July of 1938, when Mr. May was born in the Mission Hill section of Boston, then shortly after lived and was educated in the Jamaica Plain section of the city until 1976. His mother was Italian and his father Irish, an unusual combination for the times and location. His childhood, like many others, was essentially normal, with no unusual events, other than acquiring the necessary life skills to survive in the city. Education came easy to Mr. May and in 1956 he graduated from high school. He was active in the glee club throughout Junior and Senior high.

In 1960 he received his bachelor's degree from Boston State College with a major in History and Geography. In that same year he began his career with the Boston Public School System. Undaunted by the rigors of higher education and full time employment, Mr. May went on to complete his Masters Degree and in 1975 received his CAS from Harvard. He continued to teach in the public school system until 1993. From 1993 to 1997 Mr. May worked in the Wellesley Public Library and on July 31, 2005 retired at the age of 67.

In the 1930's 40's and 50's, gay life was a shadowy aberration that was not publically discussed or lived. Those who were associated with this kind of life did not fare well in society. That being said, Mr. May was 22 years old when he mustered enough courage to enter a gay bar with a friend. Once inside he was amazed that the clientele looked and acted normal and that his perceptions of gay men were distorted. In December of 1960, he had his first physical encounter with another man and he embraced it with exuberance and experienced no guilt whatsoever. This was unusual for an Italian/Irish Catholic. From that point forward his gay life flourished. In November 1974, at the Napoleon Club piano bar in Boston, he met his partner of 39 years. He has never looked back and their life together has been ideal. Both held professional positions and that allowed them to travel extensively throughout the world and prepare for their eventual retirement to Florida. They visited many countries over the years, notably Ireland, England, France, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, Turkey and Egypt. A near fatal car accident in Spain marred what would have been an almost perfect life together.

Mr. May is not content to sit. He swims, does weight exercises and is an avid reader. He and his partner love to socialize with friends. They are active in Prime Timers and enjoy visiting various flesh pots around Fort Lauderdale. Interesting to talk with, and full of information concerning history and modern day geography, this prime timer has little time to let dust collect under his feet.

