

Richard Lefebvre

by Doug Kent

Our story begins in the Northeast corner of Rhode Island, right on the Massachusetts border, where I-95 now hurdles cars past the small town of Pawtucket. It was the evening of May 11, 1942 when Mr. June (Mr. J) came into the world as the seventh of eight children. Thirteen months after his birth his Aunt and Uncle were charged with his upbringing. School posed no problem for Mr. J, though he only spoke French and had to learn English upon entering kindergarten. He went through Catholic grammar school in Pawtucket and High School in Central Falls, R.I. He favored the business courses and his childhood was totally uneventful except for the typical childhood crises such as “who should I ask to the senior Prom?”.

Upon graduation he found work at the Pierce Chevrolet/Buick Dealership in Pawtucket. For 85 cents per hour he was the Clerk in the service department and with his business courses, hard work, and a keen sense of knowing what needed to be done, he soon was promoted to Salesman. Shortly after that he became Business and Finance Manager, then promoted to New Car Sales Manager and finally assumed the mantle of leadership as General Sales Manager in just 17 short years. Along the way he took many college courses at the University of Rhode Island - mostly in Accounting, Finance and Law.

A definite pattern of success had been established and it was one that repeated itself many times during his career. However, there were some setbacks.

In 1979 after considerable work and frustration, all was put in place for Mr. J to purchase his own Chevrolet Dealership. In order to finalize the purchase with GM, Mr. J had to sever his employment with the Pierce dealership. Nine month of negotiation ended when GM decided not to approve the deal.

Devastated, unemployed, but not defeated, Mr. J forged a new career in Commercial Real Estate. He also married in 1980 and, his wife, a recent Brown University graduate was aware of his past interest in both men and women. Undeterred, they married, stayed together for 10 years raising two wonderful children, and remain friends today. During this same period he managed to build his Commercial Real Estate business into a thriving concern and managed to purchase the company that he worked for. He received his CCIM in 1983, and his company specialized in Commercial Brokerage, Investment Property, Shopping Centers and Office Park Development. All was right in Mr. J's world.

1990 proved to be one of the most difficult years in Mr. J's life. The economy in Rhode Island was hit particularly hard, banks and credit unions closed, draining the capital out of real estate projects, forcing Mr. J out of the commercial real estate business. On top of that, divorce and revealing his gay side all occurred in that year. Also,

it was through DNA testing that Mr. J found out why he was raised by his Aunt and Uncle while all his siblings stayed at home with his parents. Again, faced with insurmountable misfortune, Mr. J arose to face all the devastation in his life and the “Phoenix” of success emerged out of all those ashes.

In June of 1990 Nationwide Insurance offered Mr. J an opportunity to open an Agency in Lincoln, Rhode Island. Mr. J had to demonstrate his capability by meeting a very high sales criterion. He exceeded all requirements and was allowed to open an agency. So with only his own insurance policies, he began his new career. After 20 years of hard work, determination, and the will to survive, Mr. J opened 3 office, became one of the top 3 agents in Rhode Island, and was one of the top 10 agents in the New England area. Once again, he was on top of his game.

In 2001, Mr. J met his partner Sean online and began a loving relationship that is approaching a 13 year anniversary. In December of 2010 Mr. J retired from all things business. He was now enjoying the fruits of his labor and living full time in Wilton Manors with Sean. Despite all the adversity in his life and the amount of hard work required building his career several times, he managed to work on many gay activities. He worked with the Rhode Island Gay Help Line; he served on the board of Youth Pride, was on the board and served as chairman of Aids Care Ocean State, and was a founding member of the Rhode Island Equity Fund that supports various LGBT projects. Mr. J is an avid reader, a regular gym rat, and enjoys bowling, movies and theater. He has been a Prime Timer since 2010.

