

Jim Flora

by Doug Kent

A small brick house owned by a First Class Machinist in Astoria, Queens, New York became a very special place on September 4th 1945 for Mr. October (Mr. O). His younger brother would join the family in 5 years, but for Mr. O, this place became his place of safety and warmth. With a loving family, Mr. O attended Catholic grade school and did all the necessary things required for graduation. High school brought better grades and an appreciation for diversity which the Catholic School could not provide. An avid reader and an above average student, Mr. O was mentored by one of his teachers and they decided college would be a path to follow. Upon graduation in 1963 Mr. O worked full time and attended college classes at night for about one year. He then decided to attend school full time at New York City Community College, attaining his Associates Degree in Retail Marketing in 1966. He never stopped working all through his schooling. He realized that education was his ticket to success and he began his quest for a four year degree at Long Island University. More hard work, determination, part time jobs, along with Phi Kappa Theta and the desire to succeed, Mr. O attained his Bachelors in Marketing/Economics in 1969, along with education classes and completing all student teaching requirements.

Graduation was sweet for Mr. O. He accepted a position with the N.Y. City Board of Education, but after only one year it became clear that more education was required, and Mr. O completed his Masters in 1971. That next year, he married a college girlfriend, purchased a home on Long Island and accepted a position as Guidance Counselor at Bishop Ford High School. Not completely satisfied with his position in life, Mr. O decided to attend St. John's University to study Psychology and received his Professional Certificate after his internship at Coney Island Hospital in 1977. His education was now complete, but his life was in turmoil.

It was around 1982 that an incident in a gay bar awakened Mr. O's interest in men. After ten years of marriage Mr. O separated and divorced his wife, but no children were involved in the marriage. He was now working for N.Y. City Community School Board 6 as a school psychologist. He met Jeffery, an Occupational Therapist in 1985. They were very happy together and purchased a home in Dutchess County and lived there for 10 years. Jeffery

passed away in 1995 after a short illness. In 1996 Mr. O was fortunate to meet his second partner, Randy, a Personnel Director for one of the counties in N.Y. They were together for 15 years. In 2006 Mr. O retired and he and Randy moved to Florida. Unfortunately Randy passed away in 2010.

Alone now and still saddened with the loss of his partner, Mr. O manages to live a very active and productive life. Maintenance of his rock hard body is a chore and requires a daily visit to the gym. Not one ounce of fat has collected on this 68 year old Prime Timer. He has always enjoyed gardening while he owned his home, enjoys the art of cooking and does so for select friends, is interested in all Performing Arts and supports those that he can. He is involved in volunteering for various organizations and causes. He will frequent the nude beach and loves the shore. The view from his condo supports this love. This hard working Prime Timer is always doing something for the community, and as he has done throughout his life, continues to work hard and enjoy life.

