

Carl Barton

by Doug Kent

It isn't often that I get a chance to write about native Floridians. Mr. January (Mr. J) was born October 23rd, 1939 in sunny Miami, Florida. His father owned and operated a construction company while his mother managed all matters of their home. Together, they all enjoyed Miami well before the onslaught of all the snowbirds, all the drivers from up east, and I-95. Mr. J attended Melrose Elementary School, Hialeah Junior and Senior High. An average student, Mr. J was vice president of his senior class, and he graduated in 1958. It was also in his senior year that Mr. J was exposed to the gay life by an older friend.

After high school, Mr. J took a job with Gray Line Tours. He worked in the office and gave tours of Miami. Being a native gave him interesting insights about the area and his tours were well received. While working, he attended Palm Beach Junior College and took several courses at the University of Miami, primarily in business. He enjoyed his life but something was brewing deep inside, and he wanted to see more of the world. Prompted by this desire, he purchased a ticket to New York City, packed his bags, took \$150.00, his remaining life's savings, and went to the Big Apple in March of 1962.

Here he is, standing in Times Square, with no winter coat, no place to stay and no plans for the future. He called a friend, Robert, and they agreed to meet at a local book store after work. Robert took Mr. J to his apartment and gave him a place to stay until Mr. J could find work. It did not take long until Mr. J landed a position with Hearst Magazines. His position was a newly created liaison between the new computer department and the very entrenched accounting/bookkeeping department. With his business education, his congenial personality, his understanding of people and what it took to initiate change, Mr. J managed that area for 18 years, and was eventually promoted to Executive Director at Hearst. Mr. J's friend Robert was happy with Mr. J's quick success and was able to get his apartment back. Mr. J found his own apartment, and managed to travel to Europe in 1972, and to Rio in 1978, and eventually purchased his home in Queens in 1979. He purchased his 37 foot Egg Harbor power boat in 1979 and kept it moored in Lindenhurst, Long Island.

In 1982 Mr. J resigned from Hearst, sold his belongings and returned to South Florida. His only living relative, his mother, was in ill health. In 1983 he met his friend, Jerry, and they developed a very

close relationship. Mr. J worked in the Design District managing a fabric showroom. In 2003 he changed positions and began selling motor homes in Broward County. He was "Sales Person of the Year" in his first year of sales. Mr. J continued to work and care for his mother until she passed in 2006. It was a devastating year, losing his beloved mother and his 23 year partner Jerry within 6 months of each other. It was a difficult time for Mr. J, but he managed to survive. He purchased his home in Plantation in 2006. He retired in 2008, the same year he attended his 50th High School reunion.

Mr. J keeps very busy with his volunteer work. He spends 6 days a week at the Pride Center and serves on the Senior Advisory Counsel. He is active in SAGE of South Florida, and is very active with the Prime Timers. All this volunteer work led Mr. J to sell his home in Plantation. He moved into an apartment in Victoria Park to cut down on his daily drive to the Pride Center. He is very passionate about his volunteer work. Can you now identify this devoted, caring man, who is always smiling and who knows how to effect positive change in the world?

