

Gene Huszcza

by Ken South

On Thanksgiving morning on November 27, 1945 in Staten Island, NY, both Mr. February and a turkey were “in the oven”. Mr. F’s parents had to make a quick dash to St. Vincent’s Hospital in Staten Island, as he was ready to meet the world. His sister Carol and his grandparents waited for the good news of the blessed event at home.

Mr. F’s mother was Polish and his father Russian. His early years were spent speaking Polish at home, as his grandparents did not speak English. Polish was also the language at his Catholic grammar school, St. Aldelbert’s, from kindergarten through the 6th grade.

His father owned a gas station and was considered a master mechanic. And his mother worked in a Danish bakery but baked birthday and wedding cakes at home for friends and family for extra money.

Sadly, his father had a drinking problem. He lost his gas station business and divorced his wife when Mr. F was just 10 years old.

High school years for Mr. F found him first at the Cathedral College (the Minor Roman Catholic Seminary) in Manhattan and then at St. Peter’s HS in Staten Island. His experiences in the school’s glee club and chorus helped him improve his confidence and self-worth. His daily journey to and from the Cathedral College required him to take the Staten Island Ferry and the IRT, 7th Ave subway from the battery, to 86th street on the upper west side of Manhattan.

He found that his three years at the college of the University of NY at New Paltz, NY, proved to be “the best 3 years” of his life. There he developed his passion for photography and his considerable love for theatre with his membership in the Drama Club. His photography professor encouraged Mr. F to transfer to the Rochester Institute of Technology to nurture his passion and talent for photography. Mr. F was on the dean’s list all three years of his stay and graduated in 1969.

Mr. F realized that he wanted to be in the company of men older than himself, especially if they had gray hair. Starting at 13, his long, daily journey to school in upper Manhattan provided an unexpected benefit. During those ferryboat trips, he became interested in seeing older men in the men’s room. During his second year of HS he was fondled by an older man and knew then he wanted to be with older men. However, it was not until his 2nd year of college that he did anything to them in return...or even make the connection in his own mind that he was “gay”.

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Mr. F’s life was blessed with the experience of finding and loving five different men over the course of his adult life.

His partner Leo came into his life while still in college. They lived together in Rochester, NY and back on Staten Island, NY where the troubled relationship evolved into an open one.

During this open relationship era, Mr. F met the first man who really taught him what LOVE was all about. Harry met him at the Beacon Baths in Manhattan. Harry, his wife Ruby, and Mr. F, had a unique time together for a few years.

Mr. F worked for Kodak in Rochester, NY. where he became a Kodak Professional Technical Sales Representative, a position he held for 26 years! Soon after moving for a full-time Kodak territory in Kansas City, MO., he met Don at one of the town’s gay bars. The couple moved into Don’s house on Lake Waukomis, and enjoyed living together for about 12 years until Mr. F needed to transfer to Minneapolis. There he met another dear, loving man, named Lowell. Lowell was then 78 years old and a widower. The lovers never lived together, but spent almost all of their time with each other.

Ft. Lauderdale called to him after retirement from Kodak in 2003. Responding, he moved south, bought a condo, and met his current partner, Al. Mr. F. decided to retire in 2007. Al and Mr. F. formed a company called “Photo Impressions International” to pursue their creative photography interests and to enjoy more traveling.

Al and Mr. F. were legally married on May 14, 2014 in Maryland. The couple lives in Palm Aire. They keep busy taking public relations photographs of some of the best entertainers in South Florida and help to promote the incredible “Live Entertainment” in Wilton Manors.

