

## Mark Medore

by Ken South

Born a proud American to Houston, Texas parents, Mr. N was in the care of his maternal grandmother in Mexico City when he came into this world on March 4<sup>th</sup> 1963.

Don't let his accent or geography fool you because American pride was instilled by both sides of the family early on. In Mexico, both his mother and grandmother made him stand up and salute the US flag during the 1968 Olympics and every time the US national Anthem played. Meanwhile from Texas, he received education, a favorite gift from his father and paternal grandparents along with a mentorship and strong values from a proud Republican family.

Visitations with Mr. N's father increased as he grew up, first in Texas and eventually to South Florida where his father ran a successful golf cart business manufacturing company. It was during one of these visitations that his father suggested that Mr. N look for a college and a career in order to move back to the US.

That's when, in 1985, Mr. N enrolled in the Art Institute of Fort Lauderdale and never looked back. He went on to obtain a degree in visual communications including an additional interest in fashion illustration. Following graduation, he worked in the visual merchandising field for several retail stores like Macy's, Burdines and J.C. Penney. Mr. N later discovered the joy of graphic design and worked in the imprinted sportswear industry where he especially enjoyed creating exciting designs for ocean conservation awareness efforts.

One-day Mr. N heard opportunity "knocking at the door" when he was presented with a position as the Art Director for South Florida's LGBT Community Newspaper (TWN) where he subsequently worked for nine years. During this time in his life Mr. N learned about getting along with Democratic party perspective from friends and colleagues. Despite very long hours at the job, he was very proud to be part of a team recognizing LGBT community concerns. He really appreciated the mentorship of his bosses, they helped to increase knowledge and his growth in communication skills and confidence. Mr. N learned there was much more work to be done in order to help society understand that sexual orientation has never been a "rebel position", but rather just nature's call.

Mr. N served as a board member of the Cosmopolitan Gay & Lesbian Community Center at the American Legion where he befriended vets and civilians alike. It was because of his associations there that he got inspired to volunteer in the company of fellow members. He kept busy with LGBT community event schedule by volunteering for such causes as the AIDS Walk Miami, movie screenings (especially those of LGBT community interest), and countless rallies. All these activities were in a quest for happiness and justice in recognizing LGBT "families of choice".

Mr. N met his first partner while visiting NYC on New Year's Day of 1990, which led to living together for the next eight years! The couple worked hard together to buy their first home; however, things got too complicated which led to the hard decision to part ways. They have a cordial interaction and have nothing but good wishes for one another.

Mr. N was willing to give romance a second chance while living and working in Miami-Dade where he and his partner shared their lives for five years. During this time the couple found a mutual love of travel. It provided them with the reality of more information and knowledge about the world as their passion for travel experiences continued for many years to come. Although the partnership dissolved, they continued to be a part of each other's lives. Their friendship now feels more like family love and has fostered each being a support to each other through hard and happy times.

In the 90's Mr. N found that Yoga became a very important discipline for him. Its practice improved his fitness level, his free-style training and exercise regime including yoga at home which helps Mr. N maintain good mental and physical health. The Yoga community is very dear to his heart where he enjoys the company of good friends and learning from other philosophies which he would later incorporate to his Christian spiritual foundation.

Despite the fact that his two partnerships came to an end, Mr. N continues to be optimistic. After all, don't they say the third time is a charm?

Mr. N feels very blessed to have become a member of Prime Timers of Fort Lauderdale. It's because of this club he has lost his fear and apprehension about the aging process, especially with in the LBGT community, which seems to honor only beauty and youth.

Mr. N remains grateful for the multiple and valuable friends who have led the way for him, proving there is a reason to smile, laugh and enjoy in this South Florida paradise.

