

Marshall Belmaine

By Ken South

In July 1946, in Atlantic City, NJ, Martin & Lewis debuted their comedy act. Dr. Benjamin Spock published his blockbuster book, "Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care", and Sam Snead won the British Open golf tournament. While on 7/29, in Leominster, MA, Mr. September was the last of his parents' children, joining his seven brothers and sisters from a previous marriage.

His early years from elementary, through high school, took place in another small town, Ashland, MA. However, due to homophobic bullying, Mr. S dropped out of HS and joined the United States Marine Corps.

Serving from 1965 to 1969, first deployed to Vietnam, he was part of the, 1st Battalion, 9th Marines, which, until that time, sustained the highest casualty rate in Marine Corps history. As a taunt, they were named "The Walking Dead" by Ho Chi Minh. In fact, he so feared the battalion, that he offered 10,000 dong, (Vietnamese currency) to his troops for a Marine's head. Mr. S attended a reunion of vets from his unit. When asked to stand if they received a Purple Heart medal, he was moved to see the entire room of men join him in rising from their chairs.

Returning to the States, he was deployed to Ft. Meade, MD, with a top security clearance in the National Security Agency.

In 1971 Mr. S found himself in Boston, MA, where, in a bar known as The Lion's Den, he met the love of his life, AL. The couple has been together now for 48 years! Mr. S went on to receive his GED and held various jobs over the years.

The couple bought a home in Medford, MA where they lived for over 20 years, continuously modifying and expanding the size of the house. Also, through community activism, and advocacy, they were instrumental in the overall improvement of their neighborhood.

With the urging of friends, they decided in 1999, to move to Ft. Lauderdale, where they bought their current house and totally enjoy its pool and backyard canal full of fish!

Mr. S was very involved, early on, as a gay rights activist, participating in and leading several organizations over the years. In the 70s Mr. S helped form a gay social group in Boston known as "The Tri-Men", his partner Al became the groups'

newsletter editor. By 1974 the couple had a very successful leather accessories business, and produced the first Gay Leather Fashion Show at the Louis XIV Ballroom in Boston. Mr. S sang at the event and the media covered it well!

Mr. S was active in volunteer law enforcement activities in Florida. He attended the Citizen's Police Academy which included driving along with officers, and even undergoing DUI training. He was President of the American Veterans for Equal Rights, First Vice Commander of Post 336 of the American Legion, and Senior Vice Commandant of Dania Post 304 of the Marines Corps Law Enforcement Detachment.

Of special note was his friendship since the 70s with Woody Baldwin and his partner Sean O'Neal, the founders of Prime Timers in Boston. Woody encouraged Mr. S and Al to start a Ft. Lauderdale chapter. On June 23, 2003, the couple, joined by several friends, attracted a healthy number of guys to attend the first meeting at the Gay and Lesbian Community Center. Al became the Prime Timers' newsletter editor and named it "The Surfer".

