

Paul McNamarra

By Ken South

Queen Elizabeth II succeeded George VI to the British throne in 1952. The 33rd POTUS was Harry S. Truman and *The Today Show* premiered with Dave Garroway on NBC-TV. *The African Queen*, starring Humphrey Bogart and Katharine Hepburn, was released and *Singin' in the Rain*, with Gene Kelly and Debbie Reynolds, premiered at Radio City Music Hall in NYC.

Cambridge, MA, on May 20th of that year, saw the arrival of Mr. January, joining his parents and his older sister, with two younger sisters arriving in quick succession. Not long after, the family moved to the Brighton neighborhood of Boston where Mr. J attended Catholic schools for eight years. In 1970 he graduated from Boston Technical HS. Tragedy struck Mr. J's family when his mother died after losing a two-year battle with cancer when he was just 8 years old. His father was then faced with raising four young children on his own. His father's own sister, "Aunt Annie", decided to leave her life in Ireland and to move to Boston to help raise the children. Mr. J loved her very much and referred to her as a true saint! He did admit, that since he was the only boy among the kids, she always made him feel an extra level of affection.

Upon his HS graduation he spent less than a semester in college and left without a solid plan of what would come next. He found work with a land surveying firm and eventually decided he wanted to become a Registered Land Surveyor. He went back to school and earned an Associates' Degree from Wentworth Institute of Technology in Boston in 1974. He really enjoyed doing construction layout work and developed an interest in construction planning and management. He became motivated to further his education and went on to earn a BS degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Massachusetts in Amherst in 1978. Several years of work managing construction projects followed through-out New England and New York state. In 1989 he was hired by Suffolk Construction Company of Boston where he stayed until his retirement in 2017. In 1999 the company asked him if he was willing to go to South Florida for a "temporary" work assignment, assumed to be about 6 weeks in length. He agreed to do so and eventually accepted a permanent assignment in the company's West Palm Beach office.

Mr. J knew all his life that he was attracted to men. During his college years he started meeting other guys, but as occasional encounters. After relocating to Juno Beach in 1999 for his new work assignment, he discovered the Compass Gay Community Center, in West Palm Beach, a few miles away. He then became active in the local gay community, attending meetings and events at Compass. It was there he met Spencer, eight years his junior, and Mr. J entered into his first long term gay relationship. The relationship ended in 2008 when Spencer, who was a devoted Episcopalian, felt the call to the priesthood and entered the

seminary.

Mr. J thoroughly enjoys his life in retirement. He particularly enjoys his role as "Uncle P" for his three nieces', nephews and their six children. They have given him the opportunity to do the spoiling! He also has enjoyed over 25 years as a wind-surfer, finding challenging waters all over the world.

Mr. J lives in Boca Raton. Several years ago, he discovered the Palm Beach chapter of Prime Timers. But he wanted to experience a larger club so he joined the Ft. Lauderdale Chapter. He has also been very active with SAGE, where he is currently on the Board of Directors. He sums up his life to date as one filled with much gratitude!

