

Nick Chaparos

by Doug Kent

How does one attain the position of full tenured professor at a major University in Ohio without a degree? To find out how, just read on.

Born on March 26, 1929 in Washington D. C., the second of three children to Greek parents, our September Prime Timer would be influenced throughout his life by art, design, music, language and engineering. At the age of 10 our Prime Timer had the opportunity to attend the New York World's Fair and the power of that fair influenced the direction of his life. In his words "the world opened up". Primary, junior and high school were all without incident, except for his friend Eddie, who was his first encounter, and they remained close throughout high school. Several very special teachers during this period were instrumental in validating art as a true academic endeavor and our Prime Timer saw this career path as a potential new life.

After he graduated from high school in 1947 he moved from his home in Schenectady to New York City, and worked in two retail stores doing design work. He enrolled at night in the Pratt Art and Design Institute. His career was beginning to take shape and in the fall of 1953 moved to Chicago and enrolled in the Institute of Design at the Illinois Institute of Technology. He became a full time student in 1955, and in that same year applied and received a Fulbright Scholarship to study in Ulm, Germany, at the prestigious Hochschule Fur Gestaltung School of Design.

After two years of study he returned to the states and had the opportunity to meet Charles Eames in California.

Charles asked our Prime Timer to work as part of the team on the American Exhibition in Moscow in 1958. This exhibition was wildly successful and entailed a 7-screen film depicting various aspects of American life. It was at this very exhibition that Richard Nixon and Nikita Khrushchev had their famous "Kitchen Debate". Mr. September was so enthralled by this 7-film exhibition; he decided to stay in California to study Film and Animation at UCLA for the next year.

In 1962 Mr. September returned to New York and much to the disapproval of his mother, got married. His wife was aware of his attraction to men. This however was not a problem and for the next 21 years Mr. September worked on various projects in the world of design, film, animation, and exhibition. It was during this same period that our Prime Timer had opportunities to teach in various schools like Carnegie Mellon, University of Waterloo and the Parsons School of Design. He moved about the country and the world, as the projects demanded.

In June of 1975, the National Endowment for the Arts offered our Prime Timer a job, on the day of his interview, to edit their Newsletter "Federal Design Matters" and to design educational programs for Federal design employees who worked at various Federal agencies. This contract expired in 1981 and in that same year the University of Cincinnati offered Mr. September a full Professorship with tenure to run the School of Design. As fate would have it, he was divorced in 1983. In the fall of 1986, he began teaching full time in the School of Design at U.C., and decided to retire in June of 1997.

That my friend answers the question: How a person becomes a full tenured professor without ever completing an academic degree. You go out and get a world of experience in your chosen field.

After retiring, Mr. September moved to Sarasota, then to Hallandale, and then to a condo in Dania Beach, and now is comfortable in his apartment in John Knox Village. He has served on the Board of the Miami Design Preservation League; he is active in the gay community participating in SAGE and Prime Timers, was a regular at Haulover Beach and did extensive traveling throughout the world. In 2000 he was a founding member of the Broward Anti-War Coalition which is a diverse group that demonstrates weekly. Currently he is seeking a repository for his many photographs, design objects, and papers.

