

Agapito C. Leal

By Ken South

"Lights, camera, action!" Director Steven Spielberg called the shots in this motion picture. Our Prime Gentleman of the Month was in costume awaiting his cue. He loved being an actor and enjoyed his career in film, television, and commercials. Who could have imagined the path of his life from modest beginnings!

Our mystery man arrived August 18, 1938, the youngest of 15 births. He was born in rural South Texas, in the small town of San Juan. Mr. May is a first-generation American of Mexican descent. He grew up with his eight surviving siblings in a simple home with the love of his parents and a strong sense of family. He spent his childhood content and barefoot, receiving his first shoes when he began school.

While growing up, Mr. M. traveled around the United States with his family as a migrant crop worker. Part of each year was spent harvesting the fields in locales across the USA. Our fellow attended school in the US and studied at an institute in Mexico for two years. Because his American education was frequently interrupted, he did not graduate from high school in Texas until almost 21.

M. was aware of his sexuality from an early age, and he engaged in activities with both girls and boys. He dated and was engaged to marry a woman as a young adult, while involved in sexual adventures with young men. When in his early 20s, he decided his preference was men. It took him another decade to fully embrace that lifestyle.

This month's gent wanted to expand his world view and build his confidence, so he joined the Navy in 1959. While in the Navy, his personality developed and his self-assurance grew. He was a popular shipmate known for his clowning and outgoing personality. He sailed the world, crossed the equator, and rose in rank during his four years there.

After leaving the service, our mystery man utilized the GI Bill to attend college at Dallas County Community. While there, his studies were interrupted when diagnosed as having contracted tuberculosis while overseas. He spent three

months at the VA hospital. Upon discharge, the government informed him that his education would be funded by Uncle Sam. Then he attended North Texas State University, where he received his bachelor's in speech and drama in 1969.

Our Gentleman of the Month met Norman Nicholson in 1968 at a nightclub in Dallas. They would become lovers for 50 years, although their relationship was not typical. Our chap would frequently describe his partner as a "gay homophobe" who refused to embrace their lifestyle. They were passionate early on and remained close later, but their lack of intimacy left Mr. May wanting for more. He sought the fulfillment he needed with other men who were just passing acquaintances through the years.

Our fellow completed his master's coursework at Trinity University at the Dallas Theater Center. In 1972, he was cast as a regular in a Public Television production in Austin, Texas. "Carrascolendas" was the first bilingual children's program in the US and was syndicated across the country. While performing, he completed his thesis and received his master's in theater in 1974. The show was highly regarded, and he remained with the series until 1975, when Hollywood beckoned.

The stage was set for Mr. M. to earnestly pursue his chosen profession. In 1977, he and his partner moved to California. In the subsequent decades, he appeared in guest spots on dozens of episodes of popular television shows, including "Three's Company," "Fantasy Island," "MacGyver," "Beverly Hills, 90210," and "The West Wing." Additionally, he acted in many motion pictures, such as *The Terminal*, *Real Women Have Curves*, and *Road Dogs*. His career included hundreds of commercials in both English and Spanish and regular roles in two television series, "Los Beltran" and "American Family." Our gentleman received an American Latino Media Arts (ALMA) Award in 1998 for his acting in television.

In 2004, our gent met Bob Carroll at Northridge, California, Prime Timers. The two became close, and for years they were imitate friends. M. retired from acting in 2006, and he and Norman moved back to the Dallas area. He wanted to be nearer to his large family, with whom he was always close. Bob also moved to Texas around this time, and they continued their relationship there.

Over the years, Mr. M.'s partner became ill, and the role of caretaker became a new challenge. Norman passed away in 2017, on our chap's birthday, leaving him alone for the first time in half a century. At 79, our Prime Gentleman was convinced he would spend the remainder of his life alone. He contemplated moving to an Arizona retirement community, so he would not be trouble for his family.

Mr. May attended the Celebration of Friends in Fort Lauderdale in 2018. To his joy and surprise, he met and fell in love with his current partner there. He moved to Pompano Beach and married Richard Babik in January of 2019. The happy couple celebrated with two events, in Texas and Florida. His best friend, Bob Carroll, was the best man at both.

Our man of the month enjoys life in Florida and the Prime Gentlemen. He and his husband are out almost every day to parties, events, or playing poker. Who could have imagined he would find happiness at age 80!

