

Clark Powers

by Doug Kent

In 1947 B.B. King hitch hiked to Memphis, Tennessee to seek his fame and fortune. Little did he know that our Mr. February (Mr. F) was also seeking his place in the world. On May 15th, 1947, Mr. F was born, the only male child in a family of 6. His three older sisters were very protective of their little brother but he managed to complete elementary school with a minimum of difficulty. He has fond memories of his four years in Mobile, Alabama, where he completed junior high before his family returned to Memphis.

In high school he showed a profound skill for language, excelling in the study of Spanish. He was active in the Spanish Club, Debate Club, and Student Council. He graduated in 1965 and shortly after entered Memphis State University where he majored in History and Secondary Education. He also studied 4 years of French. In 1968 he was confirmed in the Episcopal Church and became the youngest person to serve on a Vestry in the Diocese. In college he worked full time in the evening and was a full time student during the day. On the night that Martin Luther King was shot he was working in the ER at nearby Methodist Hospital and remembers the evening well. He graduated in January 1970 with his Bachelors in Secondary Education.

His draft number was very low so he decided to enlist in the Army to provide a choice in assignment. He chose service as a French Linguist and was sent to the National Defense Language Institute in California and then to Massachusetts for Military Intelligence training. He was stationed in Udon, Thailand. It was during his enlistment that he decided to explore the priesthood. He was discharge in 1973, the same year he entered the General Theological Seminary in New York City. While there he attended the World Council of Churches Institute in Switzerland, then took 6 weeks to travel around Europe with a friend. In 1976 Mr. F graduated from the Seminary with his Masters in Divinity, was ordained a deacon in June of 1976 and a priest in April of 1977 in the Episcopal Church.

His first assignment was Vicar of a small church in Dickson, Tennessee that had been closed for 65 years. After much difficulty in finding his church, Mr. F had to figure a way to enter it. He decided that the window was the most prudent, since the church was locked and had no electricity, running water, and most importantly no people. After three years of work growing the congregation to about 100 people, Mr. F returned to NYC to pursue graduate studies at N.Y.U. In 1981 he was elected Rector of Saint Stephen and Martin's Church in Brooklyn. He spent 6 years there before becoming the Rector of Saint John's, Park Slope, also in Brooklyn where he spent the next 28 years.

After almost 40 years in the Priesthood, it was time to retire. In 2013 he took a retirement trip to Rome where he had an audience with Pope Francis and cruised home to the States via Fort Lauderdale. In 2014 he purchased his condo in Palm Aire. The first Sunday there he visited a nearby Church where he met his first friend in the area who was also a retired priest.

Mr. F is enjoying his retirement and manages to stay busy. "Once a priest, always a priest", he helps out at Saint Martin's Church in Pompano Beach, Florida. He also conducts Bible study there. When not doing priestly stuff, Mr. F enjoys music, travel and is an avid movie buff. Like most New Yorker's he loves theater, and he enjoys dining with his friends. He walks as often as he can around Palm Aire and is active with Prime Timers. Can you identify this liturgical Prime Timer after all these hints?

