

## Jacko Castagna

By Ken South

"A date that will live in infamy," announced Franklin D. Roosevelt, in 1941, when the US declared war on Japan and three days later, on Germany. Italy was already at war with Greece, under the rule of fascist dictator Benito Mussolini. In a small town of Ribera, within the province of Agrigento, Sicily, on April 19<sup>th</sup>, Mr. January was born the middle child of three boys.

Mr. J graduated from HS while still living in Ribera in 1958. He especially enjoyed playing soccer. At 21 years of age, he obtained a permit to allow him to work in England. After a four-day journey by train, he started his career in the service industry as a bus boy at London's Cumberland Hotel. He returned later to Italy to serve two years in the army. Then by 1967, he was back in London working at the prestigious Mayfair Hotel when he met his first partner, John. As John was an American, the couple moved to the US, where they lived together for the next 28 years.

The pair lived in East Brunswick, New Jersey and Mr. J worked for two years as the maitre d' of the executive dining room of the Chemical Bank headquarters in Manhattan. His partner John was legal counsel for the corporation.

In 1976 Mr. J moved on to work at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel for the next 10 years until 1984 when the couple moved to south Florida. John suffered from a chronic heart condition, took an early retirement, and was lovingly cared for by Mr. J until his death in 1995. However, the couple did have the chance to spend many years traveling the world together. John made financial provisions for Mr. J so he no longer had to work in the service industry, but could find new ways to enjoy his life.

To that end, he decided to teach himself how to paint. His home is now filled with a large collection of oil paintings, most copies of the grand masters of art like Van Gogh, Vermeer, the Dutch masters, Rembrandt and even a Winston Churchill still life! He has given away over 100 of these works to friends and organizations over the years.

Mr. J met his second partner, George in 1997 with whom he enjoyed a relationship of 21 years until his passing in 2018. The pair liked to travel and took many cruises out of Fort Lauderdale. George was the president for many years of the HOA at their home at the Meadows of Crystal Lake in Deerfield Beach. George also owned a residence in New Hampshire where they spent many summers. George and Mr. J also liked to Karaoke.

While enjoying a night out at the Club Silver in Wilton Manors later in 2018, Mr. J met his current partner, Donald. They enjoy their home in Deerfield Beach and mixing with friends at Matty's on Monday evenings. Mr. J still enjoys his tennis sessions and continues his passion for Karaoke, he can be found on most Friday nights these days singing at the Scandals Bar and Grille!

