

Ken South

by Doug Kent

The snow was deep and it was cold on December 16th, 1945 when our Mr. October (Mr. O) came into the world. Winters in New Rochelle, New York were not easy. Life would not be an easy journey but with help and determination, Mr. O would make lemonade out of the lemons that were dealt to him. His early childhood was difficult due to the alcohol problems of his mother. The family moved to Mt. Vernon, N.Y. where Mr. O went to elementary school. At age 10 the family moved to Levittown, Long Island, where Mr. O attended Junior and Senior High School. Mr. O developed two loves, Music and Scouting, one at which he would excel. Mr. O graduated high school in 1963.

Mr. O attended Fredonia Teachers College in Western New York, where he lived in the dorm for a year and a half. He pursued his love of music. He achieved being last chair, 4th horn, in the "B" Band. Eventually, Mr. O realized that his "Love of music did not substitute for talent". However, his love of Scouting drove him to establish the first Scouting fraternity on campus.

Mr. O left Fredonia to attend Salem College in West Virginia. He changed his major from Music to Non-Profit Management, and Music Education and graduated in 1969 with his Bachelor of Arts. While attending Salem he met Denny. Mr. O thought Denny was the perfect male, but unfortunately he was very straight. Denny took Mr. O with him to various churches, preaching, and this is where Mr. O found the Lord. In 1967 Mr. O had his first gay experience. His coming out was not easy. His father drove all night (a touching sign of love) to pick up his son who had just outed himself. Mr. O was fortunate to have help in dealing with his sexual identity. Mr. O went on to receive his Masters in Divinity from the Methodist Theological School in Ohio. He was eventually ordained by the United Church of Christ after being defrocked by the Methodist Church.

Mr. O was now ready to begin his long and successful career within the non-profit world. He developed skills in Grant Writing, Fund-Raising, Budget Management, Program Development, and Events Creation. Some of the organizations he was associated with included Hill Center Inc. in Hartford, Connecticut, Christian Activities Council, AID Atlanta, Presidential Commission on the HIV Epidemic, Koba Institute, AIDS National Interfaith Network, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, Bread for the World, Church World Service, N.Y., and the American Academy of HIV Medicine. Mr. O managed to have three long term relationships despite his exhausting work schedule and travel. He also created an extensive and successful consulting practice within the non-profit realm. While in Washington D.C., Mr. O also managed to be the President of the local Prime Timers Chapter.

In July of 2016, Mr. O moved to sunny South Florida. He had several friends located in the area to help with his transition. He rented at first then purchased his condo. Mr. O continues to work part time, but manages to find time to enjoy life. He is an avid Haulover beach bum, and enjoys the outdoor activities at the Vitambi Camp Grounds. He is involved with Prime Timers and enjoys his Senior Exercise class. Who is this former president of Prime Timers who quietly moves about our local chapter?

