

Rex Coston

by Doug Kent

Winston-Salem, North Carolina has never been the same since August 9, 1922 when Mr. March (Mr. M) entered the world. His father was excited when he got the news that his son was born and was healthy. He would be the first of five children to be born into this family. Early education was relatively uneventful except for one day in the second grade Mr. M spilled something all over his clothing, his teacher made him strip, stand naked the coatroom while someone went to his home for dry clothing. An average student, the rest of his elementary education was uneventful.

Mr. M attended Reynolds High School, and became involved in the Drama Club. By his third year Mr. M had his own weekly radio program where he sang popular songs. He graduated in 1940 and decided to attend the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He majored in music with a concentration in voice. A brief stay in the Army interrupted his education. He received a medical discharge and then continued his education and graduated in 1946.

Fully trained and ready to take on the world, Mr. M immediately went to New York to seek his fortune. He auditioned in every theater in New York and finally landed a role in the Broadway Show "The Cradle Will Rock". Other notables who shared the stage with Mr. M were Vivian Vance and Leonard Bernstein just to name a few. To offset the erratic and sometimes non-existent income of Broadway, Mr. M did some solo choir work around Manhattan. Many of the smaller churches around the city could not afford a full professional choir, so they hired professional soloists and then filled out the choir from their congregation. This worked out well for Mr. M but eventually, a steady income was desired.

With his radio background in college, Mr. M secured a position in Network Operations with CBS Radio. He eventually became a producer of the morning show on WCBS. In this position Mr. M would receive newly released records to play on the program. Some of the new singers included Vic Damone and Tony Bennett. Mr. M being a singer and trained in voice loved the sound of Vic Damone and played his records often. However, Mr. M thought that Tony Bennett did not have a smooth sound and would not play his records. Guess who is still around singing today.

Television was making inroads into the entertainment business. Mr. M jumped on this bandwagon and became a writer for WCBS television. This led to a position with Ogilvy Advertising Agency and Mr. M began writing and producing TV commercials for many major products.

In 1959 Mr. M married and eventually had two children. He moved out of the city to the suburbs in Putnam Valley New York. He and his wife managed to have a good life and eventually they started their own business. Mr. M secured a position with a paperback publisher that was owned by CBS and excelled in sales promotion. Unfortunately, his wife passed away in 1989 and that left Mr. M in a dilemma. In a conversation with a close friend Mr. M was comfortable with the idea that his friend was attracted to men. Mr. M confided back to him that he too had this attraction. After discussion with his doctor Mr. M spoke to a psychologist and was presented with an opportunity to join the New York City Gay Men's Chorus. He sang with them for four years and even had a solo performance at Carnegie Hall. Life once again had meaning with many close friendships. He eventually moves to Florida, bought his condo, and began singing with the Fort Lauderdale Gay Men's Chorus.

Mr. M is active with the Pride Center, has been very active with Prime Timers and SAGE. He attends his exercise class three times a week. He is very involved with photography at Center events and with the associated computer work. He is currently planning to write a book about his theatrical experiences and the many interesting and famous people he has met. This delightful character is now known to me, can you identify Mr. March?

