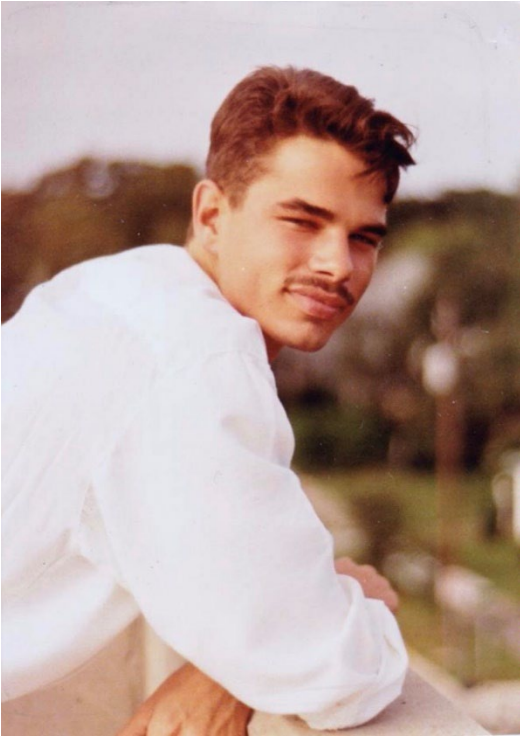




Mr. January 2025 - Michael Gagne

By Ken South



President Richard Nixon promised the gradual removal of troops from Vietnam in 1970, and a Preview Center opened at Walt Disney World, the first building to open.

Boeing launched the first commercial use of its 747 with a Pan American flight from New York City to London in 6½ hours. Apollo 13 was launched to the Moon; unable to land there, it returned in 6 days.

The dark comedy film M*A*S*H*, starring Donald Sutherland and Elliott Gould, premiered. Joe Frazier beat Jimmy Ellis for the heavyweight boxing title, and Paul McCartney officially announced the split-up of The Beatles.

And, on August 24th, Mr. January came into this world in Honolulu, Hawaii, his dad in the military and joined 3 older sisters. His dad tried to get him interested in typical “guy” things like sports, but Mr. J had no interest, while his mom got him enrolled in a theatrical summer camp, where he thrived. By 10 yrs.’ old the family had moved to Jacksonville, FL where he went to elementary and a high school of the arts, graduating in 1989. While a senior in HS, his dad decided to follow his dream and enrolled in the Ringling Bros Clown College! It took a while, but Mr. J came around and became proud of his father’s new career.

By his 19th birthday he was enrolled in the University of Tampa, majoring in Psychology. At an early age, Mr. J was already very comfortable as a gay youngster, but was surprised to find out in Tampa that he was not accepted. He was so threatened, that he kept a baseball bat in his school backpack and was blunt when people asked him why. This started his very public college activism. His newly formed Gay Rights student group lobbied the university into adding Sexual Orientation to its non-discrimination policies. Mr. J then enrolled in three ROTC classes including PT sessions to highlight where the university was in

violation of its new policies. He started wearing pro-gay message tee shirts to ROTC classes which, at one point, got him physically removed from the building. The incident was reported on the TV news and in the local paper. From there he became active with the Human Rights Campaign and Lambda Legal Defense. In 1992 he attended the Republican National Convention in Houston on behalf of ACT UP to protest and was arrested in a demonstration.

He transferred to the University of South Florida, also in Tampa, majored in political Science and graduated in 1994. During this period, a friend of the family was unable to care for her 13yo son, so he became the teens foster father. He began working for Blue Cross Blue Shield and stayed with them for the next 8 years. He also worked for United Health Care and for an Emergency Department Management company. Mr. J went on to adopt four boys from foster care and was a foster parent for 10 other children, one of whom was a transgender girl. After a certain President was elected, he and his two younger sons moved to Costa Rica for two years. During this time Mr. J became a grandad! He now has three grandchildren.

Mr. J has been active with SAGE of South Florida for the past decade and is now a Board Member. Mr. J joined Prime Gentlemen in 2020.

