



Mr. October 2025 – Gary Lee Lawson

By Ken Joseph



Gary Lee Lawson was born in Davenport, Iowa in 1941. That year the United States entered World War II after the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor. He was the youngest of three children. Lee attended the Monroe Elementary School, the Frank L. Senant Junior High School, and the Davenport High School.

He attended the University of Maryland, Parsons College, and eventually received a degree in Geography from Augustana College. He served in the army for three years and was stationed in Germany for two and a half of those years.

Lee's partner died from HIV in 1982, when no one knew what HIV was. After his partner's passing Lee became cautious when meeting others. This impacted some of the decisions he made in his volunteer work. When he resumed dating, he didn't really enter any long-term relationships until he met Tony, who he met online in 2020. Tony relocated to New Zealand as a physician. Lee decided to remain here, but they are close till this day.

Lee is a man of many diverse interests. He became interested in motorcycles in 1978 and was a founding member of the Blackhawk Motorcycle Club. He dabbles in gardening and painting. He is an avid reader. He enjoys novels and reads the newspaper daily. He started his career at Dunn & Bradstreet. He dabbled in real estate and then worked for International Harvester/Navistar International for many years. The last twelve years of his career he worked in computer operations. At one point he returned to Iowa for five years to take care of his mother.

His dedication to volunteer work and activism is exemplary. He was involved and active in Homophile, "Society Mutual Equality." He marched on the Pentagon and on the White House. He demonstrated against Anita Bryant's homophobic stand in Des Moines, Iowa. He helped form an HIV organization to assist HIV patients in hospitals in to care for their pets at home, watering their plants and taking in their mail. He volunteered for the Milwaukee AIDS Foundation, the St. Louis Effort for AIDS and the Indianapolis Damian Project, coordinating donated food from hospitals delivered to homebound AIDS patients.

