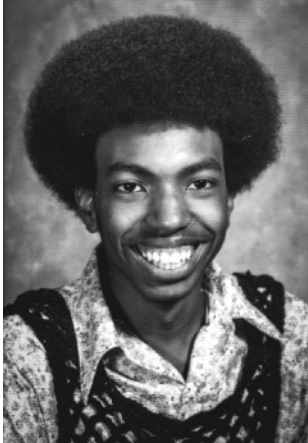


MAN OF THE MONTH

GARY

Interviewed by George H. Mihalakos



Early Years

Gary was born and raised in Washington, DC in a devout Seventh-day Adventist household — a faith known for discipline, reflection and an early appreciation for potlucks without cocktails. He is one of five brothers. Three are gay. Statistically impressive. Family gatherings must have been interesting and highly coordinated. His education

was a blend of public and parochial schools followed by the University of Maryland.

Professional Life

He has always existed at the elegant crossroads where technology meets “please fix this immediately!” In Washington, he prepared technical documents, organizational charts and client materials for federal agencies and major banks, which is to say he made complex things readable and bureaucracies slightly less terrifying. A move to San Francisco elevated his career into a supervisory role at a major law firm. There he managed word processing, desktop publishing, training and troubleshooting - back when “desktop publishing” was cutting-edge.

In 2005, Fort Lauderdale beckoned - as it does. He joined the Broward County Library's Creative Station, tutoring the community in digital tools, 3D printing and emerging technologies. It takes a special kind of patience to reassure them that the machine was not, in fact, broken. Eventually he found his professional home in Fort Lauderdale's Building Services Division handling property records, permits, front-desk reception and customer support - all essential civic duties, the unsung choreography of civic life.

Motivation

Gary is a firm believer that one must live life to the fullest. That means you, and only you, must take control

of your life because no one else will volunteer. He recognizes that pleasing everyone is inefficient and mathematically improbable. The loss of friends to HIV, COVID, violence and congenital illness gave him a practical understanding that time is limited. Being born Black and gay in America provided additional perspective - and a well-developed ability to read the room.

Love and Partnership

He met his future husband in 1994 - first online, then at a Starbucks in San Francisco. They bonded over early computer technology which at the time required patience and several boot attempts. Gary and his husband discovered early on that they had apparently been living in the same social universe with a talent for just barely missing each other. Every time he proudly announced, “I can't wait for you to meet my friend —,” his partner would interrupt with, “Oh, you mean that friend? We've known each other for years.” Cue his stunned reaction. Again and again they learned they had already been “vetted” and were two ships passing at night, docking at all the same ports. They remained partners for decades and formalized their bond in 2018 at a ceremony in Fort Lauderdale, proving that some software updates are worth the wait.

Activism

Gary and his husband served as board members and co- chairmen of Men of All Colors Together (San Francisco Bay Area) - a multiracial and multicultural LGBTQ organization committed to confronting discrimination through educational, cultural and political efforts.

