



Mr. August 2026 – Philip Loscalzo

By George Mihalakos



Some people spend a lifetime reinventing themselves. Michael simply kept saying “yes” to the next chapter—and somehow made every one of them interesting.

Born on May 13, 1949, in Jersey City, New Jersey, and raised in nearby Bayonne, Michael grew up as an only child. He attended parochial schools through high school, graduating in 1966 with a dream of becoming an architect. Like many of us, life had other plans. He enrolled at Pratt Institute’s School of Architecture, only to discover by his sophomore year that designing buildings wasn’t nearly as enjoyable as surviving architecture school. Rather than force a career that wasn’t the right fit, he made a course correction, transferring into the Humanities program and earning his bachelor’s degree in 1970. Not one to linger, he immediately entered Pratt’s School of Library Science, receiving his Master of Science just one year later. Michael jokes that he finished graduate school on a Friday and reported to work the following Monday. Apparently, taking a breather was never part of the curriculum.

His career began in New Jersey’s public library system, where he spent fifteen years before accepting a position with the New York Public Library (NYPL) in November 1986—a date he remembers because it happened to be St. Michael’s Feast Day. Most of his NYPL career was spent serving the Staten Island branches during a particularly innovative period for public libraries. Thanks to federal and state grants, libraries became much more than places to borrow books. They reached into the community, offering services for immigrants learning English, residents of nursing homes, adults with limited reading skills, people with disabilities, and even incarcerated individuals. One assignment remains especially memorable. Michael recalls standing before a classroom of roughly thirty inmates explaining library services—with no correctional officer anywhere in sight. He admits he has occasionally wondered whether everyone else thought that was as unusual as he did. As the AIDS epidemic evolved during the late 1980s, libraries found themselves on the front lines of public education. Fear and misinformation were everywhere, and Michael helped present educational programs for staff and the public that replaced panic with facts and encouraged compassion over fear. As he puts it, whatever remained of his closet doors didn’t survive that experience. Then came computers. Technology transformed libraries almost overnight. Research moved from reference desks into living rooms, collections became centralized, and the traditional role of librarians began to change dramatically. Michael watched the profession evolve in ways few could have imagined when he first checked out a library card. By July 2010, retirement felt perfectly timed.

The next seven years were devoted to caring for his parents—a role many understand but few appreciate until they’ve lived it themselves. It was meaningful work, though without overdue fines. Michael’s personal life has been bit as rewarding. He met Henry in July 1985, beginning a relationship that required countless trips between New Jersey and Brooklyn. After nearly three decades together, they married on May 22, 2014, proving that some love stories are worth the wait. In late 2017, they purchased their first Florida condominium and embraced the snowbird lifestyle before making the permanent move south in 2023. In January 2024, they settled into Palm Aire, where they’ve happily become part of the community.

He credits Prime Gentlemen with making Florida feel like home. Between its activities, welcoming atmosphere, and engaging members, he has found exactly what so many retirees hope for: friendship, laughter, and the opportunity to keep writing new chapters. Looking back, Michael’s journey has included changing careers, changing technology, changing attitudes, and changing addresses. Through it all, one thing has remained constant: a lifelong commitment to helping people find information, understanding, and community. That’s a pretty good story for a man who thought he’d spend his life drawing buildings instead of helping build lives. See page 8?? for his photo—and find out who he is!

