

Mark Fishberg

By Ken South

In 1950, President Harry Truman ordered the development of the hydrogen bomb, sent American military forces to aid in the defense of South Korea, and deployed military advisors to Vietnam to aid French forces. The first Diners Club card appeared, and the Brooklyn-Battery Tunnel is opened in New York City, while the game show, *Truth or Consequences* debuted on television.

Also that year, on February 1st, Mr. May was born in the Bronx, NY, the second oldest of four brothers. After a few years, the family moved to East Meadow, Long Island where Mr. M attended primary school and graduated from East Meadow High in 1968. He was an excellent student and enjoyed an active social life including participation on the tennis team, math club, chess team and was named President of the Honor Society. Mr. M also earned his Life award in the Boy Scouts and was on a little league team. There were monthly camping trips with his Boy Scout troop and his family camped frequently as well.

His choice of college was Stony Brook University, where he attended paying his own way by means of an ice cream route he started in high school. He majored in psychology and graduated in 1972. Like so many of his generation, the times were ripe with experimentation, and "sex, drugs and rock and roll" became the norm. For graduate school, Mr. M. selected Yeshiva University in Manhattan. He completed all his requirements for a PhD in Psychology, shy a final dissertation, and left in 1976. Mr. M. was hired by the State of New York as a psychologist and began his career of 35 years in Dutchess County, NY. He worked in several different locations under the New York State, OMRDD Division (Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities) providing a range of psychological services with different populations of clients including young people with learning disabilities.

During much of this time Mr. M. lived in several different neighborhoods in NYC, the lower east side, SOHO, NOHO, and later bought into a co-op in Jackson Heights, Queens. He remembers with fondness when he and a friend converted a school bus into a RV and traveled around the country. Once they went to a commune in Eureka, CA and when the bus broke down, decided to donate it to the community!

In the early 80's he experienced the devastation of the AIDS epidemic on

the gay community of New York. However, it was also during this time that he met "the love of his life" Vinny. They shared 13 wonderful years together, bought a co-op home in Long Beach, on the boardwalk (which he still owns today), and enjoyed all kinds of activities including much world travel to places like Amsterdam. However, his world was shattered when Vinny, who succumbed to pneumonia in 1991, died in 1995. Also during the 90s, Mr. M. became the brother who looked after his mother as her health declined and she moved into a senior community. She passed away in 1996.

A highlight during the 80s, was when he met a gay man named Jimmy who became his lifelong friend. Jimmy and his partner, current Prime Gentlemen members, introduced Mr. M. to PG.

Mr. M. is currently a "snow bird" but he is considering moving to South Florida on a permanent basis, as he also has several family members living in the Broward County area.

