

Morris Suggs

6/17/27 – 1/19/14

by Doug Kent

Born June 17, 1927, the oldest of three in Fort Myers, Florida, Mr. February was exposed early to several influences that would affect the rest of his life. These were the value of education and the Southern Baptist Church; one being very positive, the church being very negative. A child of the depression, his early life was marked with moving and the daily struggle of getting by. He was able to complete his elementary and high school education driven by his mother's desire to get her education so she could teach.

At age 17 Mr. February joined the U.S. Navy in 1945 and took his basic training at Bainbridge, Maryland and Medical Corps training at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. He spent two years in service, and then was discharged. With the GI bill in hand he studied pre-med at Mars Hill College in North Carolina. He remained in the Naval Reserve and finished his undergraduate degree in 1950 at Wake Forest University. He was recalled into service for the Korean War and served two years on the USS Henley where he had the medical responsibilities for the entire 350 man crew. For those of you who were in the Navy during this period you would be aware of "short arm" inspections. Mr. February conducted many.

In 1952 he returned back to Lake Placid, Florida and began teaching. It was at this time that marital pressures from the community and pressure from the Southern Baptist Church on this single, educated person became too great, and he did marry. Teaching, however, did not provide enough income for the family, so with the GI bill from the Korean War, he attended Florida State University and received his first Masters Degree in Bacteriology while he and his wife worked to support the family.

He was able to get a job with the Center for Disease Control (CDC) in Montgomery, Alabama, in a Virus Lab and in 1960 transferred to the CDC main facility in Atlanta. He received his second Masters Degree in Public Health in 1965 and a PhD in Microbiology in 1967 from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He has collaborated on or written no less than 31 publications in his specialty throughout his career.

Mr. February became a consultant to several government agencies worldwide, and the World Health Organization. This extensive travel afforded him the opportunity to explore and embrace his interests in men. In 1976 his wife passed away and he had three small children to raise alone. He remained with the CDC till 1985.

After retirement from the CDC he volunteered in the Education Department of AID Atlanta, then did some substitute teaching in and around Atlanta, volunteered with the Atlanta Project and then moved to Florida in 2000.

This Oakland Park home owner has been involved with the Beautification Project in Oakland Park; is an active Prime Timer; enjoys entertaining, and partaking in the social life of Fort Lauderdale; is a Silverdaddy; and has lots of family and friends visit him.

