

Al Dube

by Doug Kent

Mr. February (Mr. F) knew that he was going to lead a “Charmed” life. The last of 13 children, born in South Philadelphia, May 10, 1936, Mr.

February’s father decided to leave the family before Mr. F was born. His mother and siblings were alone and they all did what they had to do to survive. In 1941 Mr. F moved to Williamston, New Jersey and was raised by a farm family there. He attended Oak Know Elementary and Glassboro High School. Education was of little interest to Mr. F and he spent a lot of time in Ocean City, New Jersey beach throughout high school but did manage to graduate in 1954.

At the tender age of 18, Mr. F joined the Navy and volunteered for the very competitive Submarine Service. After exhaustive testing he was accepted and completed all the training. He was assigned to the Piper SS409. While serving his country, Mr. F met and fell in love with his first partner. Picture if you will two young sailors serving on a submarine and being in love. There were secluded parts of the Sub that allowed these two to have their private time together. What a beautiful picture of the “Charmed” life. They stayed together for four years and are still in touch with each other today.

Mr. F always had a desire to become part of the glamorous world of Roller Derby. He began his professional roller derby training in 1957 and after leaving the Navy in 1958, he completed the training in 1959. He was picked up by the New York Chiefs in 1959 and was traded to the Brooklyn Red Devils in 1960. As the “Charmed” life would have it Mr. F met his second partner, who also was with the Red Devils, and that began a relationship that would span 47 years.

One has to understand that the Roller Derby season was from October to June and that the players had to support themselves with other occupations in the off season. Mr. F chose to work as a bank teller in the off season. His partner worked in the home construction business on Fire Island and together they led a wonderful, fascinating life between the two occupations. One drawback of the roller derby was the sometimes embarrassing moment of sustaining a broken nose in heated discussions with opposing players.

This ideal life lasted till 1968 when Mr. F decided to leave the roller derby, nose not intact. He went into banking full time and began to realize the benefits of education. He was promoted to Branch Manager and received his Associates Degree in 1975 from Hoftra University, received several banking certificates, and then finally received his Bachelors in 1978 from South Hampton College with a minor in Elementary Education. He remained in banking, but had the opportunity to teach the 5th grade part time. Along the way, Mr. F and his partner built many homes and sold them at the absolute perfect time supporting the theory that Mr. F lead the “Charmed” life.

In 1993 Mr. F and his partner retired and built a home in historic Williamsburg, Virginia. Sadly, it was just 2 years later that his beloved partner of 47 years passed away. The grieving process took some time. Mr. F made a series of moves to Lake Huntington, New York, then to Philadelphia and finally landed in South Florida after doing extensive travel to Florida prior to the purchase of his co-op in 2012. While in Florida, Mr. F led a full life, but he had never thought that another meaningful relationship was in the cards at his age. Enter partner number 3, a musician from New York. This relationship is currently a long distance one spanning New York and Florida, but it is the “real deal”. Again, the “Charmed” life becomes apparent.

Mr. F enjoys his Prime Timers; he is a bowler, tennis player and like all New Yorkers he enjoys the Theater. He remains active and still swims in the every day in the ocean, which is just across the street. Affable, outgoing, and always aware of his “Charmed” life, Mr. F is known to me, can you identify him?

