

## Frank Pires

by Doug Kent

This is an amazing story of how a young boy from a tiny village in the middle of nowhere, landed a position of prestige with the largest airline in the world. This journey had many twists and turns and involved many cities throughout the world. It all began when Mr. April (Mr. A) was born on January 20, 1947 in the small port town of Vale De Prazeres in Portugal. He had two older sisters and a younger brother. Life was good, his father was a builder of homes and had three farms to manage. At the age of 7, Mr. A was playing with his friends and someone threw a stone at a passing train and the stone then hit another child. Mr. A was blamed for that mishap and was taken to court with his father. A fine was paid by his father and this made him very angry. As a result Mr. A was mistreated by his father so he was taken from his home and placed in a school in Lisbon at the age of 10. Here he attended school and naval training and in 1961 at the age of 14 took his first job on a passenger ship that made an 8 day trip from Lisbon to the Madiera Island in the Azores. He spent four years on this ship, was promoted and had his first male encounter with a member of the Portugese Royal Family.

Mr. A had a dream of flying. At the tender age of 18 he wanted to get to the United States, and he felt his best opportunities lie with the Merchant Marine. He found a ship going to Antwerp, Belgium. He jumped that ship and this led to many problems with his passport and he found himself working on ships, sailing to many countries trying to avoid going back to Portugal. His journey took him to Spain, Holland, France, Norway, Australia, Germany, and many other ports of call. Eventually, he did go back to Portugal, paid a hefty fine, and received his legitimate passport so he could legally travel anywhere in the world. He was now 22 years old.

He flew to Norway and requested a ship based in the United States. The Norwegian Company flew Mr. A to New York from Oslo. Here he became the helmsmen of a Norwegian ship that sailed from New York to Africa. He was given this opportunity to be helmsman only because he was Portugese, and his Captain knew that Portugese men knew how to sail. Mr. A also knew that he was based in the United States now and he needed to take English lessons. He enrolled at Temple University in evening classes. He continued for the next three years taking classes and sailing back and forth from the United States to Africa. What a life for someone who was not yet 25 years of age. He purchased his car and studio apartment.

This is where the story takes a fantastic turn. A gay friend told Mr. A that Pan American Air Lines were hiring. After a bitter lawsuit, Pan Am was forced to hire men as Stewards on their planes. Mr. A went and applied with thousands of other men for a position. Dejected by the sheer numbers and knowing his English was not up to speed he thought he had little chance of landing a position. About two months later he got a call from Pan Am, had a second interview and was hired as one of the first male Stewards. He trained for 6 weeks in Miami and requested New York as his base of operation. His dream had been fulfilled at the tender age of 25. This is how someone from a small village in Portugal gets a job with Pan Am. What a story, but it does not end here.

From 1972 to 1992, Mr. A flew for Pan Am. He flew to many countries and enjoyed every second of his career. He purchased his home in New Jersey and met his partner of 32 years, who was a banker, in 1977. Together they shared a wonderful life. In 1992 Pan Am ceased being an airline, so Mr. A took a position with American Airlines. He worked with American until he retired in 2007. Unfortunately, his partner passed in 2009. Mr. A traveled to Florida from his home in New Jersey many times. In 2011 he purchase his condo in Florida. In 2013 while at the doctors office he met his current partner.

Mr. A is a Prime Timer who still enjoys traveling (First Class now), enjoys gardening and of course he enjoys life and golf. You now have the information, who is Mr. A?

