

Lou Wangberg

by Doug Kent

His sisters, now 25, 20 and 15 years of age were quite happy but perplexed when their mother brought home to the small Halstad Minnesota farm, their very own baby brother, who was born on March 27th, 1941. Other than that, things were normal and Mr. March (Mr. M) worked on the farm and went to school as did all his friends in Halstad. Nothing unusual happened during those formative years. Mr. M was an above average student interested in drama, music and debating, and he graduated high school in 1959 with his 27 classmates.

The University of North Dakota in Grand Forks was his next educational stop. His major was Speech but changed to Geography with a minor in Political Science. Mr. M was active on campus with all the normal college distractions, fraternity life, working at the campus radio station, jumping at all chances to act, was president of his fraternity "Sigma Nu" and was a politically active member of the young Republicans. He managed to take education classes along with his major and graduated in 1963 with lots more classmates. In the summer of 1963 Mr. M was married and he secured his Master's Degree in Geography at the University of North Dakota in 1964.

Things began to move quickly for Mr. M. His first position was teaching 7th and 8th grade social studies in Granite Falls Minnesota. After a half year there he was offered and accepted the Assistant Principal position. After two years in Granite Falls, he became Principal at Cosmos High School in Cosmos Minnesota and worked there for an additional 2 years. He had two children now, but his wife was still working and Mr. M was able to go back to the University of North Dakota to secure his Ph.D. in School Administration. After graduation he accepted the position as Assistant Superintendent of Schools in Worthington Minnesota. In 1971 they adopted their daughter and in 1972 he accepted the position of Superintendent of Schools in Bemidji Minnesota, becoming the youngest Superintendent in the State.

Mr. M continued to be politically active in the state. Through a unique set of consequences in 1977 Mr. M ran for a vacant Congressional Seat in Minnesota but lost the election. The next year he was elected Lieutenant Governor of Minnesota for a four-year term. For about a year and a half of that term he also served under then Governor Al Quie as his Chief of Staff. In 1982 he ran for Governor of the State of Minnesota on the Independent Republican Party ticket, but lost (Lou was always more 'independent' than Republican! Today he is more Libertarian/Independent than anything else). He was officially now, unemployed.

In 1983 he joined the Jostens's Corporation, who was at the time, the largest vendor of school class rings and year books. They needed to diversify and they hired Mr. M to do just that. Their expansion into Adult Vocational Schools throughout the country went well under the direction of Mr. M. In 1986 Mr. M decided that he could also enter into this lucrative market on his own. He entered into a non-compete clause with Jostens Corporation, and could not compete in any state that Jostens operated in. He purchased four schools of Respiratory Therapy in the state of Florida. His family remained in Minnesota and this new venture required a considerable amount of travel. Mr. M had some very casual encounters with men over the years, usually on business trips, but remained professionally and socially closeted. In 1987 Mr. M met, while traveling in Florida, and fell in love with Jim, his partner for the next 25 years who passed away in 2012. In 1988 Mr. M was divorced but remains friends with his ex-wife who continues to live in Minnesota. His three children and four grandchildren live in Minnesota, Chicago, and Alabama.

After 11 years of running the vocational schools in Florida, Mr. M sold them and returned to teaching both on-line and in class. In 2013, Mr. M officially retired from teaching high school but continues to teach half time for two online doctoral programs. He is involved in a number of other activities. He maintains his beautiful five-bedroom home, is currently writing an history book, has taken on a new hobby of weaving, has two super cute dogs that require lots of love, and is an active member of Prime Timers. Mr. M was born deaf in his left ear, and on January 29, 2014, he successfully had a BAHA (Bone Anchored Hearing Apparatus) operation that has permitted him to hear on the left side of his head for the first time. This soft spoken, handsome, intelligent, fun loving, former politician/educator is hard to identify. Can you guess who he is?

