

## Rob Labby

by Doug Kent

Amazing, amazing, amazing... That pretty much describes the life that is about to unfold. A life that is destined to “Entertain”.

Born December 10<sup>th</sup>, 1945 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Mr. October (Mr. O) was one of 6 siblings that were given up for adoption by his birth mother. His adoptive mother was married 5 times, but managed to provide a base for the development of Mr. O's talent. His first piano recital came at the tender age of 3, and by the end of his elementary school training, he was able to play no less than 6 other musical instruments. He was not allowed to form lasting childhood friendships because his adoptive mother changed his school each year. This provided time for shows and performances all through his early childhood development.

Junior high was at the Palatine Brothers School in preparation for a religious life. Then in High School he switched to the Salvatorian Father's Seminary with the intention of becoming a priest in the Catholic Church. Fate would have it that in his second year of training, Mr. O decided that religious life was not for him. A decision he has never regretted. It was around this time that Mr. O was forming his sexual identity, and men were very attractive to him.

After leaving the seminary, Mr. O developed a strong interest in Magic, another performing art that he would master. At the age of 21 he was the youngest inductee into the “Magic Castle”, a magicians' fraternity. His magic routines afforded him the opportunity to develop a comical theme, and as a result stand up comedy became just another talent that he could use to support himself. His theatrical life was now fully developed and complete. An accomplished musician, magician, singer, actor, comedian was ready for the big time. He decided that Chicago was now ready for his talent.

Living in Chicago, and listing with every talent agent, Mr. O found work across many diverse and rewarding engagements. Nothing was too large or too small, just as long as the gig generated money so he could sustain his theatrical life. His “No Roots” lifestyle allowed him to work in New York, Houston, New Orleans, Los Angeles, Broadway plays, like “Guys and Dolls” and “Brigadoon”, and worked at Clubs like the “My O My Club” and

the “Gunga Den” in New Orleans.

He also worked Conventions, Product Shows, and many Television Programs. He trained and studied to become one of 31 authorized “Bozo the Clown” characters. He performed this character in two separate television markets. He also served as Master of Ceremonies in countless situations. He became Ring Master in a small Circus for one season. His drive and love of entertaining propelled him to continually seek new and exciting theatrical opportunities. One that stands out, was a stunt, being the only person in the world and weighing in at over 350 pounds, to escape from a “Straight Jacket” while being suspended from his ankles from a hot air balloon that was 300 feet off the ground. This stunt was reenacted for the television shows “You Asked for It” and “That's Incredible”.

His lifestyle and travel precluded his developing any long term relationships. However, he enjoyed gay encounters as they presented themselves throughout a green card, thus eliminating the requirement of leaving the country every 6 months. They now live happily in their condo, but still travel quite a bit. Together they have formed an inseparable bond and both participate in the Prime Timers every chance they get. This consummate entertainer is always willing to entertain because it is in his DNA. This always smiling and cheerful individual who has played Santa Clause so many times he can't count them, once in a nudist camp, now sits among us at our many functions. I now know who this likeable entertainer is, can you identify him?

