

Stew Pepper

by Doug Kent

Salt Lake City, Utah is known for many things. One little know fact is that it was the birthplace of our Mr. December (Mr. D) on November 20, 1949. Mr. D was born with only 10% of his vision. This fact , however, did not interfere with his upbringing or childhood. Mr. D attended public schools in Salt Lake City and was an average student despite his vision problems. He was assigned a Vision Specialist in elementary and junior high to assist with his education. He was involved in youth activities with the B'nai B'rith Youth Organization (BBYO) and was on the regional and district boards. At age 12, Mr. D and his father traveled to New York City to visit a famous Ophthalmologist who had developed a special optic for persons with severe vision difficulties. This ground breaking device allowed persons to see both distances and close work with a single device. Mr. D traveled several times to New York as improvements were made to the device. With little fanfare Mr. D graduated high school in 1968. That summer he spent 8 weeks traveling in Israel.

Upon his return to Salt Lake City he entered the University of Utah and studied business administration. He also worked part time in the office of the family business. After two years at the University, Mr. D decided to work full time with the family business and remained there until 1973. Mr. D moved to Scottsdale, Arizona and began work in a scrap metal salvage yard, the same type of business that his father owned. That August he was married and moved back to Salt Lake City to continue his work in the family business. In 1976 his father passed away at the age of 57. He and his wife adopted two boys in 1977 and 1979. With the passing of his father and with the complications surrounding the estate of the family business, Mr. D took his family and moved to Las Vegas, Nevada where he partnered with a friend and started a travel business. Their third son was born in July of 1982.

That same year, the family moved back to Scottsdale, Arizona and started another small travel business. It was in 1987 that they sold the business to allow Mr. D to pursue various entrepreneurial projects. However in 1988, Mr. D underwent open heart surgery. It was not until 1993 that he was well

enough to began working full time once again. He secured a position with a telecom company. When their third child turned 18 years of age, Mr. D and his wife decided to call off the marriage and amicably split up their assets. This freedom was the opportunity Mr. D had been waiting for his entire adult life.

In 1999, Mr. D moved to Phoenix and in December met his partner. In 2001 he began work with Cigna Healthcare as a project manager. After a second open heart surgery in 2005, Mr. D took disability insurance with Cigna at the tender age of 57. This was the same age as his father was when he passed away. Life continued and in 2010 Mr. D's partner's job was eliminated and with that they decided to move to South Florida for a completely new experience. Here Mr. D remained semi-retired where they both run two small businesses together.

Mr. D has been a Prime Timer for the last two years. He is a very active member among the group. He is politically active in the Dolphin Democrats and with the LGBTQA State Democratic Caucus. He is on his condo board; he and his partner enjoy travel, particularly cruises. He enjoys his kids, grandson, and his siblings, and all family functions. Outgoing and professional, you would never know when you meet this person that he had only 10% of his vision. I now know who Mr. D is, can you identify him with all this information?

