

MILK IN HIS BLOOD

Meet Harvey Milk's cousin Michael Salem, lingerie entrepreneur and drag designer to the stars

BEFORE HARVEY MILK made a name for himself in San Francisco, he lived a quieter life with his hardworking family in and around New York City. The extended Milk clan—including Milk's cousin Michael Salem—had been rooted in New York garment retailing since the early 1900s with a family-owned department store and hosiery shop. When Salem

launched his own lingerie boutique in 1969, his cousin Harvey offered some advice: Target cross-dressers. Over the next four decades, Salem, now 67, expanded his business's reach to international customers—as well as a certain mayor.

How did you start selling to men?

When I decided I'd go into the family business, I wanted to be like Frederick's of Hollywood. We had a big fight within the family, so I opened my own boutique. Men kept popping in, asking for panties, girdles, and shoes with six-inch heels.

I said to Harvey, "These people are married—are they gay?" He said, "Most of the time they're heterosexual."

Are you straight? I'm too old to do anything. In my youth, I was very ambidextrous and very close to Harvey, so what does that tell you?

What was it like dressing Rudy Giuliani for a press event in 2000?

His softer side comes out when he's in drag. He's a great woman, compared to being a man. —Michelle Garcia



Salem (standing) and Milk around 1960

Queer Mating for Straight Dating

Dumping gender roles as a way to find love

THE ROOM IS hushed as Mary, 51, takes her seat among the 50 people at the Deeper Dating singles event in New York. She glances at the 20 men in the room at the 92nd Street Y, but none catch her eye.

Event facilitator Kathryn Janus says, "When I went to singles events and didn't see the person I thought was my destiny, I'd consider it a waste. I can't guarantee you'll meet your 'forever' person here, but you're going to learn about yourself."

Started in 2004—by a gay man for gay men—Deeper Dating has since caught on with straight singles. New York-based

therapist Ken Page created a series of exercises that emphasize looking beyond the physical, focusing on positive attributes, and avoiding facile questions. Specifically, participants reveal their passions in life



to the rest of the group, before splitting into clusters where daters directly ply each other for information. After that, if someone is slipped a phone number, they can't respond in kind. If a connection was made, it's up to the receiver to call—eliminating the idea of a definitive pursuer.

Back at the 92nd Street Y, a man Mary hadn't given a second look to stood up and professed a love for tango. "The expression in his voice got me so stirred," Mary says. The two ended up hitting it off.

Deeper Dating, Page says, encourages straight people to enter into relationships as most gays do—as equals, where expectations as to who pays for dinner or who initiates sex are thrown out.

"Queer people have taught straight men to be more emotional, and straight women to be more assertive," Page says. "There's a looseness to Deeper Dating that gives people freedom in their gender roles."

—Jonathan Vatner

Transitions



DIED

Former actor and gay rights activist Robert Arthur, 83, of congestive heart failure, October 1, in Aberdeen, Wash. After serving in the Navy, Arthur moved to Los Angeles to pursue acting, working in minor roles before landing his big break in the 1948 western *Green Grass of Wyoming*. Arthur went on to star in films alongside Ronald Reagan, Bing Crosby, and Natalie Wood but left Hollywood in the 1960s. Following his acting career, Arthur formed Project Rainbow, an advocacy group for LGBT seniors, and became involved with the Log Cabin Republicans.

DIED

Gene Copello, 49, executive director of the AIDS Institute, of kidney-related heart failure, October 7, in Alexandria, Va. Before working at the AIDS Institute, a national nonprofit research and public policy organization with offices in Washington, D.C., and Tampa, Fla., Copello served as chief of HIV Services for the city of San Francisco and as executive director of the San Mateo County AIDS Program in California.

DIED

William E. Woods, 58, after a long illness, September 27. In 1990, Hawaii became the first state to consider marriage equality, thanks in part to Woods's work behind the scenes. Called "the father of Hawaii's gay rights movement," Woods founded the Gay and Lesbian Education and Advocacy Foundation and cofounded Honolulu's gay and lesbian center. The Honolulu Gay Support Group, which Woods started 36 years ago, still meets on a weekly basis. He also dedicated time to the Democratic Party and green causes.

ANNOUNCED

By NBC, that **Rosie's Variety Show** will be hosted by Rosie O'Donnell live from New York on November 26—the night before Thanksgiving—featuring celebrity guests, musical acts, and comedy skits. If successful, it could become a regularly scheduled show.