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Canon Richard T. Nolan & Robert C. Pingpank

Web Site: <http://www.nolan-pingpank.com/>

Born three days and 120 miles apart, Dick Nolan and Bob Pingpank celebrated their 50th Anniversary in 2005. Both cradle Episcopalians, Bob is a Connecticut native, and Dick is from Massachusetts. Their life together began at the freshmen picnic at Trinity College, Hartford, in September of 1955.

In those days they did not know the meaning of "gay" and had no gay friends. During their college years they began to familiarize themselves with gay areas in New York City, Boston, and on vacations in the Fort Lauderdale-Miami Beach region. It was quite an adventure, some of it exciting, and some repelling.

After college, Bob taught high school mathematics, primarily in his hometown, and earned a master's degree in secondary school administration, later a 6th year certificate. Dick went on to complete his theological education for ordination in the Episcopal Church, later another master's in religion, and eventually a Ph.D. in philosophy of religion. His composite career involved ministry, teaching, and writing. Their caution about living together for fear of losing job security, or advancement, didn't prevent them from maturing as a committed couple – although to this day they have never spoken any marital-like vows.

In 1967, they finally moved into a unique house together that Bob designed: a two-family structure with two apartments with separate addresses and telephone numbers. During their 27 years there, neither ran into any occupational obstacles. Furthermore, their very straight blue-collar, Italian, Roman Catholic neighbors never raised an eyebrow about "the teachers" and encouraged their own sons to do chores, such as mowing their lawn and shoveling snow, whenever Dick and Bob needed them. As time went on, they chose to become selectively out – especially in the small Episcopal Church they both served – Dick as part-time pastor and Bob as voluntary treasurer. Eventually they outed themselves to a Bishop of Connecticut who was gay-friendly.

The couple early-retired to Florida in 1994 and are now totally out. There are no more cautions necessary! Moreover, they are active in Compass of West Palm Beach [www.compassgicc.com/], Lambda Legal, and Integrity-Palm Beach [www.IntegrityPalmBeach.org/]. In 2005, they were the Grand Marshals of the PrideFest parade in their region. During these years they have also developed an academic website [www.philosophy-religion.org] with many excellent items, written by well-informed agencies and scholars, about sexual orientations; one of Dick's books *Living Issues in Ethics* is available there, too – with its chapters on love, marriage (including pre-commitment questions), family and sexual ethics. Dick has been named retired honorary canon for life of Christ Church Cathedral in Hartford, Conn.

The story of their five decades together through 2005 is available in an online book "Soul Mates: More Than Partners" – mostly written by a late, straight, grandmother-friend of theirs. They updated it with the final chapter on their retirement years. The book is in their "scrapbook" [www.nolan-pingpank.com] originally put together for friends and family, but now is widely consulted as a "case study." Recent newspaper articles about them are in the "Bob and Rich" subsite.

Capping their years together was a 2005 celebration and blessing of their 50-year commitment at the internationally respected Episcopal Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City. Additionally they are both included in the Diamond 60th Year publication of *Who's Who In America* (Marquis, 2006).

(This biographical statement provided by Richard Nolan.)

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