



Darcelle (right in both images) and his partner, Roxy, have been together for 40 years. Still active in the Portland community, they joined the Q Center's recent grand opening celebration (left).

DARCELLE ON CREATING HIS SHOW *Just Call Me Darcelle*:
 "It's like writing a book about yourself, you know. You have to go through it. You have to heal it. And if you have a hard time talking about it, then you *should* talk about it!"

Darcelle's son and his wife live next door. He and Roxy own these three houses on the block—theirs, Darcelle's son's, and a rental.

"My daughter lives in Gresham with the two grandkids. My wife lives there, too. We never got divorced. We got married in 1951 and stayed married for over 15 years. Now we're good friends."

At 20, years before his first pair of pantyhose, Darcelle was a newlywed, married to a woman, Jeannette, he loved. At 21, he was drafted during the Korean conflict and stationed in Italy.

"It was the 1950s and it was the draft. You didn't blink an eye, you just went," he states. "And I went to the Italian Riviera—now you know someone must be looking out for me!"

After the draft, he returned home to his wife and they bought a house in the Southeast, where they had two children, Walter "J.R." II, and Maridee. Then, some 15 years after he first wed, Darcelle came out.

"I said, 'Wait a minute. My life is not this. This is not who I really am.' I finally realized that I was gay—gay and happy."

Although he and his wife are friends now, the news was not well received then.

"It was horrible!" he says. "I loved her—I still do—but it wasn't right for me. I took her life and tore it up. Then she was a single mom for a little while—I couldn't be running around in a dress with kids, you know."

"She knows that I am so sorry for the hurt I caused, but it was better that than to continue the lying and cheating."

Darcelle's kids knew what was going on. They were upset, but throughout it all, he explains, there was love.

"Our bond took a vacation for a little while, but it came back, stronger than ever."

And now, J.R. even works for him at the club, Darcelle XV Showplace.

"I talk about it *all* in the show," he says of the September 27-28 performances. "All about my life and my family. All of it."

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When asked to describe his new one-man

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Young Darcelle, born Walter, during his childhood in Linnton, Oregon

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