

The History of First Name Meaning software.

Sometime in the late 1980s and early 90s my father came up with a great idea! It was to create personalised Name Certificates printing the name, its literal meaning, and the implied traits from the name's historical use. Then selling them at craft fairs and street shows.

Using a Classic Mac I created *text-image files* for each root name we had researched. These we would manually edit for the name variants, Then we pre-print name certificates on Pink and Blue striped paper that we had created.

These pre-printed names were slid into clear binder sleeves and alphabetized in several loose-leaf binders, A to Z. There was a set for Guys and another set for Gals. At shows when someone wanted a name they would pull them out of the binders. If the name wasn't there we would have to research the root, meaning and discover the traits for the NEW name. Next, create a new text layout file for each using the Classic Mac. At shows, I would do the custom name research, file editing, and printing for unique spellings. All while my family took the orders and sold the bulk of our sales from the pre-printed certificates in the binders. These sold for \$2 each certificate. I can remember how excited we were with our first \$1,000 day. That was over 500 names in one day.

This was the humble birth of First Name certificates. It was time consuming! There had to be a better way! Being a dBase programmer by trade and using a DOS-IBM compatible computer, we developed the original software for automated layout, for printing first name meaning certificates. It was called **Names N Faces**. It was used through the '90s in the major amusement parks, many Las Vegas casinos, and hundreds mall kiosks internationally, as well as Mom & Pop booths at county fairs.

We needed something better than Pink and Blue striped art to print these on. So I digitally painted a Space art print and my father oil painted Eagle Lake. I remember having to calculate how big the flying eagle had to be so when reduced it would fit key tags and coffee mugs. Through the years, Eagle Lake alone sold hundreds of thousands of copies with name meanings.

We sold so many slip-in Key tags and coffee mugs that the manufacturer of them requested us to have photographs of our products spotlighted exclusively on the pages in his international catalog at his expense.

In 1993 we were introduced to an art publisher who had great art, which he had created to print his poems on. We made an agreement for the exclusive rights to sell his art to our **Names N Faces** locations.

We hired a research team of ten researchers headed up by an Anthropologist to research and translate the symbolism and meanings for hundreds of thousands of root-names. In 1994, by using "native" speaking Spanish translators we released a full Spanish version of **Names N**

Faces. This opened up Mexico and South America to our software. Over the next year growth literally exploded! We were invited into the new Circus Circus mall in Las Vegas. We were already in Disneyland, Sea World, Sixflags, and several other Las Vegas casinos.

The personalized names business was the hottest thing going with over 600 international retail locations. **Names N Faces** was licensed for \$4500 with 45¢ per-use royalty. By 1994 we had several competitors popping up, CASI, Creative Names, The Key Chain Factory, and of course KKSoft with Ken's First Name Almanac. There seemed to be a new startup competitor everywhere we looked.

In 2000 Microsoft changed how Windows worked, killing programs written in languages from their competitor. Windows no longer would run software written in dBase, which **Names N Faces** was! Sound familiar? That is the same as what would happen in 2018 to the KKSoft apps.

Microsoft has used this strategy their entire history. It is this scheme they used to destroy IBM's personal computer market. Microsoft created PS2 for IBM then turned around to create a superior product, Windows, using IBM's money, but I digress. Needless to say this is Microsoft's default game plan to cripple their competitors. It has created the problems we have now with Windows 10 and I do not trust where Windows 11 will take us. For this reason I began developing an online app isolating us from anything Microsoft might do in the future.

Back to 2000, because of an unethical action Microsoft had taken, **Names N Faces** would have to be totally re-written in a new language, I did not know. At about the same time, our major art publisher canceled our long-held exclusive agreement and began selling their art to everyone including my larger customers like Disneyland, etc. They also sold to my competitor AANAMES.

By this time, Ken Kirkpatrick had his *First Name Almanac* selling for as low as \$150. This software market had become too competitive and not affordable to re-write such a large package as my **Names N Faces**. So, I retired it and opened my art licensing business, now known as **GrafixSoft.com**. At GrafixSoft.com I sell licenses to my art as well as art from over sixty other international artists. I also went into painting and selling my art at county fairs and art shows.

In 2017 when AANAMES.com suddenly closed, Ken Kirkpatrick came to me and asked me to provide over-print art and supplies to his customers. Since Ken and I had been competitors in the '90s, he didn't want his customers to realize who I really was. This was important to him since it was known in the industry that I had developed the *original* Names meaning software. He asked me not to use my name so I used my artist name, **G. H. Masters**. Ken selected the name **OverPrintArt.com** for me to sell the art and supplies from.

The next year, 2018, Ken passed away due to a terminal illness. I knew something was very wrong but did not know it was this bad. I had misunderstood, I thought he had had an accident.

That same summer Microsoft wanted to promote their Visual Studio programming environment. So they did what they always do, they changed Windows 10 so Visual Basic (VB), and VB6 programs would have problems running in Windows 10. Ken had used both in creating his KKSoft apps and now they would no longer work in Windows 10.

With Ken gone, this left KKSoft customers stranded with orphaned software that would not run in Windows 10. Ken's customers began contacting me about what they were to do. Having had this same scenario put me out of business in 2000. I worked on a fix to the problem and was **blest** with the fix. I say blest because it wasn't my idea how to do this. It literally came to me in the middle of the night!

In November 2019 I purchased the rights to KKSoft apps from the Kirkpatrick family. All Ken's notes, source code, data, and his customer list had been lost at his passing. Sol only received the rights to his apps. The copyright to the art shown in KKSoft apps belong to the widow and co-owner of the now closed AANames.

I have been in the personalized Name-Gift business for over 30 years. This workshop is to introduce you to what I always wanted to do, and was working on, when I had to close down **Names N Faces**.

As we move forward it is my goal to provide additional tools to aid you in taking this business where it should go. Things like Print-Art-onDemand™ images and capabilities.

The development of the online app **EasyGiftWizard.com** is to provide additional protection for the future, away from the problems Microsoft purposely creates with Windows.

If enough people support these efforts with **EasyGiftWizard.com** I will add the **Names N Faces** data of names and poems to the online EasyGiftWizard. This will provide hundreds of new poems and over 2.5 million name meanings in English and Spanish. That's over **twelve times** the number of names than is in the First Name Almanac.

I hope this workshop helps you achieve your goals with the **First Name Almanac** and the other KKSoft apps.. If so, drop me an email. You might consider making a donation. Maybe even buy your art and supplies from me so I can stay in business to support you.

I also hope you take advantage of EasyGiftWizard.com app, which has both free and subscription apps. If so it can continue to grow and give you protection for the future. Sorry this was so long but I just wanted you to know the history of this business.

Terry Allred dba **G. H. Masters**