



Sitting by the porthole of our stateroom on an earlier cruise.

## The Dinner Jacket That Didn't Fit

In July 2005, Margene and I met a couple from South Africa on a cruise out of Miami. Having introduced themselves to us during a shore excursion on the third day out of port, Koos and Deidre Bezuidenhout invited us to join them at the formal dinner in the main dining room later that evening. When I told them that Margene and I would have to eat at one of the casual dining areas because I'd forgotten to pack my suit, Koos offered to lend me a sport coat, which is where this story takes off. Koos and I are the about same height, but the favorable comparison ends there. He had the physique of a weightlifter, and I didn't. It's not much of an exaggeration to say that my chest is smaller around than his neck. With visions of *Mutt & Jeff* dancing in her head, Margene could see the disconnect right away, and began giggling under her breath. When we all returned to the ship later that day, Koos gave me the jacket. I don't know what size it was, but it could have doubled as a bedspread. As soon as Margene saw it, and right on the verge of bursting out laughing, she gleefully pressed me to *Try it on! Try it on!* Not anxious to look the part of the village idiot any sooner than necessary, I finally relented when it was time to go to dinner. Swallowed by enough herringbone fabric to make a tent, I looked more like I was headed to a costume party than a dress-up dinner. Margene came apart at the seams and couldn't stop laughing, so hard that she had to re-do her mascara. When we met Koos and Deidre for a drink before dinner, we all had a good laugh at my attire, but nobody more than Margene. Laughter from the top of her head to the tips of her toes was a central part of her DNA. She was the most fun-loving person I ever knew.