



**"He who has gone, so we but cherish his memory, abides with us, more potent, nay, more present than the living man." ~Anon.**

# Memories of Mike Guadagno

BY DOROTHY KULISEK



Mike in his new condo at Moore's.



Joe, Bouncer Dave Snyder, and Mike at Moore's on a hopping summer night



Joe & Mike with office manager Julie Shaugnessy



Mike & Anita sharing a Father and daughter moment, 1980s.

One of the best joys that I find as a publisher is receiving many unexpected surprises in the mail or email and occasionally by phone. Over the Christmas holiday, one particular phone call came from Ocean City and was the daughter of a man whom I have the privilege of saying was one of my nicest "SUN" friends. With a true holiday spirit of giving, Anita Guadagno Lince called to tell me that her beloved, late father thought the world of me. She said that when a new SUN came out, her dad would bring it home and hold it up and say, "How about my girl Dorothy! Isn't this paper great!"

I am thankful to Anita for the gift she had given me by sharing those words and many other fond memories about her father. But sometimes the best way to receive a gift is to give it away, and so I share this story with all of you about an amazing man with a smile that brightened the lives of so many people.

Mike Guadagno was probably most notably known as co-owner together with Joe Bilbee of the legendary Moore's Inlet Bar in North Wildwood, but he was an entrepreneur his whole life with a string of successful businesses to his credit. Mike's first venture was called "The Spot", a pizza shop and luncheonette that he operated in Vineland with his family after they moved there from North Jersey.

Having spent summer vacations in Wildwood, Sea Isle, and Ocean City, Mike's wife, Nancy, always had an eye on the beaches of South Jersey. After they married, over 50 years ago, Mike, too, got "sand in his shoes" and he set a goal to operate a summer business at the shore. Mike ended up settling down on the North end of Ocean City with Nancy and his daughter, Anita. Soon he and Joe Carideo created "Coach's Casino", an arcade near 12th Street on the Ocean City boardwalk (where Jilly's Arcade is located now). Mike also partnered with Ed Stansky at the corner of 12th and the Boardwalk where they ran a fast food restaurant "Mic Dono's", the current location of Manco & Manco's.

Wally's Cafe in North Wildwood was also a popular spot, much like the rest of the projects that Mike touched—this all before devoting 35 years to Moore's Inlet. He opened Moore's while he still had Maggie's Carolina Cafe in Atlantic City. And after Moore's closed, he was involved in yet another business venture as one of the organizers of Capital Bank of New Jersey, which opened its first bank in Vineland.



Mike Guadagno, Jim Flynn & Joe Bilbee, at Sunset Bay, N. Wildwood, June, 2010



Mike with his daughter Anita and his grandson Mikey

But as anyone who knew the guy would tell you, it wasn't his entrepreneurial character that he was known for. Rather, it was his boundless passion for everything and everyone that he approached in life that made him so special. A long time friend and Moore's employee, Jim "Boots" Paylor described him best, "He was the guy that when you first met him, you knew he was a different kind of man. He looked everyone that he met in the eye, and you immediately and naturally felt that first greeting was one of true sincerity." Anyone who knew Mike would agree upon one thing— if a single word could describe his life it would be genuine.

A fitting verse in the Bible attests also to his genuine nature. "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks." As we reminisced about him, Anita shared with me how blessed she was to have him as her father. She told me, "My father always saw the best in others and only had kind words to say to people." Mike made everyone he came into contact with, feel like they were special—he believed it too. He felt everyone had value.

"One of Mike's greatest characteristics was his awareness that his employees weren't perfect. He knew of our little idiosyncrasies or flaws and yet he still only saw the good things in all of us," Boots went on to say. "When it came to Mike's people, if he had a square peg to put into the round hole, Mike would just make the hole big enough to fit the square peg!"

The last time I saw Mike was at Sunset Bay on June 29, 2010. I was wrapping up my summer issue and asked him to stand for a photo with his best friend Joe Bilbee. I managed to squeeze it in just as the paper was going to press. Three days later I was out delivering the new issue when someone shocked me with the news of his passing. I opened to the page with his picture on it and stared at this amazing man who, like the setting sun behind him in the photo, had quietly disappeared along with it.

I would have loved to see his excitement over the news of my son & I bringing The SUN to Ocean City this year. He would have probably said something like, "Wow, that's great! Wait until Ocean City reads The SUN! They will love it!" maybe throwing in a "You go girl!" at the end.

When I think of him, I am sad he is gone. My heart breaks for Mike's family over such an epic loss. But knowing the person that he was, he would have wanted everyone who knew him to keep smiling. There is a thin veil that separates us from him, and I can still see that perpetual winning grin lighting up the crowd. To heaven he was a great gain. But just like the postcard for the closing of Moore's read: "DON'T CRY BECAUSE ITS OVER, SMILE BECAUSE IT HAPPENED."

## In Loving Memory Mike Guadagno

July 21, 1935 ~ July 1, 2010



To laugh often and much...  
To win the respect of intelligent people and affection of children...  
To earn the appreciation of honest critics...  
To appreciate beauty...

To find the best in others...  
To leave the world a little bit better...  
To know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived...  
Your positive impact was far reaching & life changing. Your unparalleled graciousness, enthusiasm & generosity was extraordinary and legendary. With profound gratitude to our heavenly Father for blessing all of us with such a magnanimous soul. He was truly one in a million... Mike's light and love will shine in our hearts forever...

Deeply Missed by his Family and Friends