

station on Tenby Chase Drive from the time I was 12 years old. I wasn't tall enough to reach the windshields, so the only thing I was allowed to do was spray the headlights and wipe them off." The station was very successful. Anthony was doing what he loved. His family was thriving – in addition to Lenny, he now had a beautiful little girl, his Nicole. Life was sweet.

Years later, Mobil wanted to make that station a convenience store. Lenny laughs about his father's response, "My father told them 'I'm not a greengrocer. I'm a mechanic.' So, in 1989, he put the station up for sale and opened up a repair shop out of Larry Hankins' place on Route 130 in Delran." It was at this location, that Al Makowski, a Professor of Education at Rowan University, first went to Mongo's 20 years ago. "I stopped in, was impressed with what I saw, and I've been with him ever since."



Anthony's business card from the 80's for the Mobil station at Rt. 130 & Tenbychase Dr. Delran.

Business was booming; Anthony outgrew the place quickly and, once again, it was time to move on. In 1994, he purchased the perfect property. It took two years to build, and in 1996, Mongo's Auto Repair at 1808 Taylors Lane in Cinnaminson opened its doors. He's been at this location ever since.

"When Mongo's opened at the present location, they were recommended and we've been with Anthony ever since." explained Gary Cutler of Delran. "They are incredibly fair and honest." Nancy Cutler added, "There have also been many times when they've saved our kids, Mara, now 27 and Matthew 25. I don't know about yours, but as teenagers, they seemed always to be breaking down or getting flat tires in the middle of nowhere. Mara was 'the Queen of the Flat Tire.' No matter what time of the day or night, Mongo's or Lenny's (Towing & Truck Repair) would come out and take care of the kids. That kind of service is priceless."

Al Makowski's whole family takes their cars to Mongo's. "The service is just unbelievable," he said. "They don't do any work until they show you and explain everything they're going to do. If your car needs a part, for example, my car is a '99 and I needed a catalytic converter. They will shop around the part to get you the best price!" Al continued, "I'm old school, I go there, I wait, I sit and talk; it's like going to the barber shop. But one day I needed a ride home. They offered me transportation. If you need a ride, they'll come and pick you up. Once, my daughter's car broke down on I-95. They just notified Lenny's for the towing. So it's not only service, but in case of emergencies, they're there. You can trust them. They're professional and they're very honest. They make owning a car easy."

"At one point, Dad was thinking of retiring and wanted me to eventually take over the business," Lenny said. "So I sold my gas station (Tony & Lenny's Mobil in Cinnaminson) and came down with my father to relieve him and help run the business. I brought my towing business with me, but within a year, we outgrew that building. That's when we built the facility on Carriage Lane, exclusively for the towing and truck repair part of my business. Now, we only repair automobiles down at Mongo's."

"My dad didn't want me to be a mechanic. He wanted me to work in an office – be a pencil pusher," Lenny laughed. "But this business is in our blood and, in fact, 12 seems to be a key year in the Mongo family. At 12 years old, my Uncle Herb inspired my Dad to go into the business. And I was 12 when I decided I wanted to be a mechanic just like my Dad. My grandfather Tony was the one with tow trucks. As far back as I can remember, I wanted to drive those trucks, but I was too young. Well, now we have some of the fanciest trucks they make. We like to call them the "elite fleet" Lenny boasted.

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Nicole Mongo (Nikki) started out working for Lenny. "I pumped gas for him from the time I was 15 until 22, and then came down to my Dad's place. When I started going to college for criminal justice, I was working part time. When Dad's business blossomed overnight, he asked if I'd work for him full-time. That was 11 years ago and I've been here ever since. Truthfully, I think it was also because he didn't want me to become a police officer because it was too dangerous" she confided. Nikki is going to school for Court Reporting now. Just like her brother Lenny has his own business, she has her own interests. "It's fascinating to me and it's something to fall back on."

"Sometimes I look around and am amazed at how much I know about this business," Nikki says in amazement. "When I first started, I didn't know anything. The first two years of working here with my father were like boot camp. He was trying to show me the ropes in the midst of all the craziness that was going on," she laughed. "On Mondays and Wednesdays, my Dad and Uncle John are both here. I'm always the last one in and coming in and seeing the two of them together is pretty cool. Uncle John is one of a kind – he gives 120% and you can always count on Uncle John." Nikki boasted, "My Dad is a great boss. He's good at what he does and he always has the best interests of his employees at heart. He's tough to work for but he's more than fair. You have to be on your toes and if you do what's asked of you, you'll have no problems with my Dad."



Dave Schrader, the Manager at Mongo's has been there for 10 years.

"Anthony has been in the area for 30 years and people trust him. He's a family man. He treats me like a son and I

think of him as a father figure. He's a good man." In fact, a lot of the former employees say Anthony Mongo has left a big impact on them and they are who they are now because of him. Nikki adds, "Whenever someone wants advice, whether it's for buying a boat, buying a service station, or hiring a lawyer or accountant, they come to him for advice. They love to pick his brain."

Nikki added, "My Dad says 'You always have to dot your i's and cross your t's – live by that!' I'm the girl in the family and Lenny and my Dad are the two men that I've always looked up to. They are two very intelligent men and are both very good at what they do. If they want something done, they get it done. I always go with the flow and I like to say that I fill in the cracks. They are both honorable men, so whatever they suggest, I listen. I am very grateful for where I am. I'm never leaving here. I'm lucky to have such a close and tight family" Nikki stated. Lenny added, "My daughter Toni Marie is Pop-Pop's little girl. She loves to hang around the shop with her grandfather. Actually, Mongo's is where Toni learned to ride a bike. I was washing a truck. My wife Christine was pushing Toni on her bike, when she started riding the bike by herself. So, already, my daughter is building her memories of the shop."



Anthony and Lenny on the day the millionth gallon of gas was pumped.

"My Dad has always been my hero," Lenny explained. "I am very proud of what my father has accomplished. I wanted to do this article to show people what my father has built in his lifetime. Dad purchased his first tow truck in 1979, one year after he went into business. I restored it and still have the truck today. It has been his influence that made me take my business to a higher level. Thanks Dad!"