



ITEM PHOTOS / OWEN O'ROURKE

Above: Lynn attorney Mike Mahoney shows off a painting of family members and close friends which hangs in his Blossom Street office. **Below right:** Mahoney poses with some of the memorabilia he has collected over the years.

Lynn lawyer full of fight

Mahoney: 'I just pick myself up and say, here I go again'

LYNN

BY THOR JOURGENSEN
THE DAILY ITEM

On a hot day in July 1980, Michael Mahoney ran to the edge of Red Rock intent on taking a cooling dip in the ocean and dove instead into an abyss of permanent paralysis and despair.

It took six months in the hospital and the strength and will partly instilled in him by his late father for Mahoney to dig his way out of the pit and begin living life to its fullest in a wheelchair.

As soon as he could move his arms to manipulate the chair's wheels, Mahoney rolled out of his mother's home in Swampscott and up and down the hilly side streets running down to the ocean. To anyone who offered him a push he joked that he was training for the Boston Marathon.

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On Fridays, his friend Bruce Gauvain timed Mahoney as he climbed from his chair into Gauvain's car, gradually whittling the minutes down to seconds.

"It was a series of little fights and battles and each time you won one, it got a little easier. Eventually, I felt in control," he said.

With his friends' help and his mother's encouragement he persevered, but Mahoney credited his late father, Paul, with helping to inspire him to rebuild his life. Nicknamed "Hollywood" in a nod to his outgoing flamboyance, the elder Mahoney was a popular Somerville native who, in his son's words, was not

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afraid to take chances.

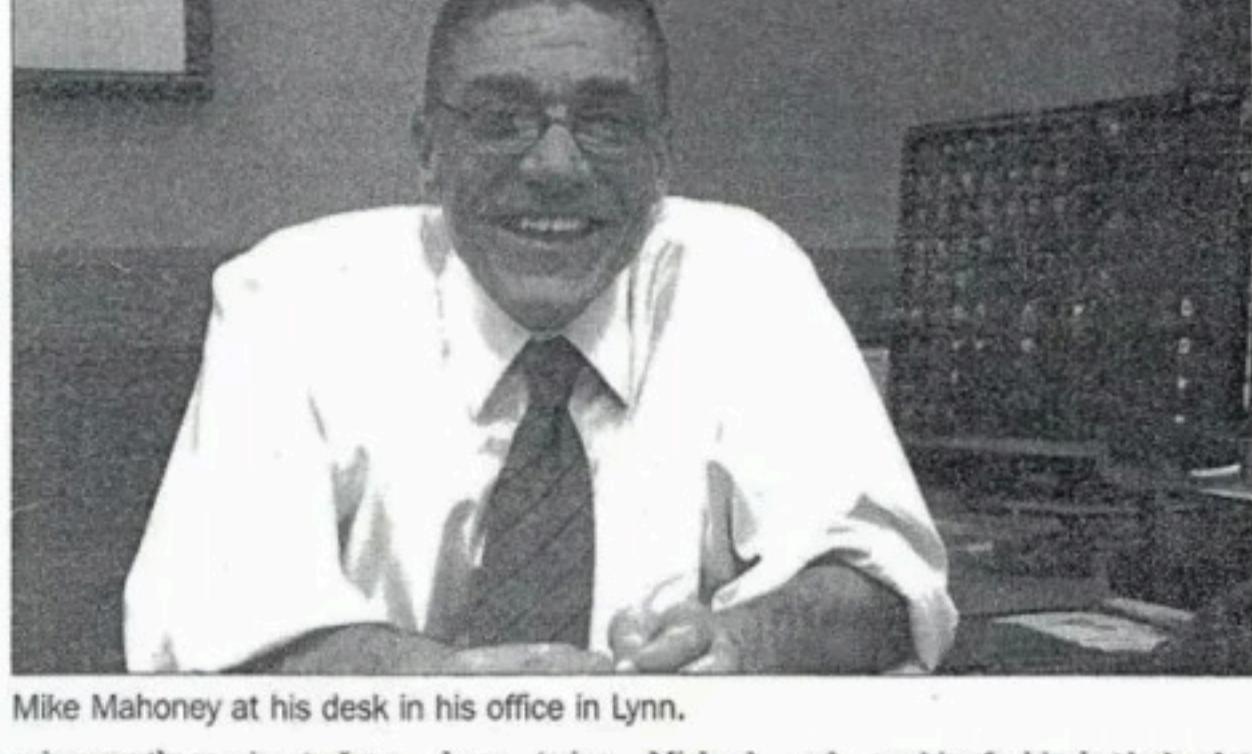
"He was an action guy, a tough guy and a hard worker."

Paul Mahoney ran a club in Revere and packed his family up in 1963 and drove them to California where he opened a restaurant in Huntington Beach. He taught his son to remember people's names and to not give up.

Michael Mahoney was taking courses at North Shore Community College at the time of his accident. He finished his coursework at Salem State College, earned a communications degree and enrolled in Boston University's journalism program while spending his free time working as a disc jockey. He also traveled the world, rolling off planes and onto the streets of Europe, Africa and the Spanish Riviera.

"I went from being a kid in 1981 who couldn't get out of a one-bedroom apartment in his mother's house to traveling the world," he said.

The Master's degree Mahoney earned at BU led him to Boston College Law School. He opened a personal injury law practice in 1996 in Salem and Chelsea,



Mike Mahoney at his desk in his office in Lynn.

subsequently moving to Lynn where he has his Blossom Street office.

He also started a family and expanded his horizons by taking trips with his son, Paul, to major league baseball parks.

"It became an obsession. We went up and down the West Coast, to Baltimore, Cleveland."

Paul Mahoney shares his father's July 4 birth date. Mahoney and his wife Edina

have twins, Michael and Joseph, who will turn 1 on Sunday — July 4. The couple also has a four-and-a-half-year-old daughter named Lilyen.

Mahoney credits his Hungarian-born wife with providing the love and stability that helped Paul, 18, excel in school and prepare to enter the University of Chicago this fall.

"I look at her and still get goose bumps. Family is very important to her."

Mahoney has three attorneys

working for him but he heads to court to represent clients with catastrophic injuries. He recently won a case involving a college student hit and seriously injured by a two-time drunken driver.

"I've represented a lot of people like myself. These are the cases I really give a damn about."

He takes the losses in stride with the wins.

"I just have no fear. If I get knocked down I just get up and go. I can face the day and do the next right thing," he said.