

JOHN LANTIERI:



It all started when I was 9 years old. Each Saturday morning I would get up and make chocolate chip pancakes before going to my weekly bowling league. I could always be found in the kitchen, trying to help my mom cook, whether she wanted my help or not.

Despite the time I spent cooking with my mom, I have to admit that my father was my real inspiration to cook, and he is still cooking today at 87! My Dad was a fireman and he did all the cooking at the firehouse. When he was not working, he always made our dinner. His second job was as Maître D' at a catering hall and I would frequently go with him to work, hanging out in the kitchen with the chef. That's where I *really* got the bug to cook.

At 16 I was hired for my first job; I worked the burger grill at McDonald's. During our breaks we were allowed to create our own burger lunch, mine was always a triple cheeseburger. I am convinced that they got the idea for triple cheeseburgers from me.

After I left McDonald's, I became an Investment Advisor for a major brokerage firm, but always remained interested in cooking. In 1983 I became a season ticket holder for the NYJETS and became the Tailgate King! For the next 25 years, every Sunday during football season I was the man with the food. In 2007 I transitioned from Investment Advisor to Chef Manager when a good friend who was familiar with my cooking called and asked me if I would be interested in running a high school kitchen. In a heartbeat, I said yes! That same year I joined a local non-profit organization and am now their Culinary Kitchen Chairman, planning and cooking for all of their functions. Since 2007 I have been fulfilling a dream that has steam rolled into a career that I can't stop bragging about.