

# Radio D.J. Mike Bowe Has Been Entertaining Listeners For 20 Years

By Judith Rusk  
NEWS Correspondent  
"I was born in Gloucester," he chuckles, "in my house." Every weeknight at 8 p.m., you can hear him spinning a "Classic Tale" on Magic 102.9. His voice is unmistakable, set apart from the usual array of radio disc jockey personalities. When Mike Bowe becomes tuned into your radio with his deep, smooth voice, whether at home, in your car or at the job, he sounds like he's standing right there with you.

This successful Gloucesterite has been with 102.9 for 20 years, entertaining the Delaware Valley with a large array of music from pop to disco to the present format of classic hits. Bowe says he knew in grammar school what he wanted to do. When he got out of high school in the late 60s, he enlisted in the Army and served for three years in Vietnam. He met a man who had a radio show while serving. Upon getting out, he was sent to Colorado where he had his first tour of a radio station.

"He told me about the school he had gone to in Minnesota," Bowe said. He wanted to get into his career, and bypass the amount of college required before it was too late for him to get a start. So when this gentleman told him about the Brown Institute of Broadcasting in Minneapolis, Minnesota, he decided to apply. It was a school known for its careful choosing of students.

"That's what I liked about it. There were all these bogus schools around at the time. If they (Brown) didn't think you had it in you, they wouldn't accept you," commented Bowe.

After sending his demo tape of a script reading that the

school requested, he was happy to find out he was accepted, and found it humorous that they mentioned he needed work on his Jersey accent. The only stipulation was that he had to leave his home in Gloucester to go to Minneapolis when he'd been away so long in the Army. "I couldn't do it from home," he said.

After graduation from Brown, he came back to the Delaware Valley in search of a local radio station.

He took his first job with WRDR-AM/FM 104.9 in Hammonton, under John Runafolo, the Program Director who hired him. He stayed there about a year, and worked in both the FM and AM parts of the station. On FM, he played what disc jockeys call "beautiful music," which is music with no words. On AM, he played "middle of the road music," which Bowe says he can't really compare to anything that is on the airwaves today.

He was getting restless at WRDR; he wasn't going anywhere and he wasn't making much money.

After quitting WRDR, he started working in construction at General Engines, where they made trailers. He wanted to figure out what he was going to do. However, John Runafolo, his P.D. from WRDR, contacted him.

"He didn't think I should quit," Bowe remarked. "That's why Runafolo is such an important person to me."

He told him about another station that was looking for someone, WMVF-FM in Millville. He took the job working the overnight midnight to 6 a.m. shift, and doing the board for the Eagles games on Sundays and commercials. After a month of



MIKE BOWE

doing this, the station decided to move him into the daytime.

"I guess they liked what they heard," Bowe modestly admitted. He began doing their afternoon show, and eventually became the program director.

"I covered a lot of sports," he said, "Basketball, football, boxing."

But growing up in Gloucester, Mike Bowe had a goal of making it to Philadelphia radio.

When WPEN-AM/FM came to town, Bowe saw his chance. At first the formats were typical, the FM played "beautiful music." Then, they were bought out together by the Greater Media, and formats were changed. The FM began playing soft, folk rock featuring artists such as James

Taylor and Carly Simon and the AM station played oldies music. WPEN-AM was one of the first stations to play oldies, a format now done by the station WOGL-FM. Bowe applied for a job at the AM oldies station but was told they weren't hiring. The program director gave his demo tape to the FM program director, the now WMOK-FM. In 1977, Bowe began working for them as their Sunday night DJ. While doing this, he was also working six days a week at the Millville station.

Later that same year, one of the full time D.J.'s from WMOK-FM left the station. Bowe became the new full-timer.

"I've been there ever since, with the exception of one year (continued on pg. 8)