Local resident to try your hand at World Series of Poker

By JOHN ALVAREZ
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CAPE MAY — Did you ever know anyone who made a trailblazing career out of playing poker? Thomas Cannuli has. As a Cape May Regional student, Cannuli is one of the few to make it to the World Series of Poker next month, the most prestigious poker tournament in the world.

“I got started when I was 15 years old,” Cannuli said, “I was in 8th grade. My nickname was Mojo. He was the king of my town, he was the king of my poker. I had never seen the game before. I was preconditioned really early, if I realized this is what I want, I actually found a passion in it.”

Cannuli’s passion for the game has been around for his whole life. After graduating from Lower Cape May Regional High School, he didn’t stick to the game. Instead, Cannuli took some time and did a few jobs before coming back to poker.

During his freshman year at the University of California, he started playing in tournaments, mainly in California. However, after a few years, he decided to take a break from playing and focus on his studies.

Cannuli graduated from UC Berkeley with a degree in business management and finance. He worked in the private sector for a while before deciding to return to his passion for poker.

“I think the motivation for any young person is to have a dream but also to live in a household with your own and your name. I feel everyone can do it, if you’re just not doing it, 10,000 people want to do it, long as you don’t quit,” he said.

For Cannuli, the next step is to keep playing and keep fighting for your dream. "Don’t give up your passion, just stick to it and keep trying. Why? That’s why you’re there."

The 27-year-old is expected to make it through the first month of the tournament. Cannuli is looking forward to the experience and to see how he can do in it.

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“Dreamweaver,” he said. "I want to apply for the most rigorous, I expect great things to work in that program." Cannuli said.

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