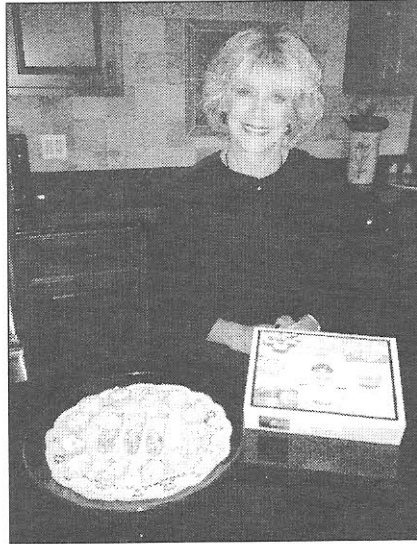


## Authentic cannoli

Business sometimes comes full circle.

Lou Toste O'Brien grew up watching her mother and father run a bakery in



**Lou Toste O'Brien along with her authentic Italian cannoli filling and dessert kits.**

Boston before they came to Forest Park and opened a restaurant.

O'Brien later spent her career running her own business in a different field, La Finesse Inc., a salon and beauty company. Over four decades, she oversaw the brand's seven salons and the creation of her own cosmetic, hair and skin care product lines. She was awarded the Business Ledger's Influential Women in Business Award in 2005.

Her plan to retire a few years ago didn't work out so well.

With a love of cooking, she traveled to Puglia, Italy and developed a plan for her current business, a dessert company she named after her mother. The business, Grandma Toste, sells authentic Italian cannoli filling and dessert kits crafted from family recipes at high-end grocery stores across the suburbs.

O'Brien, an avid entertainer, says she started Grandma Toste's to give party hosts a delicious and simple solution for authentic Italian desserts.

The product line can be found in stores including Casey's Foods in Naperville and Western Springs, Brookhaven Marketplace in the Burr Ridge, Darien and Mokena locations, From Scratch Marketplace in LaGrange and Garden Fresh Market in Naperville and Prisco's Fine Foods in Aurora.

• *Kim Mikus, editor of the Daily Herald Business Ledger, covers local business. Send her news and tips at [kmikus@dailyherald.com](mailto:kmikus@dailyherald.com).*