



# Retail Business Services

## Associate Spotlight: From a Grandfather's Bodega to a Grocery Career

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My grandfather immigrated to the United States from Santo Domingo in the late 1970s. My mother, at the time a high school senior, soon followed. They both chased their own version of the American Dream.

My grandfather was a hard-working entrepreneur who left his beloved country in search of a better financial future. Although he owned several bodegas (grocery convenience stores) back home, the country's political turmoil made it impossible to stay. For my mother, leaving home meant a different type of opportunity. She grew up with the constant reminder that her sole role in society was to get married and have children. She wanted to ensure a safe future for her family.

Fast forward to the 1990s. My grandfather owned a bodega in the heart of Jamaica Plain in Boston. My mother now had five children and a husband in the Dominican Republic. The two of them worked together in the bodega alongside my uncles, my sisters and me. They never learned to speak English, and as the eldest of the kids, I often had to step in, filling out paperwork for state permits, paying bills, organizing required food-safety trainings, working with vendors, placing orders and even working with local leaders on community engagement.

Both my grandfather and mother pushed me to work hard and value family. Seventeen years ago, I was the first – but not the last – to graduate college in my family. My career started with Stop & Shop that summer.

In the 1970s, my grandfather made a big choice that changed his life. It also shaped our family's future. Gracias buelo.

*As we continue to recognize Hispanic Heritage month, we've invited our associates to share their personal stories of Hispanic heritage to celebrate and appreciate the colorful cultures, rich histories, and diversity of the Hispanic community. Brought to you by the Conexión + Allies BRG.*