



Louis Jannetta wrote a book about mingling with some of the world's biggest stars during his 50-year run as maitre d' at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel's Imperial Room.

Famed maitre d' spent his life among the stars

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Obituary

From legendary boxer Muhammad Ali to former U.S. president Ronald Reagan, Louis Jannetta mingled with some of the world's biggest stars during his 50-year run as maitre d' at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel's Imperial Room.

The long-time Mississauga resident died Monday after a brief battle with cancer. He was 85.

Life wasn't always easy for Jannetta, but he rose above adversity to become a success.

Born in Italy, Jannetta came to Toronto as a child with his family in 1935 and lived through The Great Depression. He worked hard from almost the day he arrived, helping his father by selling fruit off a cart.

"My father, my mom, my sister and I, we lived in one room," he said. "I was out the next day selling bananas from a horse-and-wagon."

He saved whatever money he could so he could head down to the local movie theatres and watch his favourite stars. After he graduated Grade 8, Jannetta had to start working full-time to support the family.

As a 14-year-old, after lying about his age, Jannetta landed a job as a busboy at the Royal York. His hard work and attention to detail saw him rise through the ranks to become a waiter before eventually landing the coveted

position as maitre d' of the Imperial Room.

During an interview with *The News* a number of years back to promote his book *King Of The Maitre D's: My Life Among The Stars*, Jannetta shared a number of funny stories from those heady days.

One involved world-famous soccer player Pele and his entourage being snuck into the Imperial Room (without the proper attire) while the lights were down so they could check out a Tina Turner performance. Before the lights came up, Pele and his friends were taken back out again without anyone being the wiser.

"Even I enjoy the stories in (the book), and I've told them all already," said Jannetta.

In 1990, he left the Royal York to work at SkyDome and then opened his own restaurant, Louis Jannetta's Place, in 1994. He sold the business and retired a few years later.

Jannetta was married to wife Corinne, who is deceased, for 61 years. He's survived by his children Patti, Frank, Susan and Connie, eight grandchildren and three great grandchildren.

A funeral mass was held today at St. Dominic Roman Catholic Church on Atwater Ave.