

# Larger Than Life: Riverbend Mourns the Loss of Popular Alton Restaurateur

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ALTON – The Riverbend community is mourning the loss of beloved local restaurateur Leonard A. Ventimiglia.

Ventimiglia passed late Monday evening at the age of 73. He was born on May 12, 1945, in Alton to Tony and Edith Ventimiglia, who founded Tony's Restaurant in 1954. Leonard Ventimiglia. Leonard eventually took the reigns of Tony's from his parents and

passed it to his son, Paul Ventimiglia in 2016 when he retired from the industry. He also attended barber school and was interested in a variety of other industries, including hair styling. He had a barber shop and fabricated hair pieces and replacement during his time as a barber. During those years, he had hair replacement services across the country, including in Florida and California.

“He had a larger than life personality and he loved people,” Leonard Ventimiglia's daughter-in-law (Paul Ventimiglia's wife), Erin Ventimiglia said Tuesday afternoon. “He was an amazing storyteller.”

Erin Ventimiglia said she has known her father-in-law for 25 years. She said her father-in-law was “born into the restaurant industry” as his father, Tony Ventimiglia assisted at his father's restaurant, Midtown. His grandfather, the owner of Midtown, was named Leo, but was popularly known as “Pop.”

Outside of running his own hair replacement business and managing a popular Downtown Alton restaurant, Leonard Ventimiglia was also a member of St. Mary's Catholic Church in Alton and served as the president of Tony's Restaurant and Restorative Health of St. Louis until the time of his passing.

He is survived by his parents as well as his children, Paul Ventimiglia of Godfrey, Elizabeth “Betsy” Bechel of Godfrey and Lenny Ventimiglia of St. Louis, 10 grandchildren, brother Michael Ventimiglia of Alton and his longtime partner Annette Albani.

Visitation for Leonard Ventimiglia will be 4-8 p.m. Thursday, April 25 at Elias, Kallal and Schaaf Funeral Home in Godfrey with a 3:45 p.m. prayer service. A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at 10 a.m. Friday, April 26, 2019, at St. Mary's Catholic Church, which will be celebrated by Father Paul Ngyuen.