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Call Me Giambattista: A Personal and Political Journey (Footprints Series)

John Ciaccia

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What draws a person to the political life? In Call Me Giambattista, John Ciaccia recounts his immigration to Canada from Italy as a small child in 1937 to his retirement from the National Assembly of Quebec in 1998. After studying at McGill University's Faculty of Law, practising in a Montreal law firm, and shifting gears to work as a federal civil servant, a phone call in 1973 from Premier Robert Bourassa launched Ciaccia's twenty-five-year career in Quebec politics.

As a member federalist politician from an Italian background, Ciaccia faced many challenges. When first elected, he negotiated the James Bay Agreement with the Cree and the Inuit, and later, as Quebec's minister of Native Affairs, he was a key negotiator in the Oka crisis of 1990. Over the course of his career he held four cabinet posts, including International Affairs, and he ended his political career as the longest-serving member of the National Assembly. Ciaccia details all of these events and more, and explains his relationships with leading figures such as Robert Bourassa, Claude Ryan, Pierre Trudeau, René Lévesque, and Jacques Parizeau. Revealing his approach to politics, Ciaccia describes the lessons he learned from his career, and underscores the importance of acting according to one's convictions.

An intriguing memoir of an Italian immigrant who came to hold key roles in the Quebec government, Call Me Giambattista tells the story of a political leader and the choices he made during a seminal period in Quebec history.

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