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## Legendary Local Chef Inducted Into Foodie Hall of Fame

Think you can get good pasta in the North End? Or a hearty hash at your grandmother's place?

You should try some of James Berrini's dishes. JFK was a fan.

Berrini, a World War II veteran and resident of [Atria Draper Place](#) in Hopedale, is one of 80 chefs recently inducted into the American Academy of Chefs Culinary Hall of Fame for 2007 - the highest honor an American chef can receive.

Berrini, who declined to give his age, began work at the age of 13 at the Vendome Hotel in Boston, where for \$9 a week he cooked pasta and traditional Italian comfort food for visitors to the city.

"I enjoyed cooking mostly pastas and stuff of that nature, 'cause that's what I was brought up with," Berrini said.

During the war he worked in mess halls across the country - serving up soups and sauces for servicemen and women.

After the war, Berrini continued his training at the Culinary Institute of America in Boston.

"I was learning whatever I could grasp," said Berrini. "I would sit in on classes and just listen."

Pretty soon he and his older brother Peter had opened a school for hotel and restaurant management in Boston.

And by the early 1960s, he was cooking for John F. Kennedy at the presidential compound in Hyannis.

"I made whatever he desired," Berrini recalled. "Most of it was hashes and stuff of that nature. He liked special hashes."

Though he no longer cooks, Berrini enjoys interacting with the chefs at his residence, and thinks the food is "very good."

"He's become very friendly with the chefs," said Susan Billings, business manager at Atria Draper Place. "He's very pleased with the food, thank goodness."

To be eligible for the Culinary Hall of Fame, candidates must be 62 or older and have worked as a professional chef for at least 30 years.

Berrini received his induction during a July ceremony in Orlando, Fla.

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