

Born in Gujarat in 1898, Hasham Jessa ventured into the unknown, unexplored and mysterious Africa, establishing initial roots in the coastal town of Mombasa, Kenya and subsequently migrating to Tanzania to set up a *duka* (store) near Moshi. He later started a bee-keeping business and gradually expanded his businesses to include a cattle and fruit farm, and constructed the multi-storey Tanganyika House, which later became a landmark in Moshi near the snow-capped Mount Kilimanjaro. Hasham was affectionately known as “Lord Jessa” by people who respected his business ethics and charitable spirit.

Hasham's eldest son, Kamrudin, started his own business in nearby Arusha, a tourist town of northern Tanzania. From a humble beginning, he rapidly expanded his conglomerate to include a bakery, a dairy, a coffee plantation, and several other businesses. Kamrudin devoted a great deal of his time to community work. “My father was a pillar of the community in the true sense,” said Sultan - Kamrudin’s son. “He was also a dedicated and devoted father and a great teacher. He taught us ethics and responsibility.” Sultan learned about community work and helping others from his father, and served with several Ismaili organizations in Arusha and Dar es Salaam.

Sultan's interest in writing led him to establish various magazines including *Atom* and *Scholar's Digest*, receiving a special message from his spiritual leader, His Highness the Aga Khan. Sultan joined the *Nationalist*, a new newspaper that was begun by the ruling Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) shortly after independence. The *Nationalist* sent Sultan to the Berlin Institute of Mass Communication, where he studied with budding journalists from 10 African countries. He also worked for *Agence France Presse*, *Ceteka* (a Czech news agency) and *Africa* magazine. As a result of his fluency in Swahili, Sultan formed friendships with several journalists requiring translation from Swahili into English.

During his available time, Sultan worked for the United Press Agency, the Associated Press and Reuters and freelanced for *Drum* and the *Kenya Mirror*. Sultan then worked as the chief correspondent for popular and rapidly growing *Daily* and *Sunday Nation* newspapers, whose majority shareholder was the Aga Khan. When he Aga Khan visited Tanzania, as well as Rwanda and other East African countries, Sultan accompanied the Aga Khan, composing reports for the *Daily* and *Sunday Nation* about the visit.

During his ten-year career as a journalist in Tanzania, Sultan frequently interviewed prominent people including Willy Brandt, the former chancellor of Germany; Late Robert Kennedy, former US Attorney General; Cuba’s revered revolutionary leader Ernesto “Che” Guevara; cowboy legend Roy Rogers; Bing Crosby, Harry Belafonte, John Wayne, and Sydney Poitier.

He also became friends with former baseball great Stan Musal. After the interview, Musal asked Sultan if he would like his autograph. Sultan thought to himself that no one in Africa played baseball. Sultan said, “I didn’t want to offend him and said sure.” It was not until Sultan moved to Canada that he discovered Musal was an America icon and one of the most famous athletes.

The mass nationalization of properties in early 1970s in Tanzania resulted in a deteriorating political situation, compelling Sultan and his family to migrate to Canada. Sultan's parents, who had owned and operated several ventures including a 300-acre coffee plantation, a bakery, and a dairy, lost everything as a result of the nationalization without compensation.

Sultan and his family immigrated to Canada, residing initially in Cornwall, Ontario. In the fall of 1973, Sultan was employed by the *Standard-Freeholder*, a small community newspaper that once belonged to the mighty Thomson chain. "My six months stay in Cornwall stretched to three decades," said Sultan.

The retired journalist has many stories about his early days in Cornwall, then a city of 45,000 people. When Sultan and his family arrived in Canada, the Late Dr. George McGowan, a retired veterinarian, helped settle the family. He faced the nearly impossible task of finding an apartment as no one was willing to rent to immigrants, particularly those with different skin colours. No one would sit next to him on the bus. In casual conversations, he was asked if people in Africa still lived on trees and if the streets were infested with snakes and hungry lions. "It was a rough and tough beginning," recalls Sultan. Racism was rampant during that time.

Six years after arriving in Cornwall, he was declared the community's top citizen and in March 2005, Sultan was awarded the Order of Canada, the country's highest and most prestigious honour, recognizing 30 years of community service. He had served with various organizations including the Red Cross, Big Brothers, Children's Aid Society, Rotary, Kinsmen, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Canada's former Prime Minister Paul Martin sent him a message: "You can take pride in your accomplishment over the course of your remarkable career."

In the Cornwall community, Sultan came to be known as "The Sultan of Sacrifice" and "The Sultan of Selflessness." He was known for his outstanding fundraising abilities, boundless energy, leadership, and commitment. Over the years, he has been honoured by municipal, provincial and federal governments and has received numerous awards, including the Queen's silver, golden and diamond jubilee medals. He won Ontario's medal for volunteerism, good citizenship, and a medal from the Ontario Medical Association for his work in the health field. Sultan has also been honoured by the Catholics, the Jewish, and Sikh communities. In 2010, he was noted as one of the top 25 Canadian immigrants.

Sultan and his wife Rosila have two daughters, Anaar - an actuary, and Yasmin - a professor. Anaar's husband Farid is an auto mechanic. Yasmin and her husband Scott teach at the University of Miami in Oxford, Ohio. Sultan enjoys his retirement in Montreal and continues to write a weekly column on national and international affairs as well as about his travels around the world. Sultan continues his volunteer work.