



## Mrs. Esther R. Fitzgerald

May 27, 1943 - July 4, 2023

Esther R. Fitzgerald, 80, of Hoffman Estates, Illinois.

As the oldest of five children and the only girl, Esther was a strong, intelligent woman and a natural leader. She held a unique position among her siblings as both a big sister and a “second mother,” always hovering over her four younger brothers to help with math or other homework and offering sound advice whenever they needed it. She was a beautiful young girl, resplendent in her favorite full-length maroon coat with leopard fur collar, matching hat and muff to warm her hands during the bitter winters of the East Side neighborhood of Chicago where she grew up. Clearly, she was the apple of her parents’ eye and she did not disappoint them. She was a founding member of the Starliters, a youth group at Annunciata parish, and wore her Starlitter jacket proudly. Always an avid reader, she excelled in her education and was a top student at George Washington High School.

It was a source of great family pride when Esther enrolled at Loyola University and studied overseas at the Loyola of Rome, Italy campus during her sophomore year. It was uncommon for young women in her neighborhood to attend college, much less study overseas, and the experience developed a strong sense of independence and self-direction that came to define Esther and her leadership style in both her personal life and professional career. While studying in Rome, Esther once called home to request permission to

take a side trip to another country. Flatly refused by her parents who were concerned for her safety, she knew better the next time. Instead of phoning home for permission, Esther sent a post card which arrived after she had already begun her trip to England.

Esther's first job was at Green's Bakery in South Chicago during her high school years where she wore an unforgettable pink uniform that provided motivation to attend college and pursue a more challenging professional career. While studying at Loyola University's downtown Chicago campus, she worked part-time at Science Research Associates (SRA), an educational publishing company. After college, she continued to work at SRA where she excelled and rose to the position of Personnel Director. When SRA was purchased by IBM Esther transferred to the giant computer company and expanded her career in Human Resources to the corporate level of IBM. Once again, she excelled in her position and traveled extensively around the United States for IBM. She retired after a career of more than 30 years as one of the highest-ranking women executives in IBM North America.

Esther met and married the love of her life, John Fitzgerald, when they were both students at Loyola. Later, as John's career in the automotive business and Esther's career at IBM both grew, they shared their success unselfishly with their families and friends. Gatherings and holiday parties at their Damen Avenue home in the Beverly neighborhood of Chicago were legendary with Esther preparing meals upstairs while John tended bar and held court at their lower level bar. Spontaneous dinners at local prime restaurants were filled with great food, fun and good cheer. As their sibling's families grew, the holiday presents from Uncle John and Aunt Esther were always awaited with pure child delight and anticipation. Uncle John and Aunt Esther never failed to deliver the most extravagant and unique presents which they enjoyed giving as much as their little nieces and nephews enjoyed receiving.

Esther is survived by John Fitzgerald, her husband of 58 years; brothers Joseph, Thomas, James and Matthew Ratkovic; brother-in-law Richard Fitzgerald; sisters-in-law Laura Ratkovic, Marsha Martin, Sara Ratkovic and Sue Fitzgerald; nieces Laura Geisler and Megan Janz; nephews Matthew, Marc, Paul and Peter Ratkovic, Kevin and Brian Owens and Kevin Fitzgerald; and too many grand nieces and nephews to list.

Many happy, loving memories of Esther ease our deep sense of loss and we are comforted in our belief that she has passed from this life to join a familiar growing crowd in God's eternal heavenly kingdom of love. Good night, sweet princess and flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.

The family has created this Life Tributes page to make it easy to share your memories, photos, and videos.

For further information please contact the Morizzo Funeral Directors at 847.752.6444. Arrangements entrusted to Morizzo Funeral Home and Cremation Services, at 2550 West Hassell Road, (Northeast corner at Barrington Road), Hoffman Estates, Illinois 60169.

For those of you that would have attended services and would like to express your condolences please click on the "Share A Memory" link above and you can leave a message. If you wish to send a Sympathy Card, please feel free to send it to Morizzo Funeral Home, 2550 Hassell Road, Hoffman Estates, Illinois, 60169 c/o the Family; we will gladly forward it on to the family.

# Cemetery Details

**The Directors at Morizzo Funeral Home entrusted with any Visitation, Funeral & Committal; requested.**

2550 Hassell Road  
(Northeast corner at Barrington Road)  
Hoffman Estates, IL 60169  
(847) 752-6444  
[ross@morizzofuneralhome.com](mailto:ross@morizzofuneralhome.com)  
<http://MorizzoFuneralHome.com>

# Tribute Wall



“ Our family is deeply saddened to learn of Esther's passing. We spent many years in New York with them and have only the best memories. Ret in peace, Esther. Heaven has gained another angel!

Silvan and Mario Malpelli - September 10, 2023 at 12:27 PM



“ Esther and John have been neighbors the past 15 years, and two of the most wonderful people I've known. I am so saddened to learn of the passing of this remarkable lady. My deepest condolences to John and their entire family. Mike

Michael Desens - July 20, 2023 at 07:44 PM



“ A grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Mrs. Esther R Fitzgerald.

July 09, 2023 at 01:44 PM