



## R. Emmett Fitzgerald

February 27, 1926 - January 17, 2021

### R. Emmett Fitzgerald

Fortified with the Sacraments of Holy Mother Church, R. Emmett Fitzgerald passed away peacefully at home with family by his side. He was born at St. Joseph's Hospital, Alton, on February 27, 1926, the eighth of nine children born to the late Daniel M. and Genevieve Degnan Fitzgerald, of Alton.

Emmett survived all of his brothers and sisters and their respective spouses: Daniel, Jr.; John and his wife Helen; Genevieve Kulp and her husband Harry; Magalene; Edward and his wife Marguerite; James and his wife Katherine; Rosemary Gilderslieve and her husband James and Margaret Dimitroff and her husband James.

On May 7, 1955, Emmett entered into the Sacrament of Matrimony with Joan Marie Garrow at Queen of Martyrs Catholic Church in Chicago. Joan preceded Emmett in death on February 13, 2011. They left surviving six children, thirteen grandchildren and nine great grandchildren: Children: Timothy and his wife Kelly; Michael and his wife Sue; Kathleen; Peter and his wife Michelle; Daniel and his wife Stephanie; and Maura Sedlack and her husband John of Chicago. Grandchildren: Christopher Fitzgerald in London; Ryan Fitzgerald of Minneapolis; Michael S. Fitzgerald and his wife Kelly of Denver; David Fitzgerald and his wife Catherine of Raleigh NC; Molly Ferguson and her husband Troy of Edwardsville; Patrick Fitzgerald and his wife Laura of Jacksonville FL; Joseph, Maria and Jane Fitzgerald of

Edwardsville; Katherine, Daniel and Mary Therese of Godfrey and John E. Sedlack of Chicago.

Emmett attended St. Patrick's Grade School and Marquette Catholic High School in Alton and earned his bachelor's degree at the University of Notre Dame and his Juris Doctorate from the Notre Dame Law School. He began his legal career in Chicago as law clerk for the late Justice Roger J. Kiley who later served on the United States Court of Appeals in Chicago. In 1953, Emmett returned to Alton and became an associate at the law firm of Virley, Eastman and Schlafly, which later became Schlafly, Godfrey and Fitzgerald and still later became Hoagland, Fitzgerald, Smith and Pranaitis, for a total of 64 years. During High School, Emmett was employed by Peter Schwegel at old Pearl Market in Alton. Fitzgerald served in the U.S. Navy from 1944 into 1946 during World War II in the various theaters of war. He was a member of the Alton Knights of Columbus, American Legion, Alton-Wood River and Illinois State Bar Associations; served on various boards at St. Patrick's, St. Joseph's, St. Mary's, Marquette High School, Ursuline Convent, St. Anthony's Hospital and the Alton Foundation. He also served on the Board of Directors of First National Bank, Mercantile Bank and U.S. Bank, Alton. Because of COVID-19 restrictions, his funeral Mass will be a private. Interment will be at St. Patrick's Cemetery in Godfrey. The Veterans of Foreign Wars, Alton Post 1308 will provide military colors and honors at the Cemetery. Memorials may be offered to the retired Ursuline Sisters, Marquette High School, St. Mary's Church, OSF St. Anthony's Health Center, and the American Parkinson Association. Emmett also wanted to thank the Oblate Priests at St. Mary's for continuing Father Suddes' long tradition of providing early morning weekday Masses at St. Mary's and also the Sisters of Saint Francis of the Martyr St. George for providing the Alton Community with the beautiful Eucharistic Adoration Chapel at St. Anthony's. Gent Funeral Home in Alton is in charge of arrangements. Online guestbook and information may be found at [www.gentfuneralhome.com](http://www.gentfuneralhome.com)



# Tribute Wall



“ *R. Emmett Fitzgerald*

January 28, 2023 at 10:19 AM



“ *R. Emmett Fitzgerald*

January 28, 2023 at 08:19 AM



“ *Mr. Fitzgerald was always a friendly, hard-working, family man. My last memory of him was seeing him working, not all that long ago, at his desk. I owe him the blessing of the old "Ryrie-Fitzgerald house" in Middletown Alton, IL, which I bought from him in July 1999, when the house had just turned 100 years old. The house and the memories he shared of it have brought great joy to the family, and I know it was a home that he enjoyed with his family from the 1960's to the 1990's. A pious, family man who is missed by many!*

**Scott Dixon** - January 30, 2021 at 12:29 PM



“ *We often saw Mr. Emmett Fitzgerald praying in our Adoration Chapel and will miss him much. The Sisters will be praying for your family! -Sister Marie-Therese, FSGM*

**Sister Marie-Therese** - January 26, 2021 at 03:17 PM

SB

“ We want to extend our sincere sympathy to the entire Fitzgerald family on their loss. We remember Emmett fondly and are so grateful for his dedicated service on the Board with the Ursuline Sisters. Know that Emmett and all of you are in our prayers.

*Sr. Mary Beisiegel, OSU  
Ursuline Sisters*

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**Sr. Mary Beisiegel** - January 24, 2021 at 03:40 PM

LZ

“ Deepest condolences to the entire Fitzgerald family. He and your mother raised a wonderful family

*Linda Zavodny  
Duluth, GA*

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**Linda Zavodny** - January 23, 2021 at 08:22 PM

MV

“ Mr. Fitzgerald was a good friend of the family, and often at our home. When I was young and attending St. Patrick's Elementary, I would often walk home with my brothers and sister. One day, Mr. Fitzgerald saw me walking home alone and offered me a ride, which I accepted. When my mother asked me how I got home, I told her the "Your friend with the white hair" picked me up. Of course I was in big trouble for getting in a car with someone I didnt know the name, but Emmett got a big kick out of the story.

*So sorry to see him pass, but what a reward he has waiting for him!  
Sympathy to all the Fitzgeralds.*

*Mary McFarlane Vaughn*

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**Mary Vaughn** - January 23, 2021 at 12:41 PM



“ Emmett, I will miss you. Always coming to Mass dressed like a real gentleman. Kind and pleasant always. I remember you often read Fulton Sheen's "Life of Christ". I pray that now you see the Lord Jesus face to face and experience the fullness of joy in His Heavenly Kingdom!

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**John Wykes** - January 22, 2021 at 06:21 AM



“ To the entire Fitzgerald family- We are truly sorry on the passing of your dad. He was a customer of ours for many years. Always enjoyed our visits. Our thoughts and prayers to all at this difficult time. We lost a fine man. Condolences- The Rick Crivello Family and employees of Bobs Lawn & Garden

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**Richard Crivello** - January 21, 2021 at 12:41 PM

“ Dear Fitzgerald family,  
R.Emmet Fitzgerald, Esquire, was a lawyer’s lawyer and counsel to many, both rich and poor. His words and arguments were given the greatest of weight by other lawyers and judges. I dealt with him professionally twice , when I was assistant Attorney General for eminent domain and when I was Madison County State’s Attorney. These cases gave us time to talk at length about others in the legal profession, including some of my predecessors. He was a remarkable storyteller! He also told me that he thoroughly enjoyed exchanging stories with my late father while counting collection money after Masses at old St. Patrick’s .  
Emmett was named Robert Emmett after the great Irish Statesman. He became a local statesman for the area’s Catholic community on many matters.  
One of his most noteworthy achievements was to trade Catholic support for a bond issue for the construction of West Junior High and Public School Stadium in exchange for Marquette High School’s right to use the stadium rent free for football games. This was no mean feat, as past politicians have told me, because Emmett had to deal with the imperious JB Johnson, who was Alton superintendent of schools. However, Dr. Johnson badly needed Catholic votes for his bond issue and Emmett got his deal. The Catholic community listened to Emmett and voted for higher taxes at that time to make this happen. The bond issue passed and the result has been a great benefit to Marquette and also to the greater Alton Godfrey community ever since.  
Emmett and Joanie raised a faith-filled, wonderful family. Emmett leaves a rich legacy of strong family and professional competence. May all the angels guide him into paradise and at his coming may all the martyrs receive him. May they lead him safe into the holy city of Jerusalem. May the choirs of angels sing in joy to welcome him, and with Lazarus, who once was so poor, may he find rest for all eternity!  
In sympathy,  
Bill and Anna Haine.

**William and Anna Haine** - January 21, 2021 at 10:44 AM

CF

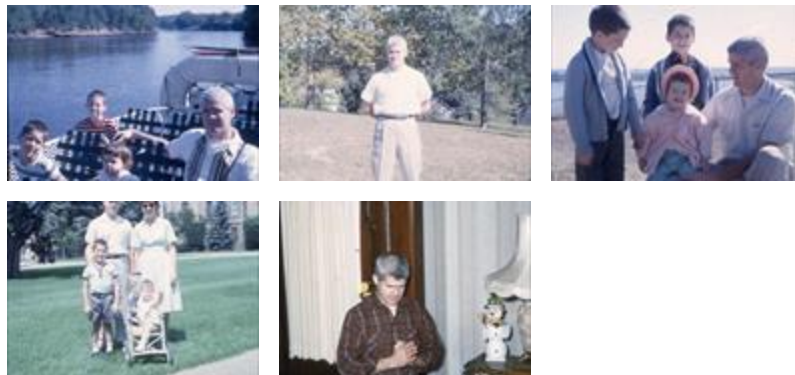
“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



**Chris Fitzgerald** - January 21, 2021 at 07:29 AM

CF

“ 29 files added to the album Memories Album



**Chris Fitzgerald** - January 21, 2021 at 07:10 AM

PF

*Chris: This is a great collection of photos of Bops over the years. Thanks for posting. Uncle Pete*

**Pete Fitzgerald** - January 21, 2021 at 08:58 AM

CF

*You can thank Ryan! I just did the upload and got the credit :)*

**Chris Fitzgerald** - January 21, 2021 at 09:25 AM

RJ

“ *Sorry for your loss. He was a great man*



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**ROLAND JAMES** - January 20, 2021 at 04:29 PM

KW

“ *Feisty is the word that comes to mind. I truly admired Emmet. My sympathies to his children, grandchildren, and great grand children. He raised a wonderful bunch.*

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**Kate Walsh** - January 20, 2021 at 02:29 PM

JS

“ *John Schlafly purchased the Fiery Lily and Rose for the family of R. Emmett Fitzgerald.*



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**John Schlafly** - January 20, 2021 at 01:32 PM

CF

“ *Chris Fitzgerald purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of R. Emmett Fitzgerald.*



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**Chris Fitzgerald** - January 20, 2021 at 01:28 PM



“ *Large Basket Garden was purchased for the family of R. Emmett Fitzgerald.*



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January 20, 2021 at 12:26 PM



“ *Deepest condolences to the Fitzgerald family on the loss of your dear Father, he was a kind man and a pillar of our community. He is greatly loved and will be sorely missed.*  
*With Sympathy,*  
*Virginia Woulfe-Beile*

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**Virginia Woulfe-Beile** - January 20, 2021 at 12:08 PM



“ *Hoagland, Fitzgerald & Pranaitis purchased the Glorious Grace Bouquet for the family of R. Emmett Fitzgerald.*



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**Hoagland, Fitzgerald & Pranaitis** - January 20, 2021 at 11:06 AM



“ *We will certainly miss our neighbor, Papa Fitz. He provided free legal services for our adopted children and many years of kindness as our neighbor. I also enjoyed playing Santa Claus for his children for several years. (I hope I didn't give anything away.) The world would be much better if there were more Papa Fitzs. The Thies family*

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**Dave Thies** - January 20, 2021 at 10:07 AM

MF

“ Marce Corbett and family purchased the *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum* for the family of R. Emmett Fitzgerald.



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**Marce Corbett and family** - January 19, 2021 at 03:07 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket* was purchased for the family of R. Emmett Fitzgerald.



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January 19, 2021 at 02:01 PM

BE

“ *Mike, Sue and family, I'm so sorry for your loss, Emmett was a good man. With sympathy Bernie Wickenhauser*

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**Bernie** - January 19, 2021 at 12:23 PM