



Ernest William Fitzgibbons

April 18, 1929 - April 19, 2018

Ernest William Fitzgibbons was born at home on April 18, 1929 in Homeville PA, the youngest son of John and Gladys Fitzgibbons. Loving father of Colleen Crowley of Springfield, VA (wife of Thomas Crowley), Beverly Hyde of Dale City, VA (wife of John Hyde), and Beth Fitzgibbons of Lorton, VA. Dear brother of John Fitzgibbons (Departed), Charles Fitzgibbons (Departed), David Fitzgibbons (Departed), and surviving sister Faith Mitchell of Oil City, PA (wife of Jim Mitchell). Also lovingly survived by 8 Grandchildren, Sean Crowley, Katie Crowley Repper (wife of Kevin Repper), Jennifer Hyde, Meghan (Hyde) Reidy (wife of Patrick Reidy), Colleen (Hyde) Powell (wife of Daniel Powell), Daniel Crowley, Bridget Crowley, Timothy Crowley, and 5 Great Grandchildren, Brooke Hyde, Sophia Powell, Amelia Reidy, Johnathan Powell, Chloe Repper, and many loving nieces and nephews and friends. It was the eve of World War II and the Great Depression, and these historic events shaped his formative years. His father left the family to find work after his younger sister Faith was born, and he never returned. Together with his older brothers John, Charles and David, he contributed to the household at an early age, delivering newspapers from at age 5 to 12, and then working at Kennywood Amusement park and the Steel Mills as he reached his teen years. Life was hard, but they got by gardening, laboring for anyone who had a job, and learning to fix anything that broke. When his brothers all went to serve in the war, Ernest took on the man of the house responsibilities. One day when playing hookie from school to work in the Steel Mills a ton of steel

beams dropped on him. He was lucky because he fell between rail road tracks which saved him from being crushed. He recovered after a 6-month hospitalization, but this tragedy lead him away from the Steel Mills and to other adventures. He was a pretty good football player before the accident, and his healing only made him tougher. His continued high school football excellence earned him a football scholarship to Staunton Military academy, with a continuing scholarship with Wake Forrest University. Although he was homesick, he distinguished himself at Staunton and Wake Forrest University. In the Spring of his third year at Wake Forrest his country called. It was the Korean conflict war and he went into the Air Force and served five years in Japan as Aircraft technician, also representing his squadron in the military football league. His duty complete, he returned home. He had no jobs lined up, so he decided to try professional football and earned a space on the 1955 Steelers roster. This was short lived. He was cut from the Steelers and was pondering an offer from the Canadian Football League while attending the Alleghany Aeronautics School and driving for his God Mother's Bus company when Loretta Walters boarded his bus. This beautiful girl with long black hair was a game changer! He wanted to find steady employment, so he took a job with American Airlines as a mechanic. He married Loretta (nick name "Toni") as soon as he had his job and they moved to Michigan to begin their life together. The first years were very challenging. They moved from Michigan to Washington DC, and then to the suburbs of Lorton Virginia when they started their family. When the work in DC dried up Fitz was transferred to New York and Toni took the kids (3 girls by this time) and went back to live with family in Whitaker PA. Fitz would work 4 16-hour days and then drive 10 hours to be with his family for a long weekend before driving back to New York to start the cycle over again. This lasted a year until luck came through. A neighbor in Lorton told Fitz about a government job opportunity. Fitz applied and was hired, and the family returned to their home in Lorton VA and settled in for good. Fitz worked hard at making a good life for his family, working multiple jobs. He coached girls' softball and basketball for 12 years. He taught his

daughters how to garden and fish, how to do car maintenance and how to fix things around the house. His home received continuous improvements. Most vacations involved trips back to “Pittsburgh” to visit the larger family. As the kids grew and he advanced in his employment, he could afford trips to the beach for the family. Along with family, he and Toni visited Ireland, Germany, and Israel. He loved his travels, but he always kept his heart at home. He loved his family and his life, and he lived it understanding how precious it is. He experienced the sorrows of loved ones gone and relished the joys of a wedding dance, a song sung-out strong in church, and the merriment of reunions with family and friends. He often spoke with gratitude of all his blessings and said how every step along life’s path he felt that he made the right choices. He credited his good choices and most of his happiness to the guiding hand of his lifetime love, Toni.

As his health failed he met these challenges like every other challenge, with determination and grit. He fought until the end, and never gave up. He went out the way he came in, at home, and with those who loved him. He was larger than life, is dearly loved, and will be terribly missed.

“ Life is an opportunity, benefit from it. Life is beauty, admire it. Life is a dream, realize it. Life is a challenge, meet it. Life is a duty, complete it. Life is a game, play it. Life is a promise, fulfill it. Life is sorrow, overcome it. Life is a song, sing it. Life is a struggle, accept it. Life is a tragedy, confront it. Life is an adventure, dare it. Life is luck, make it. Life is too precious, do not destroy it. Life is life, fight for it.”

— Mother Teresa

Tribute Wall



“ *Ernest William Fitzgibbons*

October 27, 2022 at 09:45 PM



“ *Mrs. Fitz, Colleen, Bev and BethAnn, My deepest sympathies upon learning of Mr. Fitz's passing. From being a part of the Lorton Jet's softball team from as early as 1967-1968 until we out grew the league to family trips with you to Pittsburgh and Kennywood park. I remember fondly being part of your family, enjoying many, many years of birthday celebrations, Christmas celebrations and each holiday through the seasons. I remember the 1963 VW you Dad got for you when you began to drive Col! Your family was blessed to have Mr. Fitz as a loving husband , father and grandfather and I know his love lives on in each of you. Love and God's Peace to you and all your family.*

Soft Glow - December 30, 2018 at 12:00 AM



“ *Dear Toni and Family, I was so sorry to hear about Fitz's passing. He was certainly a wonderful person and will be missed. Our deepest sympathies. Love, Betty Ann Miller*

Angel Wings - April 23, 2018 at 12:00 AM

CL

“ Keeping the Fitzgibbons family in our thoughts and prayers. “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.” Isaiah 43:2
Sam & Sheila Gotti

Candle of Love - April 23, 2018 at 12:00 AM



“ Dear Colleen, My sincerest condolences as you, your family, and friends mourn the passing of your father. I never met him, but if he was your father, then he did a great job raising a lovely and wonderful person! What a blessing to have a great father and a wonderful daughter. I can only imagine how proud he was to have you as his daughter and how proud you are to call him your father. May all your memories of him strengthen you during this time.

April 23, 2018 at 12:00 AM

EG

“ Ernest William Fitzgibbons

Enduring Grace - April 22, 2018 at 12:00 AM



“ To all of the Fitzgibbons Family in your time of mourning.
Know that you are in our thoughts and prayers.
We know as you do that Ernest is in heaven with his Lord Jesus Christ.
He was a kind and loving person. Since the time we moved into the neighborhood
he always had a kind word " how you doing today?" When Elizabeth was small " hows the little one?"
Halloween time Elizabeth always wanted to go to the Fitzgibbons house first. She got the biggest candy bars and we all got a happy greeting. We will never forget. seeing him outside. I would always stop and we would have a fun filled talk about everything. South Run was a big subject since we would often see each other there..
Again you are in our prayers and have our love not only for Ernest & Loretta but also for whole family.
Bill, Criss, & Elizabeth Lewis

April 21, 2018 at 12:00 AM