



Dorothy K. Fitzgerald

November 11, 1931 - December 10, 2020

Dorothy "Dotty or Dots" Fitzgerald

An Open Letter To Dots

You died peacefully on December 10, 2020 (the worst year ever for many reasons) at Gulf Coast Village, but I don't need to tell you that...you were there.

It's not hard to remember that you were born on Veteran's Day 1931, because you always told us about how your Daddy, the Commander, was so proud of that. In keeping with that day, your patriotism was strong. In fact, if patriotism was "The Force", Darth Vader would have commented, "the force is strong is this one".

I think back our formative years at Village Green Elementary in Miami when you were a fixture at the school as a volunteer. If there was a snow-cone sale, bake sale or class party, you were always there. I also remember when you dressed up as a clown to entertain me and my classmates, it wasn't funny then, but years of therapy have gotten me to admit it wasn't the end of the world. In going through your files, I saw a letter from the Village Green principal thanking you for your help in the swimming classes. I now remember our earliest right of passage, swimming across the deep end of the Village Green Country Club pool, which earned us a dollar and the right to swim by ourselves.

You were so active in numerous civic activities. A legacy member of the Daughters of the American Revolution for 60 years. A tireless civic activist trying to get bike paths for children's safety.

I think back to your marriage with Dad (Richard Nygaard) which was a true odd couple. He liked country music and John Wayne movies, you liked marching band music and musicals. But you guys stuck it out for 27 years. I know that you were both proudest of your children. Chuck, a Naval Officer that commanded two ships, Jim, a Police Officer with over 30 years of service to Lee County and Tennessee and Joe, a Firefighter with Sanibel Fire. I remember when I had to go to Gulf Coast Village tell you of Dad's passing. Pastor Bob of GCV was my wingman for that, we laughed, then cried, then laughed again. I know at that point that you were seeing your own mortality looming. But that didn't effect you, you continued to be concerned about the family and your grandchildren and great

grandchildren.

After your divorce from Dad, your passion for education blossomed. You attended ECC and got your AA. Then off to USF and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree. I know in the late 1949 you attended FSU and even though you held a degree from USF, your love of FSU football never waivered.

As your sons, whether we were children or in our 30's, no matter the heartbreak or success, you were always there. You always saw the positive side of life. This came though in rudimentary poetry, that we would roll our eyes at another poem that you had to read to us. I am so thankful that you accomplished your goal of being published.

Everywhere you were, seemed a little brighter. Going through your papers, I found a story your wrote about attending a UCF game with me. It was during a driving rainstorm at the Citrus Bowl where UCF beat Kentucky State 37-0. You hardly complained once we got to covered grandstands and you were enthralled by the Kentucky State Marching Band. I had forgotten about this, I complain about the task of going through your files, now I'm glad I'm doing it.

As kids, Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts were our primary activity. Dots, you never let an opportunity to help go by. You became an adult leader and were recognized by the highest award that could be bestowed upon an adult leader, the Silver Fawn. Another eye-rolling episode was when you wanted to take part in the arduous Barefoot Mailman 52 mile hike. I am honored to say that you did it. Your love of scouting was always in your core, but with me, Chuck and Jim going off and living life, the fun was gone for you and fell back on the memories.

You and Dad created a great family and I am so glad on your birthday (Veteran's Day) you got to go to Jacksonville to see Chuck and your grandchildren : Callie, Alyssa, Jacob and Samuel. Jim and Stephanie created two great sons Mike and Craig, whom you know very well. Mike and Alycia have Kinley and Wyatt. I love how if you couldn't see family, you wanted me to go see them, so my trips to see Craig and Tiana in Pensacola were a highlight. You knew my Godson Jason, but I wish you had met the twins Nicholas and Christopher and bringing up the rear is Matthew. I'm like your brother Ed, the crazy Uncle, that's my part.

Your love of people is legendary. At Sears, you were a successful saleslady, but you spent so much time getting to know people, I feel like you lost out on twice as many sales. You took delight in getting know people, but you're not cutthroat, you wanted the customer to walk away feeling great about the deal. I have contacted many of your friends to tell them of your passing and they are difficult conversations because they get choked up, which then happens to me. I am amazed at the people you have touched in life and I will strive to be more like you when it comes to humans.

Dots, you leave this life with no regrets. Thank you for showing us the path.