



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jose M. Serrano

Mary Eileen Fitzgerald

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Women of
DISTINCTION
HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

Mary Eileen Fitzgerald

Mary Eileen Fitzgerald was born in the Bronx on January 17, 1923. Her mother came to this country from Ireland with only \$1.25 to her name. Ms. Fitzgerald's father passed away when she was only 15, so she had to find work to help support herself and her mother. In 1952, she took her Civil Service test to become a police officer because she thought, "it would be an interesting job." On December 1, 1952, Ms. Fitzgerald became a member of the New York Police Department (NYPD).

Ms. Fitzgerald was a pioneer in her field and had an illustrious 31-year career serving the citizens of New York in the NYPD. Ms. Fitzgerald broke down barriers on the Pickpocket Squad and then in the Intelligence Division. She was promoted to Detective in 1959, and promoted again to Detective Second Grade in 1968. Ms. Fitzgerald also won the June 1971 “Cop of the Month” award, served in the Bureau of Policewomen, the Queens District Attorney’s Squad, the Special Frauds Squad and the Office of the Chief of Detectives.

During her time in the NYPD, Ms. Fitzgerald was tasked with protecting several of the 20th century’s most iconic women, from Israel’s Prime Minister Golda Meir and Queen Sophia of Spain, to First Ladies Jackie Kennedy, Lady Bird Johnson and finally, Nancy Reagan.

It was guarding Jackie Kennedy that Ms. Fitzgerald considers the highlight of her career. Dressed in plain clothes, she strolled the streets of New York City a few short paces behind her charge, watching carefully for threats.

Ms. Fitzgerald retired from the NYPD in 1983 at the age of 60. She now resides on Roosevelt Island and still has a photo of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, signed, “With best wishes, Jacqueline Kennedy” hanging inside her apartment, along with pictures of her great nieces and nephews.