

# Class of 1931

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William FitzGerald was born in Boston, and as a youth in the bustling 1920s, set his sights on the U.S. Naval Academy. Arriving in 1927, as a member of the Class of 1931, William, known as “Fitz,” “Biddy” or “Bill” to his classmates, won the friendship and respect of his peers. The *Lucky Bag* recalls his spellbinding storytelling abilities and described him as a “man whose idiosyncrasies are as numerous as his talents.”

At the Academy, William excelled at sports, especially baseball—and was known for his power hitting. After graduation, Ensign FitzGerald planned for a career in submarines—but a routine eye test disqualified him from continued naval service, and he found himself “retired” at age 24. The Navy’s loss was the business world’s gain.

As a midshipman, he had invested his “nest egg” in the stock market after Wall Street’s great crash, producing a nice return as the market slowly recovered. William attended Harvard but left early to pursue his strong interest in the field of investment banking.

In the midst of his budding business career, World War II broke out and William returned to the Navy for the duration of the war. During that time, he married Annelise Petschek, on July 2, 1943.

After the war, William started a company that helped rebuild Europe under the Marshall Plan. He organized the Metallizing Research and Development Company and served as Chairman of National Metallizing Corporation. With his knowledge of business and foreign affairs, William was tapped for a post in the State Department during the Eisenhower Administration and many presidents since have sought his counsel.

In 1992 he was appointed United States Ambassador to Ireland. Despite his many honors, William says his proudest achievement is his extensive work with young people. He has established scholarship and sports programs for inner city youth. At his Alma Mater, he has established the FitzGerald Scholar Program, to send select midshipmen to Oxford University for two years following graduation.

Family has remained the highest priority for William FitzGerald. He and Annelise raised two children—Desmond and Anne, and they have five grandchildren.