



IN MEMORY OF  
**ERNESTINE**  
**M**  
**"ERNIE"**  
**McCORMICK**

A bright light has gone out in the world, but heaven gained another angel  
On July 31 Ernestine McCormick (she preferred Ernie) as a simpler personal and loving  
way to call her, passed away.

Ernie was my soulmate, lover, best friend, counselor and consoler  
She balanced all my faults with patience, love and great understanding  
She was the gentle to my rough, the calm to my volatility, the rational to my  
unreasonableness

I will miss her deeply and always

Ernie was a wonderful parent and role model for the second greatest love of her life,  
Michael who was the center of her life as well as mine

There is not a single person who knew Ernie who didn't receive regular updates of what  
Michael was doing or had accomplished

In many ways Ernie was a better life instructor for Michael than I was

I didn't swim but Ernie did and regularly engaged in water activities and competitions  
with him, even to the point of having to dive into the freezing water in Breezy Point in  
May, Montauk in June, & Lake George in Late August after the passage of the season's  
first cold front

As Michael got older Ernie would snorkel with him too.

Ernie drew the line at Parasailing and Jet Skis

I didn't ride horseback but Ernie did and accompanied Michael on many rides at a Upstate  
NY Dude ranch

I didn't fish but Ernie did and taught us both how to do it: rigging a line, baiting a hook,  
untangling a line, netting and casting all while maintaining the cleanliness of the boat

This trait earned Ernie the nickname of First Maid and Mrs. Clean

Speaking of cleanliness, it is said that Michael is a master house cleaner. He also  
learned that from Ernie as she would ask him to accompany her on dusting furniture  
in our home

If Ernie didn't ask him Michael would find a dusty piece of furniture, run his finger on it, show  
his finger to Ernie and ask, "Ernie do you think this needs dusting?"

Ernie was good at sports and participated in our games of baseball and football

She was always telling us she was the best girl catcher in Brooklyn THEN proved it one  
day at Yankee Stadium where she made a one-handed catch of a David Winfield BP  
home run deep in the lower left field stands.

That ball is still in our home

Tennis was Ernie's game, and she was a fierce competitor. But wow did she have a  
temper when balls didn't break her way or when her opponent would employ "girly  
shots" ie. Little dinks over the net although Ernie used a bit cruder language than girly  
My brother Vincent (rest in peace) really knew how to get to her

Vincent was a master at all sports he played, and he had a good time chiding Ernie  
every time they played

Vincent's favorite phrase that always raised Ernie's ire was "Ernie if you want me to call  
the ball in, hit it in"

And boom he would set her off

Then he would proceed to rocket a couple of serves at her

But she loved playing against Vinnie because of how good a Tennis player he was.

Ernie was a true Family person. She regularly visited her parents while they were alive  
and spent many hours helping her mother clean the house, shop, do other chores and  
just talk with her parents

Sunday dinner was a regular occurrence and since both sides of her family were quite  
large, they always included lots of Aunts Uncles and Cousins

She regularly visited and spoke with all her family and after her parents and most Aunts/Uncles passed she kept in regular contact with all her cousins. In fact, as Ernie's sister Loretta would say, Ernie served as a hub for family communications

Ernie loved to buy clothes, for children

If you knew Ernie and mentioned to her you or one of your children was going to have or had a baby, you could expect a gift bag of clothes and a card welcoming the baby into the world

Ernie also loved greeting cards. And not just for Birthdays Christmas or Easter. St. Patrick's Valentines Day, Halloween, Thanksgiving, grade promos, summer vacation, you name it, Ernie had a card and gift ready to be mailed.

Ernie's other special loves besides Michael and I were her nieces: Laurie, Kerri, Lisa, Caitlin (rest in peace) and Ziren

Ernie was also Lisa, Caitlin and Ziren's Godmother

She loved her nieces beyond compare and spent many hours playing games, singing Bye Bye Birdie songs with them and attending their music concerts and Girl Scout sleepovers.

And then there were the PICTURES

Ernie loved taking pictures of her nieces so much she bought several cameras and iPhones of increasing storage memory for them

To this day we still have several storage tubs of pictures, a giant Snapfish account and a home PC that stores thousands more pictures

As the girls got older, they would run away when Aunt Ernie took out her camera.

Then as they got older still, they wondered why AE was taking more pictures of Ziren than of them

Because Aunt Ernie would say, "Ziren lets me take pictures of her"

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It's hard to believe but Michael did have to relinquish his position in Ernie's heart with the birth of Michael and Michelle's two boys Jackson and Noah

She loved them both fully and totally

She would play any game with them, animate any toy, watch any movie over and over and tell them made up bedtime stories based on characters her own Father would use to tell stories to her. I can't remember the character names except the names of the last two original characters Ernie created were the little Old Man and little Old Lady

Their initial story was based on an actual event where the little old man was trying to turn off a smoke detector alarm when the ladder he was on collapsed sending him into the wall at the same time the firemen responding to the 911 call of fire entered the house while the smoke detector continued to blare EVACUATE EVACUATE (actually it said Fire, Fire) but the little old lady telling the story couldn't remember it said Fire so she used EVACUATE instead

Since the event occurred during the early morning before our flight to see Michael and his family in Florida GRANDMA Ernie (she loved being called that) created the little old man/old lady stories which the boys especially Noah loved

as the little old man was always getting into dangerous situations that required the firemen to rescue him and always ended with the Fireman saying

"Aren't you the little old man and little old lady who had to EVACUATE your home before?"

Didn't you two learn anything?"

The last story Ernie was working on was about a Celebrity cruise event with the little old/little old lady getting pulled aside by security

Right Jackson and Noah?

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Ernie had a significant and very successful work career and ended her active work life with over 37 years of professional meritorious and distinguished service with District Council 37 Health and Security Plan as the Executive Assistant to the Administrator In that role Ernie was responsible for the Prescription Drug program especially with coordinating the actions of Physicians Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Third

Party providers all for the benefit of over 100,000 DC37 members and NYC Employees.

One of Ernie's specialties was helping individual members in reconciling eligibility and usage issues

If you were a member and had trouble with obtaining a medication that had been denied by the third-party benefit Administrator, you could find no better Advocate than Ernie to help you. Ernie used her vast knowledge of the Benefit Plan rules and policy, closely worked with the prescribing physician to follow those guidelines then cajoled, mediated, and charmed the third-party representatives to bend to her decisions. Her strategy and execution were flawless, and the members received their needed medications without exception

Because of the multitude of complex rules and procedures of the Prescription Drug Program and the never-ending stream of changes to those rules and procedures, Ernie was tasked the developing and publishing a Quarterly Newsletter describing and explaining those technical changes in generally understood terms to members and providers. She further expanded the Newsletter to contain tips on how members could better utilize the Drug Benefit for the economic benefit of themselves and the Plan. The Newsletter was an immediate success.

After her retirement in January 2005 Ernie and I moved from Brooklyn to New Jersey where Ernie continued to remain active and engaged in volunteer activities at her new Parish and local community

Ernie belonged to and worked actively in the St. Bernadette Parish where she regularly attended weekday Mass and served as a Eucharistic Minister and member of the Church Choir. Ernie's social service background was also energized at St. Bernadette, and she became an active member of the Social Concerns Committee whose mission was to conduct clothing, food and gift collection drives and distribution to the less fortunate. She helped prepare labels for the gifts to be collected and when the collections were finished Ernie stayed behind to help sort, pack and distribute the gifts. Ernie also prepared part of a monthly meal for the Salvation Army food program in Perth Amboy where Ernie's specialty was meat loaf. Surprised Michael?

Ernie was also a member of the Church liturgical decorating committee. In addition to ordering the flowers and decorating the Church during Christmas, Lent, Passion and Easter seasons (including draping the crosses outside the Church) Ernie also collected, washed and ironed the linens used at each mass.

Ernie was a member and officer in the St. Bernadette Rosarian Society. She held the title of Recording Secretary and in that role documented and published the proceedings of each Monthly Rosarian meeting.

To round out her activities at St. Bernadette Ernie helped clean the church building as part of the St. Bernadette Cleaning Crew each week on Friday with special cleanup programs conducted before and after all Church holiday masses.

Not many people know but it was Ernie who started the Gardening group at St. Bernadette

It began when Ernie couldn't bear to see all the beautiful flowers displayed during the Easter season go to waste. So, she decided she would plant the bulbs from the Easter flowers (the daffodils hyacinths tulips Easter lilies) in all the planting areas around the church. She supplemented the bulbs with several bushes (hydrangea mops) she bought and planted

The Church grounds dazzled each year at Easter and still does.

Obviously, it's no wonder why I endearingly referred to her as The Church Mouse on many occasions

When a prior director of St. Bernadette Social Concerns Committee became too ill to continue all her activities, she asked Ernie to fill in for her as a Board member and Recording Secretary for the Interfaith Network of Care which provides medical transportation, home visits and other social services to residents of Middlesex County. Ernie ably, enthusiastically and professionally performed that role for several years until her own illness forced her to relinquish her role

Ernie also served at the St. Mary South Amboy Parish Food Bank along with other members of St. Bernadette Social Concerns where she would regularly fill shopping

bags with essential grocery items for the underserved in that Community  
Ernie loved being outdoors and we regularly walked in many of the Middlesex and Monmouth County trail systems. Ernie was always excited to see the spring blossoms summer flowers and fall colors

She was an enthusiastic hiker and wasn't intimidated by steep inclines. Hike in Hartshorne Woods Park and you'll understand. Ernie would regularly walk for 3 miles or more a day and we circumnavigated the Manasquan Reservoir 5 mile trail several times Because of her love for hiking the trails, Ernie also volunteered as a Monmouth County Park System volunteer

In this role Ernie was part of a team that repaired and maintained the County's trail system in addition to creating new trails and eliminating unsafe ones.

Ernie's specialty was the lopper and pruner

She also assisted in Deadheading Lillie's and removing invasive species at Deep Cut Gardens

With her leftover energy, Ernie and I would pick up roadside garbage along the streets leading into our community because Ernie couldn't stand litter and did something about it.

I kept the garbage grabber tool in my car along with several trash bags because you never knew when some roadside debris would annoy her

Ernie loved to travel especially to see Michael, Michelle, Jackson and Noah in Florida where she participated with the boys in having fun at Disney Universal and Busch Gardens in Orlando and Tampa

Ernie enjoyed traveling in the US to several cities and glaciers in Alaska on cruises, Ernie visited San Francisco, Los Angeles, Anaheim, Big Sur, Newport Beach, Balboa Island, Laguna Beach, Monterrey, Carmel, Hollywood, Burbank and Beverly Hills where I urged her to shop for something for herself, but she refused because the prices there were very expensive. If Ernie were shopping for someone else that would be a different story. Ernie visited Las Vegas, Scottsdale Arizona Albuquerque (where she hiked a trail in the Sandia Mountains up to an elevation of 11,000+ feet) , Santa Fe and the Topaz trail, Ernie twice visited Chicago and New Orleans where Bourbon Street was not for her but the French Quarter (especially the antique shops, Brennans , Pat O'Brians , streetcar rides, Riverwalk, walks along the levees were more to her liking, Ernie visited Bar Harbor Maine where she walked to the island at low tide and made it back before the horn announcing high tide blew, toured Acadia National park, loved the electric tram service that took you everywhere you wanted to go especially to the park restaurant that had afternoon popovers,

Ernie loved her visit to Newport RI where she hiked the Cliff Walk around the mansions and even got to tour one. Ernie was hoping to see one of the mansions on the Gilded Age HBO show.

Ernie loved the Adirondacks and visited Lake George and Saratoga and closer to home Ernie loved the Shawangunk mountains and walked the Lake Minnewaska trails multiple times always stopping to visit Pine Bush on the way home because that is where she spent many summers at the family summer home with her parents, sister, aunts' uncles and cousins

Her favorite US travel spot was Washington DC where she visited the WH and Congress, took the DC Metro like a pro, walked the Mall and all its historic sites multiple times, visited Arlington Cemetery to see President Kennedy's grave and the changing of the guard at the Tomb of the Unknowns, loved to visit and attend Mass at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception along with visits to all the Grottoes of the Blessed Virgin Mary and to the Franciscan Mission where you can visit replicas of some of the special sites in the Holy Land. Ernie loved staying in Alexandria Va the best. She loved the restaurants, old Towne atmosphere and bustling waterfront There was a free tram service to and from the Metro to the Town shops and Waterfront, but you guessed it, Ernie would rather walk and browse along the streets of Alexandria at her own pace

Ernie was an international traveler too. She visited Rome Naples Several Greek Islands Santorini and Athens Acropolis and Platka were her favorites, Ernie loved Ephesus Turkey, and especially enjoyed her visit to the home where St. John brought the

Blessed Mother after the Crucifixion of Jesus as she attended Mass there. Ernie visited Malta, the Israel towns of Nazareth, Church of the Beatitudes, Capernaum where she sat in the Temple Jesus read the Torah at and saw the excavation of Peter's Mother-in-law's home being undertaken, Ernie visited the Sea of Galilee and Jordan River where she took off her shoes and walked through the waters. Ernie visited Bethlehem and Jerusalem including visits to the Mount of Olives and Gethsemane, Ernie Walked the Via Dolorosa to the church of the Holy Sepulcher where she revered the actual site of Christ's Crucifixion

Ernie had a smile and a kind word for everyone she met, worked with, sang with, or corresponded with. Ernie had an empathetic ear and was always concerned about the other person. Ernie made friends quickly and in some of the most unlikely places. Just ask any waitress/waiter who served her, doctor/nurse who treated her, the dry cleaner, gas station attendants (who called her Mum, Mommy), her mail carrier, you name it. Everyone loved Ernie and that Amazing smile.

Ernie was an avid gardener. in the Spring, Summer and Fall you could always find her outside in her gardens, signature floppy hat on her head, planting, weeding, deadheading, cutting back, pruning, collecting her tomatoes and giving them to her many friends, and of course chatting up anyone who passed her way.

Ernie contributed a significant part of her income to essential social and medical causes of the present day especially St. Jude Children's Hospital where cancer care is provided to children & and room & board for their family at no charge , Save the Children where she funded the annual support for a single child multiple times and funded the actual building of a family home in Haiti, Smile Train where lip deformations in children are repaired, World Central Kitchen who provide worldwide disaster relief, Food for the Poor which provides food for children, Catholic Relief Services and Catholic Charities USA which provide relief services for major Worldwide and US disasters that occur among numerous other social and religious organizations especially EWTN which she regularly viewed. and Interfaith Network of Care and St. Bernadette Social Concerns where she volunteered.

At the local level Ernie supported Feeding Middlesex County, Catholic Charities Diocese of Metuchen and Brooklyn/ Queens, and No Child Hungry were her favorites Many people belong to and contribute to one Parish. Ernie contributed to FOUR whose pastors and parishioners helped support her spiritual needs during the Pandemic and those of our own quarantine due to her illness through their prayers, visits and friendship: St. Lawrence, St. Bernadette, St. Joseph in Hillsboro and St. Thomas the Apostle in West Springfield Massachusetts

Ernie was especially thankful to Father Mark for his weekly visits to bring her Holy Communion, anointing and to have breakfast and speak with her. She especially enjoyed his stories about being a teenager/young adult in Philadelphia and the Jersey Shore (Ernie and I still call it the Beach). Father Mark also sent Ernie a plant each Christmas. She loved Father Desmond for the same reasons. Father Desmond was the ONLY ONE who could get Ernie to speak even during the terrible time the day before her first brain surgery. Father Hank who included her name in his Live-streamed masses from Hillsborough both during and after the Pandemic and who communicated regularly with her via email. Ernie especially loved Father Hank's thought provoking and highly informative homilies and Father Jack from Massachusetts who Live-streamed a shorter version of the daily Mass when she began to lose her span of attention and hospital interruptions made it impossible to attend Mass as a whole. Father Jack also sent Ernie a personal religious Healing Mass card.

Another priest who held a special place in Ernie's heart was Father Joe. Ernie met Father Joe at St. Bernadette and Father Joe kept in contact with Ernie via telephone where he prayed for and with her during her illness. Ernie supported Father's Joe's Clinician Africa via gifts to CAFRICO Inc. Yes, or No?

Throughout all the terrible days of her illness and quarantines Ernie never failed to attend Mass (Live-streamed or in person) and to receive Holy Communion or Spiritual Communion as necessary. She always had a comfort cross a good friend had given her at the very beginning of her illness, in her hands when she went to sleep at night. Ernie said her Rosary daily with me and in her final days when she couldn't speak or spoke only in numbers and letters, Ernie still managed to mostly recite the Our Father and Hail Mary.

Ernie also financially supported the Hospitals that cared for her during her illnesses by contributing to their support Foundations

Ernie is the strongest woman I have ever known. Ernie battled her cancer for 4 1/2 years and bounced back time after time even when that cancer caused bone fractures in her Inferior Pubic Ramus bone, two fractures in her Pelvic bone and the most painful one a fractured Coccyx bone where she could barely walk from the couch where she slept to a club chair to the bathroom and to the car for doctor appointments and treatments. Sitting was extremely painful, and Ernie had to use a donut as a cushion in order to sit anywhere

But with fierce determination Ernie resolved to walk again each time and through both home physical therapy and office physical therapy Ernie religiously did her muscle strengthening exercises, forced herself to stand then walk using a walker at first, then a cane and finally just holding my arm. She also used her floor swifter as a cane, and she would go through our home cleaning the floor as she strengthened her legs

Ernie underwent Chemotherapy two times, hysterectomy surgery, 44 radiation treatments for the 1st cancer 7 out of 9 for the 2nd which because of the Keytruda immunotherapy she was undergoing caused a massive lung reaction that significantly reduced her breathing capacity leading to 10 days of hospital forced air and steroid treatment and 10 days stay in a Rehab Center to regain her breathing capacity and walking capability again. Ernie also underwent brain surgery for the 3rd cancer and went home four days after that major surgery

With each knockdown Ernie got up and walked again.

Starting with .1m then increasing over time to the mile she was walking mostly without help just before her 4th battle with the cancer beast

Even though Ernie was willing to undergo cancer treatment for the 4th time she found out other cancers had developed in her body

She was not willing to battle the beast a 5th time and I supported her decision to stop the fight. Enough was Enough

Ernie fought the good fight

Ernie finished the race

And Ernie NEVER lost her Faith.

She earned every crown of righteousness she found waiting for her in Heaven

Ernie is the most loving, caring, remarkable, talented and strong woman most people didn't know at all.

I may have erred when I said a bright light had gone out of the world with Ernie's passing. In fact, it's more like a total blackout has occurred

In my heart anyway

Ernie, I miss you deeply with every beat of my heart and every breath I take.

As all my greeting cards to Ernie stated: To the One I Love, You're still the One

I Love You