

## Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy

*By Boston Women's Heritage Trail*

<http://bwht.org/north-end/>

Rose Fitzgerald was a North End girl. She was born here, baptized here, and her funeral mass was held here. Although she did not live in the North End for long, throughout her life Rose remained rooted in her North End/Irish heritage and had great pride in her North End neighborhood roots.

Rose's father, John Francis Fitzgerald, was born and raised in the North End, the fourth son of ten boys. When he married Rose's mother, Mary Josephine Hannon, they settled in the North End where their first three children were born. Rose, the oldest of six children, was born on July 22, 1890 in a home at 4 Garden Court. She was named after her paternal grandmother, Rose Mary Murray Fitzgerald. Rose was christened at the same church where her father had been christened: Old St. Stephens Church, 401 Hanover Street. The marker on the church commemorating her baptism was dedicated by her son Senator Ted Kennedy in 1996.

Nicknamed, "Honey Fitz", John Fitzgerald had a long political career. Rose started campaigning with her father when she was five years old; from then on she always loved campaigning. Honey Fitz served on the Boston City Council, in the Massachusetts State Senate and in the US House of Representatives. He was Mayor of Boston from 1906-1908 and again from 1910-1914, the first American-born Irish-American elected Mayor of Boston. He played a key role in the development of the subway system, Fenway Park and the Franklin Park zoo.

Rose first attended school in 1895 at St. John's Catholic School at 9 Moon Street. She could walk just around the corner to get to school. In 1896 her family moved to Concord for six years, and then to Dorchester. In 1906, when her father was Mayor, Rose graduated from Dorchester High School. She was presented at a debutante party with 450 guests in attendance. In 1910 Rose graduated from Manhattanville College of the Sacred Heart.

In 1914, Rose married Joseph Patrick Kennedy, an East Boston native and Harvard University graduate who became a multimillionaire. They had nine children: Joseph Jr, John, Rosemary, Kathleen, Eunice, Patricia, Robert, Jean, and Edward. At first they lived in Brookline, then moved to Bronxville, NY. They summered in their Hyannis Port compound on Cape Cod.

As a mother, Rose was known to rule with "a velvet glove and an iron hand." Ever an enthusiastic political activist, she campaigned throughout her life for her children as they ran for office. She lived through the greatest of triumphs and the greatest of tragedies with her children. She was admired for her faith and perseverance in the face of these tragedies.

Rose died in 1995 at age 105. In recognition of her roots, her funeral mass was celebrated at St. Stephen's Church. In 2009 her son Ted's funeral cortege passed by St Stephen's in homage to his mother and those same North End roots.