



## Fern R. Giambatista-Butler

March 27, 1933 - March 18, 2021

Fern R. Giambatista – Butler, 87, of Camillus passed away on March 18th 2021 just days shy of her 88th birthday at Syracuse Home in Baldwinsville. Born in Syracuse on March 27, 1933 to James and Pearl (Pink) Roberts, she graduated from Central H.S. and Tusculum University in Tennessee. She formerly lived in Baldwinsville, Long Beach, Long Island and owned homes in the Canary Islands and Newfoundland, Canada.

Among the many places where Fern gave her time, energy and enthusiasm were Zonta International (where she was a long-time member and held many positions including modeling in their annual fashion show fundraisers), Syracuse Home Association (former board member and president), Daughters of the American Revolution, Corinthian Foundation (former board member), American Legion Auxiliary, Toastmasters (Distinguished Toastmaster Award), Syracuse Stage, Syracuse Symphony, Cat Coalition, and the Wagon Wheel Senior Center. At one time, she taught an 8-week course for OCS high school students on public speaking. Fern was an avid SU fan and holder of basketball & football season tickets. She was a member of Grace Episcopal Church in Baldwinsville.

After college, Fern worked for Mohawk Airlines as a stewardess and was later promoted to head of the stewardess program. She moved to New York Airways in 1961 where she pioneered the helicopter stewardess program. Fern later worked as a Public Relations Manager for the NY/NJ Port Authority at JFK Airport where she greeted incoming dignitaries and royalty in a high-security hangar such as Jacqueline Kennedy, Prince Charles and Princess Grace of Monaco. At one time, she supervised 50 “Golden Girls” whose summer college work study was to assist arriving passengers at the JFK International Arrival Building. Mrs. G., as she was called, was always there to lend a hand to the out of state girls who often needed help finding a place to live in NYC.

She was predeceased by her parents and siblings Richard H. Roberts, Betty Roberts Litzenberger, Constance Doris Roberts Moore; as well as her husbands; Joseph Giambatista in 1963 and Norman Butler in 1986.

She is survived by her nieces and nephews; Barbara (Greg) Grover, John (Barbara) Litzenberger, Berwyn (Robert) Moore Brooker, Devi (Gordon) Moore Chancey, Karen Smith, Marilyn (Gene) Wedel; numerous great nieces/nephews and great-great nieces/nephews. She's also survived by her Caretaker Tim Bressette and her cat Missy.

Services will be May 15th at 10:30 am at B.L. Bush & Sons Funeral Home, 10 Genesee St. Camillus. Burial will be held in Oakwood Cemetery, Syracuse.

Contributions in lieu of flowers may be made to McHarrie Life Foundation c/o Syracuse Home, 7740 Meigs Rd, Baldwinsville, NY 13027 or online at <http://www.mcharrielife.org/donate> or Grace Episcopal Church, P.O. Box 6, Baldwinsville, NY 13027.

The family appreciates the care that was provided by Syracuse Home to Fern.

Please sign her guestbook at <http://www.BLBUSH.com>

# Cemetery

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**Oakwood Cemetery**  
940 Comstock Ave  
Syracuse, NY, 13210

# Events

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**MAY 15** **Celebration of Life** 10:30AM

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B.L. Bush & Sons Funeral Home  
10 W. Genesee Street, Camillus, NY, US, 13031

# Comments

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“ 2 files added to the album Memories Album



**B.L. Bush & Sons Funeral Home / Monuments** - May 11 at 07:24 PM

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“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



**B.L. Bush & Sons Funeral Home / Monuments** - April 29 at 12:59 PM

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“ Fern was an amazing woman and I was proud to know her through Zonta of Syracuse. We shared a love of cats also.  
My condolences to her family.

**Carol Money** - March 28 at 02:03 PM

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“ Thinking of you today on your birthday, knowing you are no longer in any pain and walking tall! God bless you for all the kindness you shared with so many. You will truly be missed. Tim and Nancy



**Nancy Prall and Tim Bressette** - March 27 at 02:42 PM



“ Zonta International District 2 mourns the loss of our long-time member and friend, Fern Butler. We convey condolences to her beloved family and also to the members of the Zonta Club of Syracuse, where Fern belonged, had many friends, and worked for the empowerment of women and girls since joining Zonta nearly 32 years ago. Fern was an energetic, bright and engaging member who supported her club's activities even when circumstances prevented her from attending meetings in person. That kind of loyalty, dedication and passion are treasured qualities in a Zonta member. She will be missed!

On Behalf of Zonta District 2,  
Governor Theresa Harris  
[www.ZontaDistrict2.org](http://www.ZontaDistrict2.org)

PS Fern often mentioned her caretaker with deep appreciation - you helped keep her 'on the go,' accomplishing her goals and for this, we thank you!

**Theresa Harris** - March 26 at 02:00 PM

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“ I have known Fern for the past 30+ years through the Zonta Club of Syracuse. Fern helped to organize the Zonta Lunch Bunch at the Corinthian Club for years.

She was a gracious hostess each year in the summer, hosting at her lovely home the Zonta Club of Syracuse Picnic. She hosted many a foreign Zontian from another country at her home.

Fern modeled in every Syracuse Zonta Foundation fashion show fundraiser. She was such a wonderfully warm and caring person, smiling all the time... She will be missed by many! I am proud to have known her and call her my friend. Rest in peace my friend.

Candace B. Edwards  
Past President  
Zonta Club of Syracuse

Past Governor  
Zonta International District 2

**Candace B. Edwards** - March 25 at 10:39 PM

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“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



**B.L. Bush & Sons Funeral Home / Monuments** - March 23 at 09:58 AM

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“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



**Kelly Rossi** - March 23 at 07:19 AM

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“ 11 files added to the album Memories Album



**B.L. Bush & Sons Funeral Home / Monuments** - March 22 at 06:25 PM

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“ On behalf of McHarrie Life (Syracuse Home) we would like the family and friends of Fern to know that she was a treasure of this organization; a dear friend to us who will always be remembered..

Fern became involved with Syracuse Home almost upon the relocation from Townsend Street, Syracuse, to Baldwinsville. A long time auxiliary member and active volunteer, Fern likewise served on different Boards over the years.. Always a well-connected lady, Fern was a tremendous public relations advocate, always talking about the organization, and recruiting friends and acquaintances to the cause.

Speaking personally, Fern was my neighbor long ago when my husband and I first moved to Baldwinsville. Always one who enjoyed healthy walks, she would often stop by our house to visit our black Lab, and later our new-born son. I was so delighted when our paths crossed again when I began working at the Home in 1995.

Over the years when she would attend meetings, she would always stop by my office, often with small toys or little trinkets for my children. I share these personal reflections because they are a testament to the person she was: kind, giving, keenly aware of others.

Since the beginning of the Foundation's event, An Afternoon of Theater, at Syracuse Stage, Fern was our one-woman ticket-master! For years she sold dozens of tickets, boosting revenue for the event.

We will miss our Fern.

With Sympathy,

Audrey Gibbs  
Director of Philanthropy

P.S. Thoroughly enjoyed the photos!

**Audrey Gibbs** - March 22 at 12:17 PM

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“ Audrey Gibbs lit a candle in memory of Fern R. Giambatista-Butler



**Audrey Gibbs** - March 22 at 11:46 AM



“ My condolences to Fern's family!! Quite an amazing woman with her world travels and high security clearance that allowed her to extend a warm American welcome to so many famous and historic persons!

Loved the helicopter photo!

Looking forward to a joyful reunion this summer!!!

Sincerely,

Gordon Chancey

**Gordon Chancey** - March 21 at 10:58 AM