



Rita Y. (Kirby) Erkkila, of Fitchburg

December 11, 1922 - December 30, 2025

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Rita Y. (Kirby) Erkkila, age 103, was a longtime resident of Fitchburg, MA. She peacefully passed away on Tuesday, December 30, 2025, at home in Bedford, NH surrounded by loved ones following a brief illness.

One hundred and three years is a miraculous and extraordinary life. There is no greater gift than the love and kindness Rita shared with everyone she met, making memories and touching so many lives over the years. With a century of wisdom, she taught by example, led with grace and strength, and cared for all with an open heart. Whether she was baking, knitting, dancing, sewing, telling stories, volunteering with the Young Performers, or simply being with family and friends, she radiated joy and love. A wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, sister, aunt and friend, she was deeply loved by all who knew her. Although her body no longer shares this life, her soul has gone home to be with our Lord, and her memory will live on forever in the hearts and minds of all who loved her.

She leaves behind her daughter, Rev. Sharon A. Sargent, with whom she lived in Bedford, NH; her grandson, David H. Marble, and his wife, Michelle, along with their seven children - Matthew, Stephen, Timothy, Rachel, Sarah, Joshua, and Andrew, of Byron, GA; her granddaughter Christie Simonetti and

her husband, Robert, and their son, Robert (Robbie), of Thornton, CO; her granddaughter Sara Bohling and her husband, Christopher, and their two daughters Eliza and Maddie, of Hampton, NH; two nieces, Marie LeDuc of CO and Kathy Berger of CA, and four nephews, Paul and Denis Putala of CT and Robert and Kenneth Arsenault of MA.

She was predeceased by her husband of 70 years, Eino A. Erkkila, who passed away on February 17, 2013.

Born in Gardner, MA, on December 11, 1922, Rita was the daughter of the late Henry and Lillian (Monette) Kirby. She was also predeceased by her three sisters and their husbands, Viola and Albert Vadney, Irene and Joseph Putala, and Loretta and Fred Arsenault; her niece and niece's husband Dorothy (Vadney) and Edward Zibkowski, and their daughter Joanne Zelenski; and her godchild and nephew Ronald Arsenault.

Private services for Rita will be held at a later date. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that you to be kind to one another and to pass her love and grace forward in her memory, always showing forgiveness.

Tribute Wall

KC

“ Sharon, Please accept my heartfelt condolences. Rita was treasure in our younger years. Before you were born, she welcomed us older children into her home. Many happy memories including a day trip to Mt. Monadnok, hicking to the top. I know the Good Lord welcomed her at heaven’s gate. 🙏🙏🙏

Kathleen (Cackett) Conry - January 06 at 04:23 PM

TM

Dear Sharon,

Sending condolences to you and your family. I have wonderful childhood memories of your mom directing our dance routines in preparation for the Jimmy Fund recitals held at your house during the summer. Such wonderful memories of growing up with such wonderful neighbors on Clifton St. May you find peace in knowing that your parents are reunited in heaven.

Tina (Gallo) Murray

Tina (Gallo) Murray - April 13 at 11:22 PM