



## Mrs. Laura E. (McCann) Gelfuso

December 1, 1928 - December 1, 2018

UTICA - Mrs. Laura E. (McCann) Gelfuso was reunited with her husband when she passed away on Saturday, December 1, 2018 on her 90th birthday. She was surrounded by her loving family at the time of her passing at Upstate Medical University Hospital. Born in Binghamton on December 1, 1928, Laura was the daughter of the late Frank and Catherine (Slater) McCann. Raised and educated locally, she attended Utica Free Academy and was a graduate of the Utica School of Commerce. When her daughter was young, Laura continued her education at the Utica School of Practical Nursing where she earned her credentials as a Licensed Practical Nurse. On July 30, 1955, after an 8 year courtship, she married Anthony G. "Tony" Gelfuso at St. Mary of Mt. Carmel Church. They first met at a dance hall where they realized that music and dancing were the common threads woven into their relationship. They were always together and Laura was blessed with a man who supported her dreams and desires during their life together. Earlier this year, on July 11, 2018, her beloved Tony passed away.

Laura began her working career as a secretary at the Utica Uniform Company. She also held a position at Griffiss Air Force Base. She then dedicated her energies to caring for her daughter. When her daughter reached school age, Laura returned to the workforce and held positions at the Boston Store, St. Elizabeth Hospital, and lastly at Utica Mutual. She worked not only to fulfill her passions and potential in life, but also to provide for her daughter's education. Laura was an independent woman, ahead of her time, and she never followed the traditional roles for women of her era. She was non-judgmental in her critical thinking. Her conversation was colorful and concise, especially when she was shopping, and she became convincingly animated and accommodating to others in making their choices. When she was a young girl, she helped raise her brothers because her father was ill and her mom had to work, and she managed the household exceptionally well. In life, she excelled in English, mathematics, and shorthand. As a matter of fact, she was excellent in all her endeavors. She tried to establish similar standards for her daughter of whom she was so very proud. Her sensitivity and wisdom were comforting to her daughter, and Laura treasured the ties that bound them. She celebrated her daughter's accomplishments and dreamed and hoped and shared thoughts with her through every phase of her education and preparation for a profession. She

encouraged her to pursue the sciences and realized she had the grit, persistence, and ability to become a physician and scientist.

A true believer, Laura had faith in her Catholic creed. She held to the philosophy that “what is meant to be, will be”, and she trusted in the Lord’s love and guidance; she was an inspiration to her family and those who loved her. She was very active in the Order of the Eastern Star and she sang and directed the choir at St. Peter’s Church for over 50 years! Laura was a gifted vocalist and a true soprano. She was trained at the Parker School of Music and was a member of the Utica Opera Guild. She visited nursing homes and performed for the residents to uplift their spirits. She also raised her beautiful voice as a member of the Coro di Italiano Singing Choir, and was one of the founders and conductor of Yesterday’s Senior Ensemble whose members share a passion for making music and having fun. Laura was very charitable with her God-given, vibrant voice and she was once scouted by the Metropolitan Opera House at the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, but her life took a different direction. Her family came first and her daughter was the focal point of her life. The grandchildren were an even greater source of joy for her to embrace and it was a blessing to have a son-in-law to love and be loved by.

Laura enjoyed attending the Slater family reunions held in the town of Candor, New York where scores of happy childhood memories were made. She was a great camper, especially back in the day with her Beta Sigma Phi Sorority sisters, and when her daughter was of age, they went from tenting, and then progressed to camping, until the tornado touched down at Delta Lake! Laura had an affinity for animals, and families of felines would find their way to her porch where they would be fed; it was then they knew a new home. Squirrels sought her out for peanuts, and birds feasted at her feeder and bathed in her bowls of bright water. She was intrinsically connected to God’s creatures and could communicate with them.

She formed a personal relationship with each of her grandchildren and taught them what love was. Nothing was better than a hug from Grandma. She was affectionate, generous of spirit, and family oriented. She spent quality time reminiscing about years past, and more recently, family vacations with her daughter, son-in-law, and grandchildren were so memorable. Dancing was a form of entertainment of choice for Laura. She could dance to many genres of music, and she loved to spend weekends dancing at local dance halls in decades past. Dino’s was a destination where she and her husband as her partner would dance the night away. She especially loved the company of her brother, Dick. They frequented the dance floors of many area halls and restaurants and were members of the American Legion Post #221, and the former Moose Lodge and Sons of Italy Lodge. But she also enjoyed the serenity of the Adirondacks, Nick’s Lake, Whetstone Gulf State Park, Delta Lake, Shadow Brook Campground, Pixley Falls, and Letchworth State Park as peaceful places to reflect on her life and the beauty created by the Divine. She even remodeled her back porch, calling it her “Adirondack Room”. Some of her ideas were

derived from HGTV, where Chip and Joanna were her favorite hosts. As many of us, QVC was also one of her favorite pastimes.

Laura is survived by her daughter, Catherine "Cathy" Vernon, MD, PhD and her husband Jeffrey Vernon. Cathy serves as the Associate Chief of Staff for Graduate Medical Education and Research Compliance Officer, and a practicing Internal Medicine Hospitalist at the Syracuse Veterans Affairs Medical Center; and her grandchildren who thought there was nothing better than a hug and a song from grandma: triplets Dr. Lauren D. Vernon, Pharm.D., Brenton J. Vernon, B.S. Biology, and Ian William Anthony "Billy" Vernon, B.S. in Accounting; and her brothers and sister-in-law, Ronald McCann, Thomas and Nancy McCann, and Richard McCann. She will also be remembered by her nieces, especially Carol McCann Jablonski, nephews, great-nieces, great-nephews, cousins, sisters-in-law, Maxine Gelfuso; and her friends, Beverly Piechowicz, Marie Heistand, and the Pagliaro family who were her beloved neighbors. She was predeceased by her brothers and sisters-in-law, Frank and Rose "Ruby" McCann, and Harry McCann; and her in-laws, Theresa McCann, Diane McCann, and John G. Gelfuso.

The family is grateful to Dr. Fatme Allam, Dr. Manta, Dr. Ioana Amzuta, Dr. Martinez, Dr. Teresa Gentile, and Dr. Ajoy Roy; the nurses and staff of the MICU at Upstate University Hospital, and Dr. Domenic Aiello. All have provided medical expertise, comfort, and care to Laura and her loved ones.

Visitation will be held Thursday from 4:00-7:00 at the Eannace Funeral Home, Inc., 932 South St., corner of Hammond Ave. Laura's funeral service and Celebration of Life will commence on Friday morning at 10:30 from the funeral home and at 11:30 at St. Mary of Mt. Carmel/Blessed Sacrament Parish where her Mass of Christian Burial will be offered by Rev. James Cesta. Memorial donations in Laura's honor may be made to the American Cancer Society, 100 Lomond Court, Utica, NY 13502 or online at <https://www.cancer.org>; envelopes will also be available at the funeral home. Committal prayers and Entombment will take place in Calvary Mausoleum.

# Cemetery

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# Events

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## Calvary Mausoleum

2407 Oneida Street

Utica, Ny,

**DEC 6** **Visitation** 04:00PM - 07:00PM

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Eannace Funeral Home, Inc.

932 South Street, Utica, NY, US

**DEC 7** **Funeral Service** 11:30AM

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St. Mary of Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament Parish

648 Jay St, Utica, NY, US, 13501

# Comments

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“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Mrs. Laura E. (McCann) Gelfuso.



December 05 at 02:40 PM

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“ Brother Thomas and Family purchased the Crystal Cross Bouquet for the family of Mrs. Laura E. (McCann) Gelfuso.



**Brother Thomas and Family** - December 04 at 10:11 PM

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“ So sorry to hear of Laura's passing. She was a wonderful woman. We will miss seeing her outside.

Mr. and Mrs. Alfonse Nitti  
Utica, NY

**Gertrude M Nitti** - December 04 at 07:41 PM

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“ So sad to hear about Laura's passing. May she be in peace and join her beloved Tony. My thoughts go out to Cathy and all of Laura's family who loved her.  
Alan Goodman

**Alan Goodman** - December 03 at 10:22 PM