Good evening, distinguished guests, colleagues, friends, and family,

Tonight we gather to honor Eleanor “Ellie” Fitzgerald, and to mark a milestone that feels both inevitable and astonishing—inevitable because 32 years have a way of passing even when they are dense with work and purpose, and astonishing because Ellie’s presence has been so constant and steady that it is hard to imagine our days without it.

This is a black-tie evening, a formal setting worthy of the moment, and if you listen closely between the conversations you can hear the string quartet offering Debussy in the background.
It suits Ellie—elegant, precise, layered with quiet complexity.

When Ellie joined our company in 1994 as a financial analyst, she walked into a firm that was still learning how to measure its own ambitions.
She did not arrive with fanfare.
She arrived with a notebook, a set of questions, and the conviction that numbers are only as valuable as the clarity they bring to human decisions.
From the start, she set a tone we could build on.

Ellie’s time here charts a progression of responsibility that mirrors our own evolution.
Analyst to leader, steward to strategist, she became our Chief Financial Officer in 2012 and has served in that role with uncommon steadiness and rigor for fourteen years.
That span includes volatile markets, shifting regulatory landscapes, and the kind of growth that tests every seam in a company’s fabric.
Through it all, Ellie’s compass did not waver: integrity above all, transparency as practice—not posture—long-term stewardship, accountability, and a leadership style inclusive enough to bring voices to the table before the decisions were

made, not after.

There are moments that define a career, but Ellie’s manner was to let actions explain themselves.
In 2014, when we undertook IPO readiness, the work was exacting and, at times, unforgiving.
Roadmaps expanded, timetables compressed, and everyone learned that the phrase “close enough” does not belong in filings or in culture.
I remember a late evening in a windowless conference room, the whiteboard running out of space, and Ellie, calm as ever, saying, “We can’t announce a future we haven’t measured.”
That sentence shaped more than a milestone—it shaped how we understood the responsibility of becoming public: to disclose, to educate, and to be worthy of scrutiny.

In the years that followed, Ellie stewarded three strategic acquisitions—in 2016, 2019, and 2023—that were not just transactions but integrations of capabilities and people.
If you watched her during those months, you saw someone as interested in systems interoperability and purchase accounting as she was in employee handbooks, town halls, and the first day each acquired team walked into our building.
Integrations are where principles are tested.
Ellie never treated them as a page in a deck.
She treated them as a promise: we will do what we said we would do, and we will do it in full view.

Ellie’s effect has never been contained by the ledger.
She launched a company-wide financial literacy program that insisted finance is not a guarded language but a shared one.
I still meet engineers and designers who recall the first session they attended, where Ellie explained free cash flow using a household garden hose instead of a formula—what goes in, what comes out, what’s stored for tomorrow—and turned a topic some avoided into something they could own.

It changed how teams prepared budgets and argued for initiatives.

It changed how we thought about trade-offs.
It changed, in a quiet way, our posture toward responsibility.

Her commitment to transparency extended to how we talk about the world beyond our walls.
Ellie championed ESG reporting, not because it was fashionable, but because she saw it as part of long-term stewardship—how value is created and preserved.
Under her leadership, our reporting won the 2021 Governance Leadership Award.
That recognition mattered, yes, but it mattered most because it confirmed a belief Ellie held and practiced: that governance is not a set of footnotes; it is a living system of choices, controls, and candor.

Ellie’s influence on culture is also written in the communities she lifted.
As the executive sponsor of our Women in Finance network, she didn’t settle for a calendar of events.
She used the platform to ensure sponsorship, not just mentorship—to make sure names were in rooms when opportunities were allocated.
I have watched younger colleagues step to microphones at our all-hands and cite Ellie by name as the reason they believed their work would be seen on its merits.
There are careers in this room, and far beyond it, that trace back to a conversation Ellie made time for when no one was watching.

One story, in particular, says much about her character.
In 2020, when the world tilted and markets behaved like weather, Ellie hosted daily ten-minute briefings—just ten minutes, no drama, no spin.
She insisted on the sequence: facts first, then forecasts.
It sounds simple until you try to do it while fear is loud.
Those briefings became a ritual.
Investors repeated the phrase back to us.
Employees quoted it in project updates.

It grounded people who needed a point of reference when everything else seemed to be moving.
Ellie’s calm clarity did not just steady our balance sheet; it steadied us.

To speak of Ellie is to speak also of the person beyond the office.
There is the classical pianist who can sit at a keyboard and turn a room toward listening.
There is the rooftop herb gardener who can tell you which basil belongs with which tomatoes and who measures time by the growth of mint in June.
There is the museum-goer who does not rush through exhibitions, who reads the placards and somehow remembers them.
There is the mentor of first-generation college students who shows up not just with advice but with introductions, mock interviews, and sustained attention.
These are not hobbies in the disposable sense; they are ways of seeing—patient, careful, and deeply engaged.

No leader works alone.
Tonight we thank those who made this demanding chapter possible.
Robert, thank you for your partnership and patience through closing cycles and earnings weeks, for the weekends that shifted and the vacations that began a day late because something needed to be finished right.
Maya and Lucas, thank you for sharing your mother with us through years when her job did not confine itself to office hours.
Your support has been a quiet strength behind a very public role.
We are grateful.

We also recognize the teams Ellie has shaped—the Finance organization that built discipline without losing curiosity, the Investor Relations group that earned trust one conversation at a time, the Accounting and Controls teams that took pride in accuracy and never treated audits as burdens, the Corporate Development and Integration teams that learned how to bring companies together so that one plus one was actually more than two, the ESG working group that transformed reporting into relevance, and the Women in Finance network that turned aspiration into architecture.

You carried the work forward and made it visible.

There are details from Ellie’s tenure that would never make it into a press release but matter enormously.
I think of the quarterly close two years ago when a discrepancy surfaced in the final hours—a rounding error that signaled a deeper issue with a feed.
Others might have let the variance ride; Ellie did not.
She stayed until the cause was found and fixed, and not because she feared a headline, but because she believes that small cracks widen if you let them.
This is what integrity looks like when no one is keeping score.

And there were the lighter moments that remind us leadership can also be human.
After one particularly dense acquisition diligence session, someone asked Ellie what she did to unwind.
She said, completely straight-faced, “I turn on a metronome and see if I can slow my breathing to match it.”
The room laughed, of course, but I remember thinking: that’s exactly right—she finds tempo and brings it back to the rest of us.

Ellie, this next chapter belongs to you in a way none of the previous ones quite could.
We hope it brings you long mornings at the piano when the only deadline is the last note in a Debussy prelude.
We hope there are afternoons spent in museums where you pause as long as you like in front of a single painting without looking at your watch.
May your rooftop garden flourish, and may the basil forgive you if you plant it too early in the season.
May travel be unhurried, with room for detours and conversations you don’t schedule.

We also know you will not step away from impact.
You have always believed that the skills of finance—discernment, measurement, stewardship—belong in the service of community.

We look forward to seeing you bring that same clarity to nonprofit board service, where your insistence on “facts first, then forecasts” will be a gift.
And because you have devoted so much of yourself to mentoring first-generation students, it is fitting that your legacy continues in their journeys.

Which brings me to an announcement that reflects our gratitude and our belief in what endures.
In recognition of Ellie’s decades of leadership and her commitment to opening doors, we are establishing the Eleanor Fitzgerald Scholarship Fund.
This fund will support first-generation college students pursuing studies in finance and accounting, pairing financial support with mentorship from our teams.
It is our way of ensuring that the candor, discipline, and generosity Ellie brought to this company ripple outward for years to come.

I am often asked how to measure a career like Ellie’s.
The metrics are straightforward: growth sustained without shortcuts, investors who trust the numbers because they trust the people behind them, teams that stay and advance because they are seen and challenged in equal measure.
But there is another measure that is less easily charted: the texture of a place after a leader leaves.
Do we handle ambiguity with more clarity?
Do we tell the truth sooner?
Do we ask better questions?
Thanks to Ellie, I believe the answer here is yes.

As we celebrate, I would be remiss not to acknowledge that farewells can feel complicated.
But tonight is not an ending dressed in nostalgia; it is a handover made with confidence.
Ellie has built systems that work, teams that think, and a culture that understands why we do what we do.
That is the finest legacy any executive can leave.

Ellie, on behalf of everyone in this room and in the many rooms you have filled with your work—boardrooms, classrooms, conference rooms with broken markers, and the quiet corners where someone needed counsel—thank you.

Thank you for the consistency that steadied us and the questions that sharpened us.

Thank you for proving that rigor and kindness can sit at the same table.

Thank you for making “facts first, then forecasts” more than a line; you made it a discipline.

May the days ahead be generous and well-scored.

May the keys under your hands respond the way they always have, with music that gathers people close.

May the journeys you choose—near and far—bring you the kind of perspective you have given us over 32 years.

Robert, Maya, and Lucas, we look forward to seeing you in the front row of this next movement.

And to the quartet this evening, thank you for reminding us that precision can be beautiful.

Ellie, with profound respect and genuine joy, we celebrate you.

Your work here is complete, and its imprint will last.

On behalf of all of us—congratulations on a remarkable tenure, and welcome to a chapter defined not by deadlines, but by choice.

Thank you.