



Message from Ray Brown, Jr.

Ella Fitzgerald's Son

September 29, 2022

To Ella Fitzgerald Academy Students, Families and Staff,

I wish I was with you to share this message. To be able to say a large thank you in person to the Board of Education Trustees and the Superintendent of Schools for reaching out to me and allowing me to thank you on behalf of my mother.

I can only surmise the joy she would be feeling at hearing this name change. I can visualize a smile across her face and an extra bit of sparkle in her eyes, hearing her say, *"That's so wonderful."*

Home, the place we associate with being grounded and secure, is that special place for all of us. We never forget our roots, and you should know that no matter where in the world my mother went, she never, ever forgot her home, and it is nice to know that home hasn't forgotten her.

I have read that one of the goals of the Academy is to "empower our students and parents to reflect and prioritize their goals in order to gain their independence of working towards being a productive member of the workforce."

For your future prioritizations, my mother would encourage you by sharing one of her favorite thoughts, *"It isn't where you came from, it's where you're going that counts."*

With the dedication of your teachers and parents, the Ella Fitzgerald Academy will help you get to where you want to go.

"Just don't give up trying to do what you really want to do. Where there is love and inspiration, I don't think you can go wrong." That was more than an empty philosophy for my mother, it was her goal in helping her reach her dreams.

On behalf of our family and my mother's fans, I thank you for her and this superlative distinction. I will leave you with one more quote from *Ella Fitzgerald*, *"I guess what everyone wants more than anything else is to be loved. And to know that you loved me for my singing is too much for me. Forgive me if I don't have all the words. Maybe I can sing it and you'll understand."*

At this dedication today, you would have heard a wonderful song.

Peace and love to all!