

Notre Dame News

Notre Dame's Fitzgerald Institute promotes the common good through real estate

by Dennis Brown [\[link:/news/authors/dennis-brown/\]](https://news/authors/dennis-brown/)

June 18, 2019



The Fitzgerald Institute was created to educate and inspire our next generation of real estate professionals. Photo by Barbara Johnston/University of Notre Dame.

Mark Twain once said of real estate: “Buy land, they’re not making it anymore.”

What was true then remains so now. Real estate is the world’s largest asset class, valued at more than \$200 trillion. But it’s more than that: Real estate involves fundamental moral issues about how we invest in, build upon and develop this resource across the globe.

Researchers at the University of Notre Dame are studying all aspects of real estate, including core areas like investment and development, as well as how real estate can promote human flourishing and the common good, and this work has now been endowed with a \$15 million gift from alumnus Ward Fitzgerald and his wife, Kathy.

“With faculty from throughout the University, the [Fitzgerald Institute for Real Estate](https://realestate.nd.edu/) [\[link:https://realestate.nd.edu/\]](https://realestate.nd.edu/) is an interdisciplinary hub for world-class research in this field,” said [Rev. John I. Jenkins, C.S.C.](https://president.nd.edu/about-the-president/) [\[link:https://president.nd.edu/about-the-president/\]](https://president.nd.edu/about-the-president/), Notre Dame’s president. “With this extraordinary gift from Ward and Kathy, our institute is well situated to become a preeminent center for the study of real estate as a means to create places of lasting value. We are deeply grateful.”

The newly launched Fitzgerald Institute includes more than 40 faculty members whose research and teaching on real estate will inform the academy, industry and public policy, on issues including real estate capital markets, technology in real estate, affordable housing and church properties. Faculty come from Notre Dame’s [Mendoza College of Business](https://mendoza.nd.edu/) [\[link:https://mendoza.nd.edu/\]](https://mendoza.nd.edu/), [School of Architecture](https://architecture.nd.edu/) [\[link:https://architecture.nd.edu/\]](https://architecture.nd.edu/), [College of Arts and Letters](https://al.nd.edu/) [\[link:https://al.nd.edu/\]](https://al.nd.edu/), [Law School](https://law.nd.edu/) [\[link:https://law.nd.edu/\]](https://law.nd.edu/), [College of Engineering](https://engineering.nd.edu/) [\[link:https://engineering.nd.edu/\]](https://engineering.nd.edu/) and [Keough School of Global Affairs](https://keough.nd.edu/) [\[link:https://keough.nd.edu/\]](https://keough.nd.edu/).

“Notre Dame is poised to become a force in real estate education,” said [Dan Kelly](https://realestate.nd.edu/about/leadership/?id=daniel-b-kelly) [\[link:https://realestate.nd.edu/about/leadership/?id=daniel-b-kelly\]](https://realestate.nd.edu/about/leadership/?id=daniel-b-kelly), the institute’s faculty director. “There is high demand among our students for real estate courses and experiential learning opportunities. Due to the generosity of Ward and Kathy Fitzgerald, the institute is off to a great start, and we plan to hire additional faculty whose research and teaching will strengthen our academic reputation, contribute to our distinctive mission as a Catholic University, and expand our curriculum and degree programs for our students.”

The institute already offers courses for undergraduate, graduate and professional students, including a new [University-wide minor in real estate](https://realestate.nd.edu/education/undergraduate-minor/curriculum/) [\[link:https://realestate.nd.edu/education/undergraduate-minor/curriculum/\]](https://realestate.nd.edu/education/undergraduate-minor/curriculum/), which combines theoretical knowledge and practical skills in real estate through investment, development, design, construction, sales and marketing with an ethical emphasis.

“The Fitzgerald Institute was created to educate and inspire our next generation of real estate professionals,” said [Jason Arnold](https://realestate.nd.edu/about/leadership/?id=d-jason-arnold) [\[link:https://realestate.nd.edu/about/leadership/?id=d-jason-arnold\]](https://realestate.nd.edu/about/leadership/?id=d-jason-arnold), the institute’s managing director. “We offer a unique interdisciplinary program that brings together talent from across the whole University while leveraging an exceptional alumni network that is second to none. We believe that our approach will allow us to be a distinctive voice in real estate, help our students to secure top internships and job placements from Wall Street to Main Street, and, ultimately, advance the common good.”

Ward Fitzgerald earned his bachelor’s degree in business administration from Notre Dame and a master of business administration degree from Harvard University. He is chief executive officer and senior managing principal of Exeter Property Group, an international real estate private equity fund investment group and real estate development and operating company. He also serves on the advisory council for the Mendoza College of Business and the University’s Boldly Campaign Cabinet.



Fitzgerald family

He and Kathy, a graduate of Pennsylvania State University, are committed to community philanthropy focused on Catholic education, homelessness and medical research. They have funded medical research grants for the Ehlers-Danlos Society, Dysautonomia Society and numerous hospitals and universities, including the Casa Solievo della Sofferenza in San Giovanni Rotondo, Italy.

The Fitzgeralds are members of The Papal Foundation, and Ward served as a vice-chair for the World Meeting of Families in 2015, for which the couple was named Knight/Dame Grand Cross in the Order of Saint Gregory the Great. They have three children, Francie, a 2017 Notre Dame alumna; Maggie, a graduate of Northwestern University; and Teddy, a current Notre Dame student.

“Kathy and I are thrilled to support the University in its establishment of the Institute for Real Estate, particularly because the vision and strategy the administration has developed are revolutionary in its multi-college, interdisciplinary execution,” Ward Fitzgerald said. “It is clear the University is drawing from the depth and success of both its business and investment programs as well as its broad liberal arts tradition to develop what we hope will become the finest real estate program in the country.”

POSTED IN

- **University News** [\[link:/news/category/university-news/\]](#)

Related

Statement by Rev. John I. Jenkins, C.S.C., President, University of Notre Dame

[\[link:/news/statement-by-rev-john-i-jenkins-c-s-c-president-university-of-notre-dame-3/\]](#)

In memoriam: Theologian Jan Poorman

[\[link:/news/in-memoriam-theologian-jan-poorman/\]](#)

Carla Harris, business leader and gospel singer, to receive Notre Dame's Laetare Medal

[\[link:/news/carla-harris-business-leader-and-gospel-singer-to-receive-notre-dames-laetare-medal/\]](#)

In memoriam: John F. “Jack” Sandner, Notre Dame Trustee

[\[link:/news/in-memoriam-john-f-jack-sandner-notre-dame-trustee/\]](#)

Gov. Holcomb: Notre Dame continues to do good

[[link:/news/gov-holcomb-notre-dame-continues-to-do-good-2/](#)]



[Copyright](#) © 2021 [University of Notre Dame](#)
[Notre Dame News](#) Notre Dame, IN 46556 USA
[Accessibility Information](#)

