

[Home](#) > [Obituaries](#) > [Ivy Irene Bottini Obituary](#)

Photo courtesy of Stephenson-Nelson Funeral Home - Sebring.

# Ivy Irene Bottini

Sebring, Florida  
Aug 15, 1926 – Feb 25, 2021 (Age 94)[Plant Memorial Trees](#)

## About

<b>BORN</b>	<b>DIED</b>
August 15, 1926	February 25, 2021
<b>AGE</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
94	Sebring, Florida

## Obituary

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### Stephenson-Nelson Funeral Home - Sebring Obituary

Ivy Bottini's Obituary:

August 15, 1926 – February 25, 2021

By Elaine Suranie

“Get out of your own way and understand that your life has a life of its own and will take you on a wonderful, adventurous ride.” – Ivy Bottini

Ivy Bottini died at home after a long, adventurous life, lived abundantly and with lasting impact on the civil rights for all women and LGBT persons in America, whether they know of her or not.

Ivy was not ill, she was 94, and her body simply began to quietly unplug. As she died, she was surrounded by love, her youngest daughter, Lisa Perron, her daughter-in-law, Beth Perron, her grandson, Jason Sponenberg, and her Pastor, George Miller, of Emmanuel United Church of Christ. Also with her in spirit were her oldest daughter, Laura Bottini Toy, and Laura's husband, John Wheeler, both of West Hollywood California. Along with her loving family, Ivy leaves hundreds of dear friends and admirers coast to coast, all who have been inspired by her vitality and empowered by her example. To learn more of this dynamic woman's amazing accomplishments, please google: Ivy Bottini.

Ivy was born August 15, 1926 in Long Island New York to Irish/English parents, Archie and Ivy Gaffney. She attended Pratt Institute of Art and Design on a full scholarship in graphic design and illustration. In 1952 Ivy married the handsome young man across the street, Edward Bottini. At four foot eleven and a half inches, the vivacious and engaging Ivy and her six foot two inch husband made a striking couple.

Ivy had known since she was young that she was attracted to women more than to men but in those days, the choice was to be married or to be an old maid. After getting some counseling about it she chose marriage. Eddie and Ivy had two daughters, Laura and Lisa. Unlike most women in the 1950's, Ivy worked full-time as an Art Director and illustrator at Newsday, a newspaper which served Long Island and the metropolitan area of New York.

One day, a reporter and friend at Newsday asked Ivy to go with her to a meeting where Betty Friedan, the feminist author, would be speaking. It was 1966 and Ivy's life was about to take a dramatic turn, in which she would discover her lifelong passion and purpose: fighting for women's rights and soon thereafter, LGBT civil rights.

Ivy Bottini got involved in this new group of women talking about civil rights and ended up helping to found the first chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW) in New York City. She created their iconic logo that is still used to this day. On August 10, 1970, Ivy was then president of the New York Chapter of NOW when the membership decided that a radical public outcry for women to unify their political power was needed. Ivy conceived the bold move of taking over the Statue of Liberty. A hundred members of NOW organized the takeover and hung a forty-foot banner reading, WOMEN OF THE WORLD UNITE, across the top of the pedestal. Ivy watched with amazement from the park below. A photo of Ms. Liberty in her new banner made the front page of the NY Times and was broadcast around the world.

There was no turning back. Ivy was compelled to pursue what became a lifelong passion for activism on women's liberation and LGBT civil rights. In 1968 she came out as a lesbian, in 1971 she moved to Los Angeles, and in 1972 her husband Edward divorced her and retained custody of the children. It would be years before Ivy was reunited with her daughters and they could understand the full weight of both her civil rights work and with her limitations as a mother.

There is so much more. Ivy was a study in tenacity and a love for life. Her need to fight for justice for those marginalized was fierce and it yielded results that would change lives forever.

Here is a small sample of Ivy's often historic accomplishments:

Co-Founding AIDS Network LA – the first AIDS organization in Los Angeles – and the Los Angeles Lesbian/Gay Police Advisory Board.

In 1977, she created and hosted the first Lesbian/Gay radio show on a mainstream network – KHJ in Los Angeles.

In 1978, she was the Southern California Deputy Director of the successful campaign against the Brigg's Initiative (No on 6) which would have banned gays and lesbians from teaching in California public schools.

In 1981, Ivy was appointed by then Governor Jerry Brown as a Commissioner for the first California Commission on Aging, making her the first “out” person to be appointed to a state commission.

In 1983 she Co-Founded AIDS Project Los Angeles.

In 1986, she chaired the successful No on 64, a Lyndon LaRouche proposition to stigmatize people who were HIV-positive and promote them losing their jobs.

In 1993 Ivy Co-Founded the Gay & Lesbian Elder Housing non-profit which developed Triangle Square in 2007, the first affordable housing complex for gay and lesbian senior citizens in the country.

In 2006, Ivy Bottini was inducted into the *California's Remarkable Women* exhibit as a permanent honor at the California Museum for History, Women, and the Arts.

In 2009, the film *On These Shoulders We Stand*, profiled Ivy and ten other LGBT activists who made a significant difference in LGBT civil rights in Los Angeles.

In 2011, Ivy began advocating for the creation of an AIDS memorial in West Hollywood and, along with a group called The Lavender Effect, advocating for an LGBT museum in Los Angeles.

In 2014, Ivy put on a One Woman Show for her 88th The Stage Raw reviewer: “With a spirited mix of standup comedy and personal reminiscences from her distinguished and colorful life. The show – witty, entertaining and professional – only ran two nights, but Bottini's art remains on display at the Los Angeles [LGBT Center's](#) Advocate and Gochis Galleries, located at The Village at Ed Gould Plaza. Also on display is the artwork of her daughter, Lisa Santasario.”

In 2016, she joined Caroline Heldman and the California Women's Law Center in lobbying for and Drafting a bill to remove the statute of limitations on prosecuting rape cases thereby removing the former ten year limit to prosecute. Governor Jerry Brown signed the bill.

An accomplished and popular artist, Ivy's need to create art was unstoppable. Over the years when she wasn't involved in her activism, she could be found in her art studio. As she aged, Bottini lost much of her eyesight to macular degeneration and her painting shifted to abstract art. After moving to her daughter Lisa's home in Sebring, Florida in 2019, she continued to paint in her studio.

Despite her increasing frailty due to her advanced age, Ivy still had hopes for continuing her activism in Florida. “Sebring is the county seat for Highlands County,” she said. “I suspect I'll get involved with the democratic party. The women are now trying for a real push to get the ERA passed. Maybe when I get there I can help.”

In adherence to Irish tradition Ivy's daughter opened Ivy's bedroom window immediately after she passed. Tradition is, the opening of a window is for the soul of the loved one to pass through with ease once they have died...It is both a gesture of letting go, and also of letting in; bringing in the fresh air from the outside world and the promise of another day. Go with love, Ivy.

All of Ivy Bottini's papers are held by ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives at the USC Libraries in Los Angeles. It is the largest repository of LGBTQ materials in the world.

In Lieu of flowers, memorial contributions can be made to Good Shepherd Hospice, 1110 Hammock Rd, Sebring, FL 33870.

Arrangements entrusted to:

Stephenson-Nelson Funeral Home

4001 Sebring Parkway

Sebring, FL 33870

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