

IVY BOTTINI

b. August 15, 1926, Lynbrook, New York

WOMEN'S AND LGBT ACTIVIST

“For 50 years, my passion has been equal rights for women, lesbians and gay men, and it continues.”

Ivy Bottini is a pioneering lesbian feminist. In 1966 she was inspired by Betty Friedan's book “The Feminine Mystique.” She met Friedan and together they established the first chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW). Bottini served on the national board of NOW for three years and was president of the New York chapter for two years.

Friedan was vocal in her concerns about out lesbians in NOW. Because lesbians were being asked to closet themselves, Bottini left. She moved to the West Coast where she became the women's program director for the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center. Bottini met local activist Morris Kight and they formed the Coalition for Human Rights to oppose the Briggs Initiative. The initiative threatened termination of lesbian and gay teachers in California. In 1978 Briggs was defeated. It was the first defeat in the nation of a homophobic state referendum.

Bottini continued as a radical force for LGBT activism through the 1980s. She cofounded the Los Angeles Lesbian/Gay Police Advisory Board and formed AIDS Network LA, the first organization in the city created to combat AIDS. In 1986 she successfully worked to defeat Proposition 64, which designated homosexuals as a public menace who should be quarantined.

In 1993 Bottini founded the nonprofit organization Gay & Lesbian Elder Housing, Inc. The organization's first low-income LGBT senior housing project, Triangle Square, is located in the heart of Hollywood.

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