

JEANNE CÓRDOVA

b. July 18, 1948

d. January 10, 2016

ACTIVIST AND AUTHOR

**Jeanne Córdova
helped found the
Gay and Lesbian
Caucus of the
Democratic Party.**

*“It’s the job of the young to
push the societal envelope.”*

Jeanne Córdova was a pioneering feminist and lesbian rights activist who helped lead the LGBT movement on the West Coast of the United States. She launched numerous civil rights and community organizations. For most of her life, she worked as a journalist and author. Her autobiography, “When We Were Outlaws: A Memoir of Love and Revolution,” was published in 2011.

Born in Germany of Mexican and Irish-American decent, Córdova was the second of 12 children. She attended high school in California, then joined the Immaculate Heart of Mary, a convent that embraced radical changes to the Catholic Church and protested the Vietnam War. Her experience there inspired her to leave to become a community organizer. At 22 she earned a master’s degree in social work from UCLA.

Córdova’s advocacy began as president of the L.A. chapter of the Daughters of Bilitis, the first lesbian rights organization in the United States, where she helped open the first lesbian center in Los Angeles. She also launched The Lesbian Tide, the first American publication to use “lesbian” in its title.

Córdova went on to organize influential women’s events, including the first National Lesbian Conference. She became the human rights editor of the Los Angeles Free Press and served as president of the Stonewall Democratic Club. She worked to defeat a proposition to ban openly gay and lesbian teachers from California public schools.

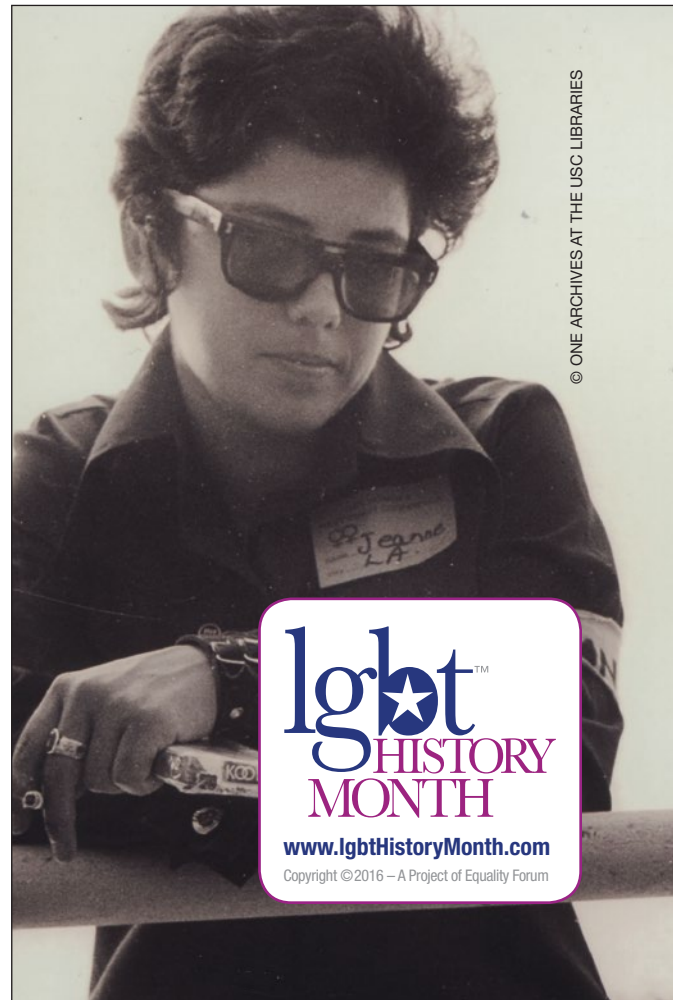
Córdova also helped create the Gay and Lesbian Caucus of the Democratic Party and became one of 30 openly lesbian delegates to the 1980 Democratic National Convention. She created the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Press Association and was a founding member of the Connexus Women’s Center, where she worked to defeat a 1986 proposition that would have quarantined people with AIDS.

Among other organizations, Córdova cofounded the Lesbian Legacy Coalition and the Lesbian Legacy Wall at ONE Archives in Los Angeles.

Throughout her life, she wrote passionately about women’s and lesbian issues. Her work has appeared in popular publications nationwide, including The Advocate, ICON, The Washington Blade and countless others. In 1981 she published the Community Yellow Pages, the first and largest LGBT business directory in the country. She also started Square Peg, a queer cultural magazine, in 1992.

Córdova has received numerous awards. In 1978 she became the first out lesbian to appear in Who’s Who in America.

Córdova spent 25 years with her partner, Lynn Harris Ballen, a feminist radio journalist. Before she died, Córdova donated \$2 million to the Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice.



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