



Iris June Schlesinger

June 17, 1934 - April 12, 2026

Iris June Schlesinger,

Passed peacefully in her home on April 12, 2026. Born in Chicago, IL on June 17, 1934, to parents, Sam and Gussie Gold, Iris enjoyed a creative and spirited childhood. Her older sister Edith would “dress her up” in handmade clothing, sparking a sense of fashion in Iris that lasted a lifetime. Iris graduated from Von Steuben High School in Chicago and attended the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She actively participated in her Alpha Epsilon Phi sorority and graduated in 1955 with a degree in teaching. Shortly after graduation she married her college sweetheart, Charles “Chuck” Coplin, and moved to Wisconsin.

Iris’ beauty and style landed her a series of modeling contracts while also teaching fourth grade at Maple Dale Elementary School in Fox Point, WI. Iris and Chuck had two sons, Andy and Rick, before Chuck’s passing in 1962 of leukemia. After much coaxing from loved ones, Iris agreed to date again and met Mel Schlesinger, a handsome and charming widow. They married on July 30, 1967, in her sister’s backyard in Chicago, a mere one week after Mel proposed. As Mel’s career in the automobile industry grew, they moved their blended family to Wisconsin. Iris started a scarf and women’s clothing business called Iris Accessories. She traveled the world to source fabrics that made each piece exquisite, selling in high end department stores like Bloomingdales and Marshall Field’s.

In 1984, Iris and Mel moved to Boca Raton, Florida. Iris enjoyed playing mahjong, cards and golf. She earned the Women's Club Champion title in 1990 at Saint Andrews Country Club. Iris designed incredible beaded jewelry that caught the attention of a cruise lines merchandiser when they were on vacation, prompting a career in her seventies and eighties making beaded jewelry to sell. They loved hosting their family in their home in Florida and did everything to earn a five-star rating from her children and grandchildren after each visit. Iris loved the theater and travel. She was a brilliant and witty writer, penning popular poems among her friends about her observations of aging. She lived a beautiful and full life. She was an absolute icon whose nails were always perfectly manicured and her signature lipstick in check.

Iris is survived by her children Andrew (Jill), Richard (Kate), Bobbe and Donald (Aeisha), her grandchildren Cari (Brian), Bradley, Sam, Caitlin, Ethan, Avery, Elijah, Molly and Mathieu, and great-grandchildren Lauren, Mason and Benjamin, her sister-in-law Helene (Geoff) and nieces and nephews. Her loving husbands, Mel and Chuck, sister Edith (Lionel), parents Sam and Gussie, and grandsons, Israel and Daniel preceded her in death.

Private services will be held at Spring Hill Cemetery in Milwaukee. In lieu of flowers, the family kindly requests donations to be made to Jewish Family Services in her memory.

Cemetery Details

Spring Hill Cemetery

166 S. Hawley Ct.
Milwaukee, WI 53214

Tribute Wall

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“ We were deeply saddened to learn of the passing of your beloved mother, Iris, and we extend our heartfelt condolences to your entire family.

It is a profound honor for JFS to be listed for tributes in her memory. It is a reflection of a life of generosity, compassion, and commitment to the values that strengthen community and care for others. We are truly grateful.

May her memory be for a blessing.

*With deepest sympathy and gratitude,
Dan Fleischman
President and CEO
Jewish Family Services*

Daniel Fleischman - May 03 at 09:01 PM