



# **Mrs. Beulah "Cora Combs" Szostecki**

MAR 17, 1927 - JUN 21, 2015



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## **Mrs. Beulah "Cora Combs" Szostecki**

MAR 17, 1927 - JUN 21, 2015

**B**eulah "Cora Combs" Szostecki, age 88 passed away June 21, 2015. Born in Hazard, Kentucky on March 17, 1927, to the late Lorenzo and Susie Mae Combs. During her school years, Cora Szostecki played basketball (guard) and ran track at Bonnyman High School. After graduation, She moved to Nashville with the hopes of singing at the Grand Ole Opry. Cora wasn't a wrestling fan, but her sister was and made ring jackets for the wrestlers. One night in 1948, Cora tagged along to the matches at the Hippodrome Arena. The first match she saw live was Dot Dotson against Mildred Burke. During the match, Dot landed in Cora's lap. After the matches, Cora met Nashville promoter Nick Gulas, who introduced her to women's wrestling promoter and trainer, Billy Wolfe, who invited her to his school in Columbus, Ohio and had her work out with June Byers. A mere six weeks later, she had her first match- in a seven-girl battle royal in Jackson, Mississippi. Cora wrestled all over the world- Canada, Mexico, Japan, pre-Castro Cuba, the Fiji Island, and Nigeria. While in Germany, she wrestled as Hildegard Schmidt. She wrestled many of the legends, including Mildred Burke, the Fabulous Moolah, Mae Young, June Byers, and Kay Noble. In 1967, she was proclaimed the Women's United States Champion after a reported series of elimination matches. Years later, her daughter, Debbie, followed her into wrestling and they became the only mother-daughter team in wrestling history.

Always dressed to the hilt, Cora's ring outfits- a wide variety of colorful jackets and robes- were made by her sister (the one who introduced her to wrestling). Cora retired from the ring in 1985. She continued to manage her daughter for years following. In 2007, she was inducted into the Wrestling Hall of Fame. In September 2012, she was recognized as the oldest wrestling legend at the Tennessean Wrestling Legends Reunion. She was one of the most highly-regarded and respected lady wrestlers by her pro wrestling peers. She will be greatly missed.



## Obituary

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Preceded in death by her parents; her husband, Chester Joseph Szostecki; sisters Mildred Russell and Hazel Rosenburger and brother William Combs. She is survived by her son Charles David Szostecki (Christy); daughter Deborah (Combs) Szostecki; grandchildren Christopher Szostecki, Joshua Szostecki, Jennifer Szostecki, Alexander Szostecki and special granddaughter Celena Szostecki; great-grandchildren Shianne, Charles, Elizabeth, Jaylen, and Cedrick; sister Jackie Ostrowski and nephew Timothy Ostrowski.

She served her country in the US Army. She was a member of The Cathedral of Incarnation. She loved her cats, Oreo and Callie and enjoyed playing bingo and watching westerns.

A Funeral Mass will be held Friday, June 26, 2015, 10:00 a.m. at The Cathedral of Incarnation. Visitation will be Wednesday 4:00-8:00 p.m. and Thursday 12:00-8:00 p.m. at Spring Hill Funeral Home. Visitation will be on Friday 9:00-10:00 a.m. at The Cathedral of Incarnation. Entombment will follow in Spring Hill Cemetery, Serenity Chapel Mausoleum. Arrangements entrusted to Spring Hill Funeral Home and Cemetery, 5110 Gallatin Road, Nashville, TN 37216, 615-865-1101.





## Events

**Mrs. Beulah "Cora Combs" Szostecki**

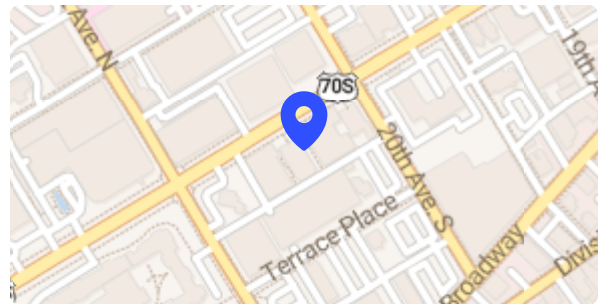
MAR 17, 1927 - JUN 21, 2015

### Funeral Mass


 **Friday**, June 26, 2015

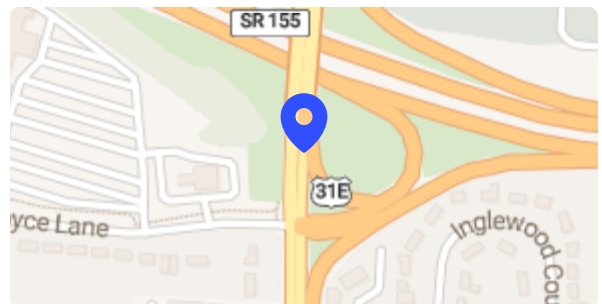
 10:00 AM CT

 **Cathedral of the Incarnation**  
2015 West End Avenue, Nashville TN 37203



### Cemetery Details

 **Spring Hill Cemetery - Chapel Mausoleum**  
5110 Gallatin Rd, Nashville TN 37216





## Tribute Wall

**Mrs. Beulah "Cora Combs" Szostecki**

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**Mike Lano** posted:

We were all so fond of total legend Cora(that's what everyone in our industry called her) who was always what a class champion professional athlete should be. But also kind and lovely to others. She had such an amazing pro wrestling career for decades in that golden Byers/ Burke era and beyond. Always giving back to her profession, she additionally gave us Debbie and I believe they're the only mother/daughter combination I can think of who ever wrestled together. Both also helped train so many others unselfishly. It was an honor getting to know Cora and she and Deb were usually the highlight of any reunion they went to whether it was Gulf Coast or Cauliflower Alley, etc. When calling Debbie back in the 90's, it was always a blast talking to Cora first with all her Nashville personality, as she usually got the phone first. Love and respect goes out to her entire family and I hope they know how special Cora/Beulah was to all of us. They sadly lost or broke the mold in heaven as we unfortunately won't see anyone remotely close to her likes again. Thank you Cora.Dr Mike Lano/wrealano@aol.com

June 25 at 1:02 PM



**Anthony Owen** posted:

I am so sorry to hear of this. We have loss touch with each other but I still love each and everyone of you, She was always my favorite aunt and she will be missed. May God be with you in this time of loss.Your cousin, Tony Owen

June 25 at 5:21 AM



**George Gulas** posted:

Cora is in that golden arena with an everlasting time limit.Rest in Peace, Cora. You meant so much to pro wrestling,my father Nick Gulas and me.Yours In Sports,George Gulas

June 24 at 11:06 PM



**John Organ** posted:

Message of condolence for Chuck Szostecki and family: Chuck....I am sorry to read about your loss. Your mom was pretty special. I hope you and your family are doing well.Take care of one another.John Organ

June 24 at 3:35 PM



## Tribute Wall

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**Anonymous** sent a Sweet Sincerity to the Szostecki family.

June 24 at 1:19 PM



**Anonymous** sent a Strength & Solace Spray to the Szostecki family.

June 24 at 11:34 AM



**Anonymous** sent an Enchanted Cottage to the Szostecki family.

June 24 at 9:15 AM



**Anonymous** sent a Peaceful White Lilies Basket to the Szostecki family.

June 24 at 7:00 AM



**Anonymous** sent an A New Sunrise Spray to the Szostecki family.

June 24 at 4:48 AM



**Anonymous** sent a Beautiful in Blue to the Szostecki family.

June 23 at 3:30 PM





## **Memories only last if you share them**

Join us in honoring Beulah by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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