

## *Mary Buschbaum*



**M**ary Buschbaum was an outstanding athlete who was well ahead of her time.

Growing up in East Norwalk when sports opportunities for females were practically non-existent, Mary never let that stop her. She didn't let her 5-foot-1 size stop her, either.

In fact, she was named captain of the Norwalk High School girls basketball team in 1937. And when it came to softball, Mary Buschbaum had no equal.

In 1938 women's softball made its debut at the old Madison Square Garden on 50<sup>th</sup> Street and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The famous arena was transformed into a softball diamond with many top amateur teams in the U.S. and Canada invited to play.

One of those teams, the Howard Girls from Norwalk, had the distinction of playing the feature game on opening night May 18, 1938 in front of 12,000 softball enthusiasts. They played the Eastern

Women's Softball Team, one of the top clubs in the country. But the Howard Girls beat them 6-4 as winning pitcher Mary Buschbaum struck out 17 batters. She also played for the Treandy Rosebuds of Norwalk, the Boston Olympets and the Roverettes of New York.

Mary was a member of Norwalk's No. 1 Sports Family, the Buschbaum All-Stars — six brothers, three sisters, and other family members. During the 1930s, the Buschbaums won 92 percent of their games, a remarkable 245-51, including four city championships. They probably would have won more if city softball officials hadn't asked them to disband so other teams could have a chance to win. The Buschbaums were still in high demand, though, and 'barnstormed' around the tri-state area those years.

They were even featured in Ripley's 'Believe It or Not' and in a cartoon titled 'Stranger than Fiction' in the Brooklyn Daily Eagle.

The family is still remembered today by the horseshoe drive around Veterans' Memorial Park, which the city officially named "Buschbaum Boulevard."

Mary Buschbaum Banks Tingets passed away at the age of 56 in 1975.