

## **Bill Adam**

Bill Adam possessed a passion for cars from an early age but a neighbour who took him to the first Players 200 at Mosport on June 11, 1961 took that passion and fashioned it into the focus of Bill's life and the career he pursues to this day.

Bill's love of racing had to wait until May of 1970 to finally graduate to the track at Harewood Acres when he entered his first novice race. It only took Bill until July of that year to finish his third novice race to complete the requirement for his National License.

His main competition in those novice races was a young American who came north to race before the SCCA would allow him to at home, Bobby Rahal, beginning a lifelong friendship. Bill's car in that first season was a \$2300 Corvette that suited the young racer's budget. Sold at the end of the season, that car, Corvette Grand Sport 002 now worth north of \$2 million, could have been Bill's retirement plan had he kept it.

Bill's goal changed to beating his neighbour from Hamilton, the very successful "Mo Carter". A new and more expensive Corvette helped Bill achieve that goal and opened doors to other teams. A promised ride with the Greenwood Corvette failed to materialize but that led to some drives in the Export "A" stock car series which rejuvenated Bill's love of the sport. A one off drive in his own Corvette at the Mosport 6 Hours in 1977 which he led until the first pit stop brought him to the attention of Bob Tullius of Group 44 fame.

Bill raced a TR8 for Group 44 in 1980 winning their class at Sebring and Mosport and continuing in 1981. 1982 brought new opportunities as IMSA created the GTP class and Jaguar chose Group 44 to prepare them and Bill to drive. Bill went on to drive the blindingly fast but unreliable March, in 1986 a Porsche 962 and a Riley and Scott in 1987. In addition to racing almost full time in the IMSA GTP series, Bill had a second place finish in the 1985 Can Am at Mosport as well as several wins in the Rothmans Porsche Cup Series.

Bill was part of the Porsche Dealers Team Canada that entered LeMans in 1987.

Bill also raced Audi's and Porsches when attractive rides became available before turning to race broadcasting where he has continued to carry the flag for Canada.

## **Alan Bunting**

Alan Bunting's interest in motor cars began in England in the 20's as he walked home from school. Coming to Canada in 1956 he followed his passion to BEMC and became an active volunteer. In 1958 he joined the committee to find and build Canada's new Grand Prix course and, after the committee selected the site north of Bowmanville, he accepted the role as designer and builder of Mosport, the name created from the name of the facility, Motorsport Park.

Using his extensive knowledge of European tracks he led many discussions to get a track design accepted. The site had been chosen for its natural undulations and promised to be exciting. He also spent countless hours with local groups and car clubs, explaining his design and looking for financial support. After the surveyors were hired in 1959 the crown line of the track was finally laid out on a rainy Saturday, shades of many races to come, and a major milestone was met.

The combination of heavy rain, sandy soil and undulating land, chosen to create an exciting track, caused many construction problems by washing away the loose gravel after the grading had been done and before the paving could be completed. The gravel base finally survived a winter and paving was scheduled for the spring of 1961. The steep lead into Moss corner defied the paving equipment of the time and Alan had to innovate on the fly and winch the paving machine up the steep slope. Alan's most common comment of the day was "I hope you are raising lots of money because I sure am spending it".

The work was done and done well. The first race, a club race required to demonstrate that the track was fit for racing, passed with flying colours and the official opening was scheduled for June 11th. Lovely weather and a crowd of 40,000, the largest in Ontario history to date made the event a wonderful success.

Alan Bunting poured his heart and soul into his track and probably the best testament to that is the fact that the original track surface lasted 40 years!

## **Doug Fairchild**

Some people are champions on track and some are champions in life. Doug Fairchild never raced but devoted his life to making it possible for many to follow their dreams. Doug started his career with Goodyear in the 1960's and quickly became recognized as a tire expert. This was confirmed when Doug became a member of the Goodyear Formula 1 tire team. Doug remained with the Formula 1 circus until returning to the US to work for Roger Penske as Goodyear race tire distributor in North America.

In 1985 Doug returned to Canada as the owner of Competition Tire Canada and became Goodyear's Official race tire distributor nationwide. Roger Penske also recognized Doug's expertise and appointed him as a Penske Shocks distributor.

Doug was not only available to successful and famous race teams and car designers to advise on the proper set up and use of the new tires but went out of his way to share his expertise with all, whether it was road racers, stock car competitors, or the drag-racing fraternity. This was no small accomplishment in the hectic and frenetic world of weekend racing across the country, at different tracks every weekend, more often than not servicing multiple locations on a single week.

Doug was never rewarded with a chequered flag in front of thousands of excited fans but took his reward from the quiet thanks of those that did and many more whom he helped achieve their dreams of being a racer.

For his role as the man who connected the drivers to the track and kept them racing, Doug Fairchild is now rewarded with his induction into the Canadian Motorsport Hall of Fame.

## Wayne Kelly

Wayne Kelly started racing while in Europe while serving in the Canadian Armed Forces. Invited to attend some local races, he won the first one he entered and became hooked on the sport. He drove a Porsche 90 and later a Porsche Carrera which became his first Canadian race car upon his return to Canada.

Settling in at home, he raced successfully claiming numerous top three finishes in his class, at Harewood Acres, Green Acres, Waterford Hills, St. Eugene and the new generation of tracks at Mosport and St. Jovite.

An ambitious and innovative mind led to the development of the Kelly Porsche, which with the cooperation of people at Porsche, allowed for his design to incorporate the latest low-profile cooling technology. Although he never won a Canadian Championship in this car, his close friend, Horst Kroll did successfully campaign this race car and won the Canadian Championship in 1968.

Wayne was a man who enjoyed life and his friends. Wayne is remembered by many for his approach to problem solving. During a club event in Harewood Acres, the car broke a part for which Wayne had no spare. An urgent call was made to Trenton, home at the time, and the required item was handed over to a pilot friend who needed some extra flight training time. The pilot placed the unit, well packaged, in the air brakes of a T-33 and made his way to Harewood. Making a pass over the field it was thought by the Chief Steward that the aircraft had to make an emergency landing. A second pass saw all practice stopped so that the main straight would be clear for a landing. This was not the case however, and while making a very low speed pass, the pilot activated the air brake flaps, and dropped the 'emergency' package, and then took off to continue his 'training'.

As racing grew more expensive, Wayne realized the need for an affordable racing car that would provide good competition, the development of new drivers, and an introduction to open wheeled racing. His European connections alerted him to the recently introduced Formula Vee class. Wayne created his own design and began production of his rendition of the Formula Vee. In total, about 23 Kelly Formula Vees and one Super Vee were constructed. Believing in his own product, Wayne won the Canadian Formula Vee Championship in 1965 and again in 1968, and other Kelly Vees won in 1966 (Horst Kroll), and 1967 (Brian Robertson). His Formula Vee racing took him to Watkins Glen, Lime Rock in Connecticut, Nelson Ledges in Warren, Ohio, Daytona Beach and the Grand Bahamas, as well as across Canada.

The introduction of Formula Ford brought new, larger, very competitive fields and he rose to the occasion. Wayne Kelly, unfortunately and tragically, lost his life while racing for the Shoppers World Formula Ford Championship honours at Mosport on September 19, 1971. His points total had him standing in second place overall with two races remaining.

His epitaph, shared with Bruce McLaren who died a year earlier, reads: **“Life is measured in accomplishments, not in years alone.”** His induction to the Canadian Motorsport Hall of Fame once again reminds us of all that he gave to racing in Canada.

## **Bill LeFeuvre**

Bill LeFeuvre has a long and distinguished career in motorsport. Rallying, racing at Harewood Acres and Mosport, and ice racing with championships in both “rubber to ice” and “studded” classes. He also participated in the Volkswagen Owners Club as Treasurer and Competition Director.

Bill emerged from the pack after starting Off Road racing in 1971. Racing in the Baja Bug class, Bill gathered 4 championships in 5 years and moved on to other classes, picking up more championships and expanding the scope of his racing into Off Road Racing and the Mickey Thompson Eastern Stadium Series in the United States.

Bill LeFeuvre represented Canada well winning Sportsman of the Year Honours off track as well as championships against on track competition.

## **Norm Mackereth**

Stock car racing came to Ontario in 1948. That summer, Norm Mackereth had his first race. It was the start of thirty years as a driver and a lifetime in racing. In the 1950s, Norm honed his skills at Speedway Park, Pinecrest, Oakwood, Oshawa and the CNE. He became a front runner, a heat winner, and a feature winner. The early jalopies became modifieds. The modifieds morphed into supermodifieds. The full-blown, purpose-built open-wheel racers suited Norm. He was a regular winner at Pinecrest, then at the CNE. His best year at the CNE was 1961. He won six features, including the 100 Lap International, and was second in the point standings.

Rising costs and fewer cars led the CNE to drop the supers in 1963. Two years earlier, a fast new paved oval opened at Oswego, New York. It became a mecca for supermodifieds. Norm had his first race at Oswego in 1962, ran there for 20 years "and loved every minute".

Norm Mackereth was one of the best at Oswego in the 1960s. He ranked fourth in total points scored (1,751) and fourth in the number of top five finishes (40) for the decade. He was only out of the top ten once. That was in 1968, when was Norm severely burned in an accident. Norm was 6<sup>th</sup> in points in 1962, 10<sup>th</sup> in 1963, 3<sup>rd</sup> in 1964, 7<sup>th</sup> in 1965, 8<sup>th</sup> in 1966, 6<sup>th</sup> in 1967, 11<sup>th</sup> in 1968, and 5<sup>th</sup> in 1969.

Mackereth was 8<sup>th</sup> in points in 1970, 3<sup>rd</sup> in 1971, 4<sup>th</sup> in 1972 and 6<sup>th</sup> in 1974, the year of his last feature win at Oswego. He made the top ten in feature victories for the decade with five wins. He ranked eighth in top five feature finishes in the 1970s with 37.

The man who put Oswego on the map for Canadian drivers and fans retired in 1978. Twenty-five years later, Norm was still one of the top twenty feature winners at Oswego. He was seventh in all-time points scored and ninth in feature race top fives.

While Norm will always be associated with Oswego, he has raced successfully at thirty-six tracks in Ontario and nine states. In 1964, Norm won the Supermodified championship at Shangri-La Speedway in Owego, New York. He was the Supermodified champion at Delaware Speedway, near London, in 1969 and 1970. He won features at Fulton Speedway in New York in 1970, 1971 and 1972.

For the Mackereths, racing is a family sport. Norm's wife, Marg, was the Ladies Champion at Pinecrest. For much of Norm's racing career, his brothers built his cars. His sons all raced. Now there is a third generation of racing Mackereths. Norm kept bringing his racing suit to the track, just in case. His last race was on July 1, 2005, at age seventy-eight.

Norm Mackereth was one of Canada's finest oval racers. A fan favourite, he was a great ambassador for the sport in Canada and a great ambassador for Canada when he raced in the United States. He always made a point of signing his autographs "#40 CANADA".

## **Michel Mercier**

Michel Mercier was born in Thetford Mines, Quebec in 1953. As a boy, he made up for his small size with competitiveness and fearlessness. Michel bought his first motorcycle at seventeen. He started motocross racing in 1973.

In 1977, Michel won the Canadian Motorcycle Association's national ice racing titles in the 125 and 250 Expert classes. That summer, he took his ice racer to a CMA dirt track event and jumped from novice to expert class in a day. He finished the year as CMA champion in the Lightweight Senior class. From 1978 to 1982, Michel won ten more CMA ice racing titles and held the No.1 plate as Canada's top ice racer five years in a row.

By the early 1980s, Michel Mercier was Canada's best ice racer and a force in dirt track racing. In 1981, Michel tried road racing. He quickly moved from the novice to the expert ranks and turned pro in 1982. In 1982 and 1983, he won two CMA titles and his first championship with the new RACE sanctioning group.

Mercier's approach to racing changed in 1984. A new job kept him from attending practice sessions so he had to rely on mental preparation for his races. The analytical approach, added to his natural speed and aggression, made Michel a complete racer. He won the RACE 600 Production title and was fourth in Superbike. In 1985, he won the CMA's Superbike championship and another RACE 600 title.

The Superbike class is Canada's premier road racing class. By the mid-1980s, RACE was its premier sanctioning body. Michel Mercier won back-to-back RACE Superbike championships in 1986 and 1987. He also took RACE's 1986 Eastern Canada Formula 1 and Superbike titles and starred in the UK Match Race Series in 1987.

Although he won a national title, a regional championship, and was third and fifth in Superbike points, Michel was disappointed by his results in 1988 and 1989. At Thirty-six, he was an "old man" in motorcycle racing terms but Michel was not finished yet.

In 1990, Mercier switched to Yamaha, with his own team and protégé, Pascal Picotte, as his team mate. Michel won four of the six RACE Superbike finals and the championship. He was also the top Canadian in the USA vs. Canada match races and finished fourth in the World Superbike round at Mosport, which he described as the race of his career.

Michel Mercier retired from racing at the end of 1990. In 1987, Michel became the director of the FAST Racing School at Shannonville. Most of Canada's leading road racers have learned their craft from him. One of his brightest students was his son, Max. Max Mercier was killed in a race at Shannonville on June 12, 2005. He was seventeen.

Michel Mercier has won twenty-five Canadian motorcycle racing championships in ice racing, dirt track and road racing. He held the No.1 plate in ice racing five years in a row. He took three national Superbike titles and retired with a record twelve wins. Michel is one of the most successful and versatile motorcycle racers Canada has produced. As a teacher, he continues to leave his mark on Canadian motorcycle racing.

## **F. J Smith**

From the day his dad dropped him off at the gates of Kohler drag strip to see a visiting Don Garlits, Fred was gripped by a passion for the sport. He raced as an amateur through high school and university. His 1967 Beaumont was raced at Niagara Dragstrip and became internationally known as the Canadian Chevelle. Fred taught at Cayuga Secondary School and freely shared his automotive and drag racing knowledge.

In 1976 Fred raised the bar with a 1967 Camaro that became a NHRA legend. Campaigned almost every weekend at Divisional and National NHRA events from 1976 to 1983, the car was known for its innovative 4 – link suspension, wheel stands and awesome horsepower. This success led to Fred retiring from teaching after 16 years to found Smith Performance Specialties as a state of the art, high performance engine and chassis fabrication business.

In 1986 a rained out event gave Fred a chance to talk to General Motors personnel about creating a rear wheel drive conversion for the front wheel drive cars that were now the backbone of GM production and essentially shut out of drag racing. The first car built by Fred became the prototype for all front wheel conversion race cars in the National Hot Rod Association. That achievement, beyond any doubt, saved the Super Stock eliminator class from extinction. That first prototype Cutlass Ciera was featured in the Oldsmobile display booth at SEMA in Las Vegas in 1987. The partnership with Oldsmobile and later Pontiac enabled SPS to become a Super Stock mini factory. Endless class wins, National event wins, Best Engineered awards, and records achieved by his own cars as well as racers of the Smith Performance Specialties Super Stockers put “F. J. Smith” in the forefront internationally and created the legend inducted into the Canadian Motorsport Hall of Fame.

## **Bruce Vessair**

Bruce Vessair started racing snowmobiles in 1977. Running with the Ontario Snowmobile Racing Federation (OSRF), he worked his way up from amateur races to the professional Sno Pro formula class. In the 1981-82, he was third in the OSRF's premier division. In 1982-83, he was second. In 1985, he won a Formula 1 race at the famous Eagle River Track in Wisconsin. In 1986, he won the prestigious Kawartha Cup at Peterborough.

Snowmobile racing was in trouble in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Bombardier decided that if professional snowmobile racing was to survive, there had to be one big North American series. It created the Sno-Pro Oval Racing Title series. The SPORT series was well funded and well organized, with TV contracts and media coverage. In 1986-87, snowmobile racing moved from the doldrums to a golden era.

Driving for the Motomaster (Canadian Tire) team, run by Vessair racing, Bruce won the first race at Eagle River. He led the points race until the last event, where a DNF dropped him to second in the standings. He repeated as series runner-up in 1987-88.

In 1988-89, Bruce won three SPORT Series rounds and the biggest victory of all: the World Championship at Eagle River. He finished the season as series champion. Bruce Vessair had reached the top of his sport.

Vessair defended his SPORT Series title in 1989-90, becoming the series' first double champion. He also came second in the OSRF's Super Mod II class and 3rd in points in the OSRF's Formula One class.

The next two seasons were difficult for Bruce but the 1992-93 season saw his return as a frontrunner. It was one of the most competitive seasons in the history of the SPORT Series. Bruce's main rival for the championship was his brother Gary. They battled to the final race, and Gary took the title with 188 points to Bruce's 185.

After the 1993-94 season, Ski-Doo withdrew its support from the SPORT Series. The Vessair team withdrew from racing but Bruce kept on. He was competitive through the end of the decade, winning classic races like the Bonnechere Cup in 1998 and the Canadian Power Toboggan Championship in 1999.

Bruce Vessair has won most of the classic snowmobile races. In a golden era when the Ski-Doo SPORT Series brought the best racers together at the best venues in North America, Bruce Vessair was a two-time champion. In snowmobile racing the World Championship is a single event, held at Eagle River, Wisconsin. It is the biggest and richest race, the Indy 500 of snowmobile racing. Bruce Vessair is one of the handful of Canadian world champions. He was one of the finest racers of his era.

As a racer, and as co-owner/manager of what was arguably the most successful team in the history of the snowmobile racing, Bruce Vessair has created a remarkable record.

## Gary Vessair

Gary Vessair started snowmobile racing in 1973. From 1979 through 1985, he won multiple Ontario Snowmobile Racing Federation championships. He won on the Eastern Pro Series. He also took the Kawartha Cup and had second and third place finishes in the World Championship at Eagle River.

For the 1986-87 season, Bombardier created a single marquee series for pro snowmobile racing, the Sno Pro Oval Racing Title series. Gary drove for Vessair Racing, which also ran the Motomaster team for Jacques Villeneuve and Bruce Vessair. Gary won his first SPORT championship as an owner when Jacques took the drivers' title. In 1987-88, Gary and Bruce were back together as teammates with Vessair Racing. In 1988-89, Gary won the Ontario and Quebec Formula 1 title. In 1989-90, Gary won four races in a row and came second to Bruce in the SPORT series. He also took the OSRF's Formula 1 championship.

Gary Vessair had a "dream season" in 1990-91. He won five of the ten SPORT series rounds. At Valcourt, he crashed in practice and spent the night in hospital. The next day he won the final by a full straightaway. After four seasons of trying, Gary was the SPORT series champion.

In 1990-91, Gary Vessair won everything *but* the World Championship. In 1991-92, he won it all. He took the Canadian Power Toboggan Championship. Then, after ten years of trying, Gary won the World Championship at Eagle River. He followed that with wins in four more SPORT finals and took an insurmountable lead in the championship.

Gary Vessair was 39 years old when he won his third successive SPORT championship. He beat his brother to the title by a mere three points. In the off-season, Gary considered retirement but decided to try for a fourth SPORT championship.

The 1993-94 season was not a good one. Gary lost the World Championship on the last turn of the last lap when his sled hit a bump on the decaying track, sending it out of control. He finished a distant 6<sup>th</sup> in the SPORT standings.

Ski-Doo ended its sponsorship of the SPORT series after the 1993-94 season. Gary quit driving and took the reins of the new Camoplast Formula 1 series. He kept it going until 1997. With the death of Formula 1 racing, Gary turned his focus to the family marina in Honey Harbour, Ontario.

For eight seasons the SPORT Series brought the best snowmobile racers in North America together on the best tracks. Gary Vessair won three SPORT championships and more races than any other driver in the series. He won the World Championship at Eagle River – the crown jewel of snowmobile racing. He won regional championships in Ontario and Quebec. He won races and titles on production based racers and the sophisticated offset twin-track Formula 1 sleds. The record shows that Gary Vessair is one of the greatest snowmobile racers of all time. Vessair Racing's record shows that he was one of the finest builders, tuners and team managers in the sport.