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Remember When: Bruce Taylor “The Flying Mailman”

In a recent conversation with Keith Koval, motorsports writer and broadcaster, the topic of Bruce Taylor came up. Keith describes Taylor as a “Dick Curry type character.” Keith said it is very difficult to be Bruce Taylor. Anytime you turn around Taylor is on vacation somewhere? The journey starts at Daytona in February every year. He then travels north visiting racetracks between Florida and Pittsburgh. Some of the stops include, Memorial Day at Charlotte, Dover, and Michigan. He is not only a big NASCAR fan, but also visits many of the local racetracks such as Marion Center, Challenger, and Lernerville. The Firecracker at Lernerville and the Dream at Eldora are part of his travel plans.

Koval explained that the reason former Eldora Speedway Promoter, Earl Baltes was able to retire was because of Bruce. Baltes always said, “If I could sell one more hotdog I might be able to break even.” As much as Bruce eats, Earl could have retired very comfortably. Koval suggested that Taylor could do a segment on television similar to the one Benny Parsons used to do discussing food. He suggested the name “Buffet Bruce” because he likes to sample all of the food at the concession stand. This is an interesting situation since Taylor is always telling people he is losing weight. Is it because he took all of the loose change out of his pocket or had a haircut?

He is very well taken care of at home by his wife Janet. She is not a big race fan but always stays at the campground to make sure everything is taken care of. They say every great racer and every great guy has a super woman in the background. That would describe Janet.

Bruce’s pride and joy is his nine year old Dutch Star motor home which he just had repainted. He is the type of person you can count on as a friend. Keith said that the stories he hears when

Bruce, Dick Curry, and Keith's father Frank are sitting around the campfire is a real education. The hard part is trying to get a word in edgewise.

Bruce Carlyle Taylor was called "The Flying Mailman". He has been involved in racing most of his life. His involvement included car owner, driver, sponsor and a vendor supplying parts to the local racing teams. Bruce's passion for cars led him to become interested in stock car racing in the late 1950's through good friends Wally and Ed Boyer.

In 1960 he decided to become the owner of a 1934 Ford Coupe. The car carried the familiar #15. Wally Boyer was the driver at tracks like the Indiana Fairgrounds, Windber, Jennerstown, Clinton , Marion Center and Schmuckers Speedway.

During the 1960's Taylor was not only a car owner he was trying to make it in the racing industry selling tires and parts. He traveled to all the weekly tracks supplying what the teams needed. Bruce was popular in the racing community; the competitors knew they could count on him to get them through the race night. He would sponsor local races occasionally and enjoyed presenting the winner with their trophy in Victory Lane .

Bruce went from being a car owner to driver in the mid 1960's. He competed in races throughout the area including what was then known as the "Indiana 500", located at Marion Center Speedway driving in the semi-late, late model and sprint car divisions for local owner Roy Brougher.

Throughout the 1960's and 1970's Bruce continued with his passion for racing, competing at tracks like Lernerville, Latrobe, Clearfield, Jennerstown, Tri-City and Motordrome Speedways. I had the opportunity to race against Bruce at Marion Center Speedway in the early 70's and he was a good clean driver. There were never any surprises, if you raced door to door, just good competition.

Bruce went from owner/driver to just driver in the early 1970's. John Fleming, of Indiana PA, purchased a Pinto modified for Bruce to drive. The car belonged to Hal Browning, a top competitor from the Eastern Pennsylvania , New York , New Jersey and Delaware area.

During the 1970's Bruce had several wins and many outstanding finishes in the modified division as well as experience running other divisions such as Sprints and Late Models. Some of his accomplishments throughout his racing career included:

1976 Modified Point Champion at Clearfield Speedway, 1975-76 he was 4th in the Modifieds at Lernerville Speedway and 8th place in the Modifieds at Jennerstown. In 1977 the team won the Modified Championship at Jennerstown along with a 5th in the point race at Lernerville Speedway. He was the Most Popular Driver in the Modifieds at Jennerstown Speedway in 1977.

In 1978 Bruce's racing career came to a screeching halt when his modified caught the wheel of a competitor and flipped five times, end over end, landing roof down. Several thought this would be the end of Bruce's racing career. With a totaled car and a very sore body, Bruce and car owner John Fleming bounced back. Late in the 1978 season Fleming purchased a Gremlin Modified and before long they were back in action. The team continued their winning ways at the area tracks.

After the 1979 racing season Bruce decided to hang up his drivers helmet. It was an opportunity to spend time with his wife Janet and their daughters Michele and Cindy. Bruce has not driven a race car since 1979 but his interest in racing has not diminished. He owned Taylor Trucking & Rental Inc., and sponsored several drivers throughout the years. Bruce and his family have been supportive of the Micro-Sprints, Late Models, Modifieds, Drag Cars and even Moto-Cross. Bruce and his family still have a love of the sport and support local drivers.

In his retirement, he and his wife Janet spend their summers in Indiana with their daughters; Michele and Cindy, and their families. He enjoys following the local dirt track races while remaining in close contact with several local drivers. In the spring and fall during their trek to and from Florida he happily follows the east coast NASCAR Circuit attending Nextel Cup, Busch Series as well as the World of Outlaw Sprints and Late models.

NOTE: Nostalgia Night at Lernerville Speedway has been rescheduled for Friday August 10 and Bruce plans to be there.

If you were a former competitor and would like to participate please e-mail me at speedwayproductions@comcast.net or call 412-999-6625.