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Remember When: Dave Lundy

Last December Dave Lundy's daughter Sue Radzanowski asked me if I would serve as Master of Ceremonies for a surprise retirement party for her father Dave. It was an honor to be asked to participate for the special occasion. I first met Dave in 1959, at the track when several of my high school friends and I built a 1947 Ford to race in the Hardtop Division at Greater Pittsburgh Speedway (Clinton). We didn't have a clue about racing and Dave offered to help. His advice was essential in our efforts to become a race team. It was the beginning of a friendship that has lasted forty nine years.

Dave was one of the premiere drivers at Greater Pittsburgh Speedway. The track was a quarter-mile operation along Route 30 near Imperial that ran from 1958-70; it was changed from dirt to asphalt in 1969 when Ed Witzberger and the Pittsburgh Racing Association took over the operation. Ed thought he needed another paved track to complement Heidelberg. As a dirt track, it flourished during the mid-60s but it never seemed to be as popular as an asphalt track. Lundy moved on to other venues to continue his career on the dirt tracks across the country.

Some of the local racers that Lundy competed against at Greater Pittsburgh Speedway included: Lou Blaney, Gib Orr, Dale Johnson, Steve Unger, Bobby Adamson, Herb Scott, Gus Linder, Dick Bailey, Joe Viglione, J.D. Leas, Don Dahle, Stan Hoover, and Bob Burris.

In URC competition he had to deal with Larry Dickson, Earl Halaquist, Wally Dallenbach Sr, Dick Tobias, Jim Champine, Kenny Weld, Bentley Warren, Will Cagle, Jan Opperman, Lee Osborne, and Lynn Geisler.

In addition to Dickson some of Dave's most notable fellow competitors in USAC included A.J. Foyt, Johnny Rutherford, Mario Andretti, Don Branson, Jud Larson, Roger McCluskey, Bobby Unser, Jim McElreath, Gordon Johncock, Parnelli Jones, Gary Bettenhausen, Jim Hurtubise, Lloyd Ruby, and Troy Ruttman.

My responsibilities at his retirement mainly focused on welcoming everyone, have some fun, tell some stories and enjoy being with some great racers. Some of the guests included: Larry Dickson, Lou & Kate Blaney, Lynn Geisler, Don & Lois Luffy, Herb & Pat Scott, Keith, Rich & Linda Barbara, Billy & Ted Swiontek, Jr (Ted Swiontek's sons) and a legion of family, fans and admirers.

Johnny Rutherford was planning to attend but was delayed in Fort Worth, Texas. Dick Bailey was working in Tampa, Florida, and Joe Mihalic called Dave that evening from his home in Daytona Beach, Florida.

Dave's jobs in racing included: driver, pit crew, car owner, and sponsor. His roots in racing started young. His fathers car set the worlds record on Langhorne's one mile track in a 1941 Buick with dual carburetors.

Dave always felt that the best part of racing was the people. The toughest part was coming back to the garage after midnight to rebuild what's left of the car to race the next day.

His most memorable moment in racing was setting fast time at Clinton and winning the 100 lap feature while his mom and dad were in the stands. The most embarrassing moment in racing was the night he managed to get upside down during hot laps.

Dave's favorite competitor was Larry Dickson. The two had plenty of time to share stories at the party and it was great to see them stroll down memory lane. Dave would most like to be compared to A.J. Foyt because he was aggressive and impressive. Many people assume that Dave is crazy. It would be hard to argue the point!

His list of car owners reads like the “Who’s Who” of open wheel racing. Ted Swiontek, Ken Brenn, Bill Dugas, Jr., Sab & Ralph Venezia, the O’Brien Brothers, Jimmy Guenther, Spitz, Clem Schmidt, Charlie Sachs, Wilbur Hawthorne, Boston Louie Seymour, and John Ankeny. Pit crew members included: Bill & Ted Swiontek, Don Resnic, Ken McElhaney, Bill Dugas, and Bernie Auberzinski.

Lundy’s resume included some very impressive speedways such as Allentown, Arden Downs, Bedford, Blanket Hill, Bloomsburg, Butler, Canada, Claridge, Clinton, Columbus, Debo Park, One evening at Debo Park in the 1960’s the throttle stuck, he went through the wall, and he ended up in a watermelon patch, Eldora, Erie, Flemington, Hagerstown, Hamburg NY, Heidelberg, and Hickory.

Kansas City MO, Langhorne, Latrobe, Mercer, Middletown NY, Midvale, Mon-Duke, Muskogee OK, Morgantown, New Bremen OH, Port Royal, North Carolina State Fair in Raleigh NC, Reading, Rutland VT, Selinsgrove, Sharon, South Park, Florida State Fair in Tampa, Terra Haute IN, Trenton Speedway, Tri-City, Tulsa OK, Uniontown, Williams Grove and Winchester.

Dave was critically injured in a sprint car that should have been called the “voodoo wagon”. The car came to life during the fall of 1962 in the Warren Michigan shop of driver Johnny White. It was sold to Texan, Gordon Wolley, who proceeded to dominate and win the 1963 IMCA Sprint Car Championship.

The car was returned to Michigan with the sale to Utica home builder, Sid Weinberger, who installed the car builder, Johnny White, as the driver in USAC competition. A week after finishing fifth and winning Rookie-of-the-Year in the 1964 fire-ravaged Indy 500, White flipped the Weinberger sprinter at Terre Haute and was rendered a quadriplegic until his death in the early 70's.

Later Gordon Johncock was installed as the driver and Weinberger hired him to drive the entire 1965 USAC Championship Trail in his Watson Offy roadster. Johncock finished fifth at Indy.

In 1965 the Weinberger Sprinter was sold Louis Seymour and Bill Deaken and named "The S & D Special." In June of 1966, its driver, Red Reigle and Judd Larson perished together in a horrific crash at Reading, PA. Lundy was offered the ride in the S & D car and drove it with some success until that fateful Sunday, September 11, 1966 at Terre Haute. The ultimate irony, of course, is that Lundy and White were hurt in the same car at the same track!

In 1989 Dave Lundy was inducted into the Pittsburgh Circle Track Club Hall of Fame. I was the Master of Ceremonies and Jim Dinsmore made arrangements to have Johnny Rutherford's taped comments played at the HoF Induction Ceremony. Rutherford said "Dave was one of the best I raced against and if he had not been injured he would have been at Indy with Dickson and me".

Dave's retirement includes some bowling, golf, and spending a great deal of time at Forbes Field Automotive working with the Barbara Family of the Triangle Benefits Service #17 Super Late Model that Keith Barbara drives. Special thanks to Jim Dinsmore for a lot of the open wheel information on Dave's career.

I had the pleasure to watch one of the best in the business as well develop a friendship that has lasted five decades with a true gentleman and excellent race car driver. Dave is one of the reasons we like to "Remember When"