

NATIONAL SPRINT CAR HALL of FAME & MUSEUM

GEORGE "DOC" MACKENZIE

Coming from a family of physicians at Eddington (Penna.), it was only to be expected that George MacKenzie should pick up the title of "Doc" and carry it with him throughout his life.

He was a colorful figure (especially his uniforms) at all times and believed in giving the spectators a show as well as a good race. The greatest evidence of that was his Van Dyke beard which caused him to have plenty of fun along with his precarious work.

Doc entered dirt track racing in the 1930s on Ralph "Pappy" Hankinson's Eastern circuit with only intermittent success until the 1935 season. That year, as the pilot of John Bagley's Cragar Cresco Special, he had 19 feature wins, four seconds, one third, one fourth and one seventh place finish and was declared the American Automobile Association (AAA) Eastern Champion. He also won the

Hankinson Speedways circuit trophy that year, making him the first dual champion in East Coast history.

At Indianapolis he finished the 1935 race in ninth position aboard the Bowes Seal Fast Special, which was his best finish since starting

owner Kelly Petillo).

After Indy in '36, Doc met with a serious five-car accident at Reading (Penna.) on July 12. That accident put him (and Floyd Roberts) out of action for a period of time.

While recuperating in the hospital, Doc married Verna Mather and, as a wedding gift to his wife, shaved off his beard. It did not go unnoticed by his fellow competitors. At Springfield (Ill.) in August, Doc returned to the cockpit of his championship car, only to need relief from Tony Willman.

However, MacKenzie was involved in another major crash on August 23, 1936, at the Wisconsin State Fair races and that mishap proved fatal. Ted Horn commented, "Doc shouldn't have shaved. That jinxed him." And from that day on, Ted Horn never shaved the day of a race.

MacKenzie was a great showman, a skillful driver and a fine sportsman.



George "Doc" Mackenzie (Bruce Craig Collection)

at Indy in '32. In 1936, Doc pushed his Cragar car over the line in third place (relieved by