

# NATIONAL SPRINT CAR HALL of FAME & MUSEUM

## MARSHALL "SHORTY" PRITZBUR

Marshall Pritzbur was born in April of 1903 in Philadelphia. The 200-mile Fairmount Park road race in his hometown on October 9, 1911, was the first auto race witnessed by Pritzbur (thanks to his father). Among the competitors in the American Automobile Association (AAA) race were Ralph DePalma, Ralph Mulford and Louis Disbrow.

In the early twenties he attended bicycle and motorcycle races in the New York/New Jersey/Pennsylvania tri-state region. Pritzbur also frequented the garage hangouts of drivers Ray Keech, Russ Snowberger, Jimmy Gleason, Fred Winnai and Al Aspen, and watched them compete at the surrounding county fairs.

Marshall held many jobs throughout his life, beginning as a mechanic, then as a suspension bridge designer (including the Ben Franklin Bridge over the Delaware River) and finally as plant manager for the Sales Corporation of America in Dreshertown (Penna.), which designed furnaces for the world's oil fields.

In 1928, six-foot-four-inch Marshall "Shorty" Pritzbur married his girlfriend, Marion. Marion's sister, Margaret Swan, her boy Joe (and his wife Mae) were frequent houseguests of the Pritzbur.

After officiating a few years with the "outlaw circuits," Shorty went with the American Association (AAA) at the Flemington (N.J.) Fair in 1931. This led to his longtime friendship with 1912 Indy 500 winner, and subsequent official, Joe Dawson. Acting as AAA chief timer and scorer, Pritzbur, and Dawson, ran the busy 'big car' schedule in Pennsylvania. Pritzbur also scored the two Roosevelt Vanderbilt Cup races on Long Island.



Marshall "Shorty" Pritzbur (Bruce Craig Collection)

After Dawson's demise in 1946, Pritzbur was appointed the AAA Pennsylvania Zone, then Eastern Zone Supervisor, which took him from Syracuse (N.Y.) to Atlanta, overseeing all of

AAA's divisions.

In 1948, Shorty co-founded the United Racing Club (URC) with fellow Philadelphian Harry Johnson. According to Johnson, who was to be its first president, "Here is your opportunity as a car owner and driver to avail yourself of the many advantages of Class B competition under AAA sanction, plus the many benefits of a membership in URC." In 1950 URC separated from AAA and the club is still active today as a modern 360-cubic-inch sprint car sanctioning body.

In 1955 Pritzbur was an assistant steward at Indy and was cited for writing a complete 'running tape' of the entire 500-mile race.

Shorty's last official duty was in 1956 when he was the United States Auto Club (USAC) Technical Representative for their sanctioned test for the Sun Oil Company which ran two weeks through six cities.

During the 1970s, he wrote articles in "Cavalcade of Auto Racing" magazine on 'the early days.' Throughout his life, Shorty always served as a great ambassador for the sport of auto racing. Many sprint car racing fans, including Charles W. Lecki of the "City of Brotherly Love," owe their love for the sport today to the

efforts of Pritzbur.

Marshall "Shorty" Pritzbur passed away in April 1984.