

NATIONAL SPRINT CAR HALL of FAME & MUSEUM

TED HORN

By Carol Sims

Rarely in the history of auto racing has one man had such an impact on the sport as did Ted Horn. Still spoken of with reverence, he was the first driver to become AAA National Champion three years in a row (1946-47-48). Born February 27, 1910, Eylard Theodore Horn traveled many a mile from his Cincinnati, Ohio, birthplace to DuQuoin, Illinois, where a broken spindle caused his fatal crash on October 10, 1948. He left his mother and brother, wife Gerry, and four daughters - Loretta, Theresa, Kathy and Gayeleen.

In that brief 38-year lifespan, Ted Horn racked up an almost unbelievable list of accomplishments. Only an Indianapolis win evaded him although he had one second, four thirds, four fourths and a lone DNF at the Brickyard. He held 89 track records from California to Massachusetts, from one lap to 350 miles.

Ted's early career included racing at Legion Ascot, Frank Funk's mid-western tracks and Ralph "Pappy" Hankinson's eastern fair circuit in the early thirties. By the middle of the decade, Ted had established his rac-

ing team in Paterson, New Jersey's Gasoline Alley, which would be his headquarters for the remainder of his life. In the early forties, Hankinson withdrew from the AAA in favor of CSRA/IMCA sanctions and with him



Ted Horn
Bruce Craig Collection

went the Ted Horn Racing Team (Horn, Bob Sall, Tommy Hinnershitz and Rex Records). In fact, Ted captured the 1941 Central States Racing Association (CSRA) title. After World War II, Horn resumed his winning

ways. In his last season, Horn won 24 sprint car races, cinched another National Championship and successfully defended the Eastern Championship too.

His race cars, 'Baby' the sprinter and 'Beauty' the champ car, were always immaculate. So was he. Courageous race driver, successful businessman, idol of thousands, he signed autographs "Best Wishes Always, Ted Horn" - and meant it.

Wilbur Shaw, then Indianapolis Speedway President, perhaps said it best: "In addition to Ted Horn being the undisputed Champion automobile driver of this era, he was unquestionably the most loved and respected driver of this time. These characteristics qualified him as the sport's outstanding good will ambassador. His passing was an irreparable loss to automobile racing."

