

NATIONAL SPRINT CAR HALL of FAME & MUSEUM

JERRY RICHERT, SR.

Jerry Richert (Sr.), born on November 25, 1932, started driving the Auto Repair Service No. 63 in 1958 after running modifieds in the Twin Cities area since he was sixteen. In fact, in 1959, he finished fourteenth in International Motor Contest Association (IMCA) points. The next year, he improved his position by three spots in the association's final ranking. In 1961, Richert spent the first of three seasons in the Bill MacDonald Offy. It was with MacDonald that Richert matured as a driver and won his first championship feature at Lakeside Stadium in Kansas City. The Forest Lake (Minn.) driver finished the season fourth in IMCA points.

When not running with MacDonald, Richert ran outlaw dates in a car owned by Harold "Ted" Ready. Ready turned his ex-Bill MacDonald "Offy Killer" over to Richert in 1962. At the Knoxville Grand Nationals in July of that year, Richert drove the lightweight Chevy-powered stretched midget to a split-second victory over Gordon Woolley, after the inaugural winner and defending champion Roy Robbins crashed out of the lead. Meanwhile, back in IMCA competition aboard the MacDonald Offy No. 69 entry, Richert placed third in points in 1962 and sixth a year later (in spite of a May, 1962 cockpit fire at the "Little 500").

In 1964, Richert left MacDonald to pilot the Wagner-Johnson-Wilson (WJW, Inc.) Chevy, which was vacated by Jerry "Scratch" Daniels in favor of Hector Honore's "Black Deuce". In 1965, MacDonald joined the Frank Wagner stable and wrenched Richert's sprinter throughout the winning years. They won the IMCA title in 1964-65-66-68 and finished second in 1967 and 1970.

In 1964, Richert won 14 features in the WJW, Inc. Chevy and placed second in the prestigious "Little 500" at Anderson (Ind.). A year later, the Wagner-Johnson team tried United States Auto Club (USAC) competition. However, the problems there

proved too great, so they returned to IMCA in July and proceeded to win another title. In the 1966 championship-winning year, the No. 63 STP Chevy with Jerry aboard found victory lane a total of eleven times. The following year, Richert topped all winners with six, however, he trailed Karl Busson in the season-ending standings. That was only temporary,



Jerry Richert, Sr.
Bruce Craig Collection

though, as Richert and the Wagner-Johnson team rebounded in 1968 with nine wins and their fourth IMCA national title. The 'Golden Gopher' also finished second for the third time in his career at the "Little 500" event in Indiana. 1969 was not a great year as Richert won once early, but then was sidelined following major surgery.

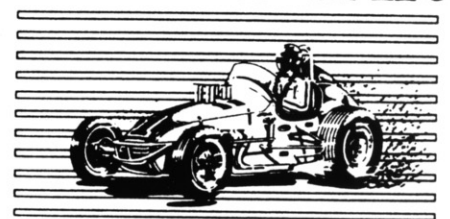
In 1970, Wagner retired and sold out, but Richert continued, winning six main events and finishing second in points to Jerry Blundy. Driving for Wagner's son Denny, the rim-rider began to run less IMCA races in the 1970's and more weekly sprint car races around home. In fact, he won a championship at Cedar Lake Speedway in 1971 and numerous features at North Starr Speedway in St. Paul, Minnesota. He also finished

twelfth in IMCA national points with two wins. In 1976, Jerry won the National Cheater's Day Race in Sioux Falls.

During the decade of the seventies, Richert's priorities clearly had taken a turn. He and Ted Ready resumed racing, but for love rather than money. His children were growing and life offered more than endless days on the road and long nights in the shop. In a class where survival itself is an accomplishment, he won four national titles and then had the sense to grab the opportunity to see what else life offered. However, Jerry will always be remembered as a "racer" and he proved that again with his win in the 1980 Clay County Fair A-Main in Spencer, Iowa.

Jerry is married to Carol and is the father of four, including Jerry (Jr.), the 1986 Jackson (Minn.) sprint car track champion who is currently a regular Knoxville Raceway competitor on Saturday nights.

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