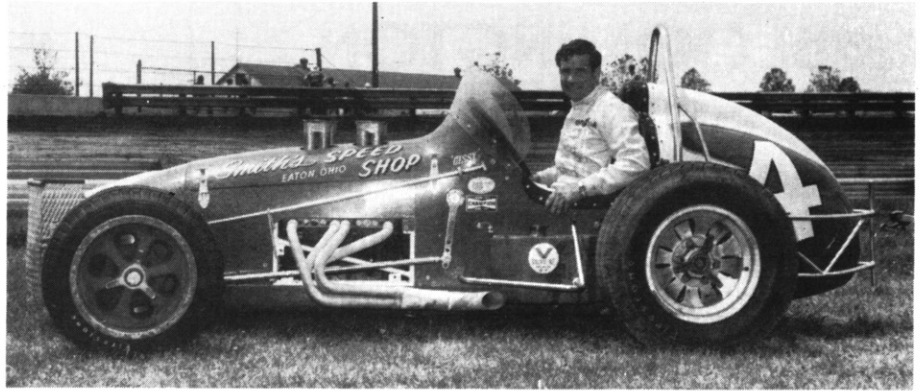

NATIONAL SPRINT CAR HALL of FAME & MUSEUM

LARRY DICKSON

Larry Dickson was born September 8, 1938 and was one of five brothers (Robert, Richard, Tommy, Larry, Paul). For years, his hometown was listed in United States Auto Club (USAC) media guides as Marietta, Ohio, although the independent building contractor and his wife Linda currently reside in Indianapolis. Larry started driving "jalopies" at a little track in Torch (OH) in 1954. He switched to super modifieds in the Marietta area in 1956, winning over 120 feature races through the years, including the 1964 Williams Grove National Open over fellow Buckeye Rollie Beale. During this time, Dickson drove the Long Brothers #55 machine, a car which brother Tommy would later drive for Dean & Don Long (in 1970). Larry had also garnered a season point championship at the Ohio Valley Speedway in his early days on the tough Pennsylvania/Ohio quarter-miles. In 1965, Larry won five sprint car main events enroute to the United Racing Club (URC) point title in his rookie season with the traveling group, driving for George Nesler as a teammate to Earl Halaquist. He also started his first USAC sprint car main event at Eldora Speedway in Ohio on July 3 using a temporary permit.

The following year (1966), Larry passed his Indianapolis 500 driver's test, although he was involved in that year's



Larry Dickson

Armin Krueger Collection

first-lap accident. He also won three events on the USAC sprint car circuit in 1966 and finished fifth in points. In 1967, he won two USAC sprint car events, yet moved up a notch in the season standings. In 1968, one of USAC's most celebrated rivalries was created (by the press) and it was dubbed "The Larry and Gary Show". It featured sprint car stars Gary Bettenhausen of Indiana and Larry Dickson of Ohio. Dickson garnered the USAC national crown in 1968 with 12 feature wins, while Bettenhausen was second with 7 wins. These two veterans finished 1-2 in the national points for four consecutive years, with Larry being dominant in 1968 and 1970 and Gary leading the way in 1969 and again in 1971. During this time, Larry edged Gary in USAC sprint car victories by a score of 29-27. Larry's wins

during this period came with several car owners, including Ray & Cissy Smith, Steve Stapp, Kenny Lay and Ben Leyba.

In 1972, Dickson nearly retired, but instead staged one of the most remarkable comebacks in sprint car history when, in 1974, he won the American Speed Association (ASA) "Little 500" at Anderson (IN). And in 1975, he became the first three-time USAC national sprint car champion. Both proud accomplishments were with car owner Ernie Ensign. When Dickson finally retired from active sprint car competition, he did so with 45 USAC main events to his credit. Although he no longer travels with the 'thunder and lightning division' throughout the midwest, he and wife Linda do make the trip to Marietta to visit daughters Cindy & Marsha.
