

NATIONAL SPRINT CAR HALL of FAME & MUSEUM

HARRY A. MILLER

Harry A. Miller was born in Menomonie, Wisconsin on December 9, 1875. The automotive designer/engineer built his first racing engine in 1915, working for the Duesenberg brothers in Des Moines, Iowa. He designed a carburetor with a barrel-type throat and built-in butterfly assembly. He also tried to get the Mercedes blocks from the Packard Company, but failed as they had been sent out to the Linthwaite-Hussy machine shop in Los Angeles. Knowing this, Harry left the Duesenbergs and went to work at that machine shop in Southern California. He soon gained control of the shop and thus he spent the 1920's building engines and complete racing cars. During the Twenties and Thirties, Miller Specials and Duesenberg's were *the* open wheel machines in this country, and Miller racing engines were *the* motors of choice. It should be noted that during this time, the Duesenbergs, the Chevrolets and Harry Miller waged a terrific battle for supremacy of the race tracks in this country. Unfortunately, this caused Harry's friendships



Harry A. Miller

Bruce Craig Collection

with both sets of brothers to be severed. Only Louis Chevrolet made up with Harry in time.

Also during this time, Miller met two other engine designers, Schofield and Offenhauser. This alliance brought out the Schofield racing head for the Model "T" Ford, similar to the Frontenac head made by the Chevrolet brothers. In 1931, Harry A. Miller designed, with the help of Fred

Offenhauser and Leo Goossen, a 255-cubic inch, 4-cylinder "Offy" engine which eventually won over twenty-five Indy 500-mile races and countless sanctioned and outlaw big car events. The motor was later increased to 270-cubic inches. In 1932, the Miller company went bankrupt (due to serious money matters of which Miller had no control) and the business passed to Offenhauser and Schofield. Soon after, Schofield also left the company, and in 1946 it was sold by Offenhauser to retired driver Lou Meyer and his friend, Dale Drake.

During the winter months of 1934-35, Edsel Ford talked Harry Miller into building several cars to run at Indianapolis. Of the cars, five made the 500-mile race, including those of Bob Sall and Eyland "Ted" Horn.

Harry A. Miller died in Detroit on May 3, 1943, although his engineering efforts with multiple-throat carburetors, light alloys, aerodynamic design, front and four-wheel drive, independent suspension and advanced brake design will live forever. His son Ted currently resides in New York City.