



M.A.

Brown

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M.A. Brown fielded one of the premier Sprint Car teams in the country in the Seventies. The McKenzie, Tennessee, trucking magnate was commonly known by his initials, rather than by the name, Mose Andy, given him by his parents, Rudolph and Era Brown, at his birth on March 7, 1921, in Houlika, Mississippi. He was the second of six children.

Brown was bitten by the racing bug early on, largely due to his friendship with his neighbor Jerry Inmon of Dirt Late Model fame. His first adventure in racing came at the cost of \$12.50 as he purchased a jalopy for competition in the Tupelo area. He was married to Alda Faye Young in May of 1942 and was drafted for service into World War II in October.

After serving three years, M.A. was released with several decorations, including a Purple Heart for being wounded in combat. Once back home, Brown tried his hand at the sawmill business before starting a trucking company with his two brothers in the late Forties. In 1959, M.A. moved to McKenzie, Tennessee, and didn't waste any time in getting involved in open wheel racing when he purchased a Hudson-powered "B" car. With Leonard Mann driving, they never lost a race at nearby Milan. From there, it was time to move on to sprint cars and he did just that in 1969 when he purchased a car from Les Hill. It was a Hil-bilt from Auto Speed Supply, who had a new builder by the name of Jack Elam, a future National Sprint Car Hall of Fame inductee (2009). For the next decade, Brown was a loyal customer, calling on Elam in every occasion but one to supply him with race cars. Jackie Cook was his first Sprint Car driver.

The 1970 season saw M.A.'s three-car team hit the road with his first Hall of Fame driver

The colorful and talented Amati moved from Freeman Spur, Illinois, to Tennessee to work at Auto Speed Supply and to ply his trade behind the wheel of M.A.'s car. With Billy Anderson crewing, Amati traveled afar to put the team on racing's radar. He started and finished third in the 1971 Little 500 and looked like he was going to victory lane but ran out of fuel.

In 1972, Amati finished second in IMCA points behind Ray Lee Goodwin. During a flight to one of the races, Chuck struck up a conversation with Thomasville, Alabama, Ford dealer, Bruce Cogle, who excitedly came on board as a sponsor of the team – a relationship that endured throughout the tenure of M.A.'s involvement. Cogle immediately supplied a station wagon to pull the car to the races. At one point, he gave M.A. a homemade dual cab rollback to transport the car.

The next wheelmen employed by Brown was another Illinois standout named Bubby Jones. He scored victories on many road trips for the team after M.A. convinced him to return to competition after he had prematurely retired. Pro Shocks' George Gillespie served as crew chief for the team. Among their races together, Jones claimed the '76 Western World championship at Manzanita and finished third in the "Wide World of Sports" televised USAC Hulman Classic, which was won by Jan Opperman at Terre Haute. It was a day to be proud of for the invading outlaws. Jones notched a total of 22 wins in USAC. M.A.'s son, Mike recounts the time at a race when Bubby was obviously troubled by his inability to pay a financial debt. "Dad took him aside and said the entire winner's purse would be his if he won. And, he did," said Brown. M.A. forewent the team's share to help out Bubby.

Following Jones, Tennessee native Rickey Hood was the next regular driver of M.A.'s

racing stable. Hood was in the Army for part of the stint and flew in to the races for weekend R&R. Another Mid-South standout Bobby Ward filled in twice when the regular shoes were not available and rewarded the team with victories on both occasions. Ward says, "M.A. was a good competitor but he never told me what to do."

In 1977, M.A. lit the fuse of the skyrocketing career of another second-generation Memphis youngster. Sammy Swindell was a regular winner at home and at a variety of events in the South. With the birth of the World of Outlaws in 1978, it was time to go National and they did. Swindell soon became a member of the famed triumvirate with Steve Kinser and Doug Wolfgang and the junior member of "the Big Three" joined the podium pounders in scoring a pair of wins in the Outlaw's inaugural year.

Toward the end of his racing career, Brown had 50 trucks in his company, mostly hauling furniture for Gaines Manufacturing in his hometown of McKenzie. He retired from business in 1999. The last car in his inventory was a Dirt Champ Car built, of course, by J&J. Elam had taken over the chassis business in 1972 when he formed J&J Enterprises, which is now J&J Auto Racing. Both Sammy and Chuck Gurney drove the new car in USAC competition.

By 1980, Brown was pretty much retired from racing and his primary car was turned over to Ken Conrad, who put Rick Ungar in the seat. They claimed a WoO primary victory at the Devil's Bowl Speedway and took home the track championship at Riverside International Raceway in West Memphis, Arkansas.

M.A. enjoyed his waning years with his son Mike and grandsons Matt and Marty restoring Sprint Cars, several of which are on display at the National Sprint Car Hall of Fame & Museum in Knoxville. His nephew, Michael Hampton, has been an aspiring Sprint Car driver. Brown had four children and three grandchildren. Cancer claimed the Hall of Fame owner in July of 2010.