

# NATIONAL SPRINT CAR



## HALL of FAME & MUSEUM

KNOXVILLE, IOWA



# CLASS OF 2026

## JERRY STONE - DRIVER

By Pat Sullivan

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Photo: Paul Arch

and when the work was done, the groundwork was established for the lad to survive and lead a successful life. Still, Marvin Stone asked his son what he could do for him, Dennis didn't miss a beat – he wanted a go-kart. Dennis quickly put the go-kart to the side – in contrast his brother loved it.

Jerry Stone's remarkable career extends from the plains style supermodified era, 100 inch dirt cars, to 410 sprint cars. While he spent the bulk of his time in the heartland, Stone also spent productive years in Pennsylvania and logged plenty of miles with the World of Outlaws.

Taking karting seriously, in 1966 and 1967 Jerry took the Winter Go Kart Championship in Barnesville, Georgia. Just shy of graduation from Wichita North High School, Stone was invited to participate in an exhibition race at the hometown 81 Speedway. It was here that he spied former go-kart racer, Dale Parson, putting a supermodified through its paces. He knew what he wanted to do.

Melvin and Jerry purchased what Jerry deemed a class B modified for \$750.

"It was really an 85 inch supermodified. It was push start, so it was really a sprint car without a sprint car body. No fuel injection, it had three Stromberg carburetors on a 265 Chevrolet." Stone, as custom dictated, was forced to wait until his 18th birthday to race. In the interim, 81 Speedway's rules changed dramatically, leaving the Stone's high and dry.

In the latter part of the 1967 season, with few other options, the family ventured forth to race on Saturday night at Riverside Stadium on the North Kansas City river bottom, and then the following evening they headed just a bit to the southeast to compete at legendary Olympic Stadium. The family then secured a Nance kit and began racing at 81 Speedway near their Wichita home and he scored a win in the 1968 season.

Stone then took control of the George Hibbs Zephyr Transfer no. 69, deeming it "the first really good car I drove." He took the 1970 Nebraska/Kansas Supermodified championship captured on the Belleville High Banks. Jerry dabbled in midgets for a time but by 1973 he carried John Rice's car to a second place finish at Olympic. The following season he drove a sprint car for Pius Selenke, winning with the Big Car Racing Association at the Colorado Turf Club and at Belleville.

His racing life changed with the formation of the National Championship Racing Association (NCRA). Taking a chance with Shot Hampton's car

Jerry had a solid year but in 1976 he was the best at the Hutchinson (KS) Grand Nationals. At that time, this race was a rival to the Knoxville Nationals. Stone would then form a relationship with irascible Jelly Wilhelm who fielded a car they called Gertrude. Later Stone would say "that car made me a winner." Also of note, in 1977 he scored a USAC National midget victory indoors at the Seattle Kingdome.

Jerry relocated to Tulsa and formed a relationship with famed owner Lloyd K Stephens. He then took the 1980 championship over Emmett Hahn and Ray Crawford. When the NCRA transitioned from supermodifieds to what were called Championship Dirt cars Stone and team were ready. In 1982 Jerry was the NCRA champion and scored track titles at Tulsa and Oklahoma City. By 1984 he had secured his 4th NCRA crown and third in a row.

Jerry moved his operation to Pennsylvania where he quickly gained the respect of a diehard racing community. He also took on every major series in 410 sprint car racing. He returned home where 410 sprint cars were now the premiere class. Jerry was the 1990 Tulsa Speedway champion and one year later he topped the NCRA for the fifth time. He would continue to race until 2005.

It is impossible to understate how important a figure Jerry Stone is to the racing scene in the heartland. He was a star at a time when 7,000 people crowded the grandstands at Tulsa and Oklahoma City each night. Stone is a member of the Central Auto Racing Boosters Hall of Fame, Belleville High Banks Hall of Fame, Big Car Racing Association Hall of Fame, and 81 Speedway Hall of Fame. He is credited with somewhere around 125 to 150 major wins in the course of his career. ■

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