



MISSION STATEMENT

A) To discover, identify, gather, preserve, and display documents, records, items, etc. pertaining to eastern auto racing facilities, competitors, personalities or events.

B) To assist writers to publish and/or research articles regarding historical eastern auto racing topics.

Our organization collects & displays articles dealing with any eastern auto racing facilities for any racing enthusiast to enjoy. Please consider either joining our organization or contributing to our projects.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NAME: _____

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AREA OF INTEREST: _____

_____ \$25 SUPPORTER
Non-voting supporter of the mission statement of the EARHS. Admission to showroom by appointment.

_____ \$40 INTERNATIONAL
Non-voting international supporter with basic benefits.

_____ \$250 CORPORATE SUPPORTER
Corporate supporters are non-voting supporters whose contribution to the EARHS will be permanently noted in the EARHS showroom. Contributions will be used to develop additional displays, catalog information collected, and to defray expenses in pursuit of the mission statement.

PLEASE MAIL TO:

EARHS, P.O. BOX 333, OREFIELD, PA 18069
Make checks payable to EARHS.

For additional information
call 610 395-5303 or 610 398-2188

**EARHS is recognized as a federally tax exempt charity by the IRS under section 510c(3).

www.earhs.org



Eastern Auto Racing
Historical Society

Newsletter Vol. XVII 2020 Ed. #3

Don Vance Edmunds (9-23-1930 – 8-12-2020)

Don Edmunds, iconic racer, designer and builder of an array of race cars, restorer of vintage race cars, builder of world class race car models, and member of both the National Midget (1994) and Sprint Car (1991) Hall of Fames, died in Gold Beach, OR after a brief illness on August 12, 2020. Although a few weeks short of his 90th birthday, Edmunds packed more living into his 89 years than most of us can even envision.

In his early years Edmunds participated in land speed record runs at both Bonneville, UT and El Mirage, CA before joining the jalopy stock car craze in southern California. By 1952 Don had progressed to the United Racing Assn. midget division and won his first open-wheel main event for owner Doug Caruthers at South Mountain Speedway in Phoenix, AZ in 1953.

In 1955 Edmunds drove his own midget to #3 in URA points, but parked his racer in '56 to concentrate on his job building Indy roadsters with Eddie Kuzma and to travel to Indy as the right front tire changer with the Lysle Greenman – Ernie Casale team.

For 1957, Don was back at Indy as the driver of Doug Caruthers' Braund Plywood Offy #67. Although the Caruthers' team could not achieve enough speed to qualify, Don was a last minute replacement for '53 AAA midget champ, Leroy Warriner, in the McKay 500G Kurtis roadster. Edmunds turned in a 140.440 mph average speed to earn the 27th starting spot. Although running in or near the top ten, Don spun in his own oil in turn three of lap 170 when the oil tank on the McKay car ruptured. Don still finished 19th and was



*named 1957 Rookie of the Year.
A 26-year old Don Edmunds, McKay Kurtis 500G at Indy.*

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Cortner was also killed in an Indy practice crash. Don returned to California to work for Bill Devin producing fiberglass bodied sports cars and married Garnet Hawkins on August 28, 1959. Don and Garnet were 16 days short of their 61st wedding anniversary.

Stints with Bill Stroppe and Bill Thomas produced, among many other cars, the Stroppe 'bearcage' and the 'Cheetah' sports cars. Edmunds built the Cheetah from several pencil sketches and his fertile mind. Its success catapulted him onto the national stage.

An order from Gordon Van Liew for a rear-engined Indy car for the 1964 '500' was the impetus for Don to leave Bill Thomas and open Don Edmunds' Autoresearch. In seventeen years of business, the company produced nearly 700 race cars, including ¼ midgets, midgets, sprint cars, supermodifieds, champ dirt cars, Formula Vs, and Indy cars. In addition to the Vita Fresh Indy car in 1964, Don built the '70 "Wolverine" for J.C. Agajanian and Leonard Faas, and the 1977 'Lightnings' for Lindsey Hopkins, et. al.

Don also built the X-1 prototype SkyCycle for Evil Knievel's effort to jump Idaho's Snake River Canyon and found time to become the 1970 AMA National Champion Owner for speedway bikes with rider Rick Woods and tuner, Ed Schafer.

After selling Autoresearch and retiring to Pistol River, OR in 1980, Don worked on several high profile race car restorations and produced numerous scratch-built, world-class scale model race cars.

However, of all the cars produced at Autoresearch or before, Don's favorite race car is his 1973 Offy powered, 4-wheel independent suspension midget roadster. At its debut at the Phoenix mile on 11-25-73 most competitors scoffed at the out-dated Offy engine, but when Lee Kunzman put it on the pole with a new track record, the smiling stopped. USAC officials wanted the nose trimmed back by approximately 2" on both sides, but Don wasn't about to take a tin snips to a nose, whose dimensions were within the printed USAC rule book. As a result, the car did not run at Phoenix. When owner Howard Linne sold the car to customers in Australia, Don thought his pride-and-joy was gone forever. In 2010, Don finally completed negotiations with the Tatnell family and today his roadster sits proudly on display in his Oregon shop.

In 2016 Don threw himself headlong into a collaboration on his biography with writer, Paul Weisel. 'The Saga of Rotten Red – The Don Edmunds Story' reflects Don's first-hand account of nearly 90 years of a life well lived. Copies are available at 610-395-5303 and all profits from the

book are donated to the non-profit Eastern Auto Racing Historical Society.



2016, Don and the apple of his eye, his Offy powered 4-wheel independent roadster midget #99

**EARHS Fall Open House Date
Sunday, October 25, 2020
5080 Kernsville Road, Orefield, PA 10am-5pm**

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Freddy Adam – The Kutztown Komet

From Freddy's family, friends, and fans

Your monetary support in any denomination or donations of historically significant items, photos, documents, etc. toward projects undertaken by the EARHS are welcomed and encouraged. EARHS is recognized as a federally tax exempt charity by the IRS under Section 501c(3).

EARHS “wants and needs”

Wanted: Racing photo collections – share and preserve programs. If you have vintage racing photos, EARHS would like to be able to scan and copy these items. All items will be returned intact and we can provide you with a computer disc of those items from significant collections.

We are especially interested in Dorney Park items from the 1940's, 1950's, and 1960's and all Allentown Fair items, including indoor racing events, but all items are welcome.

Wanted: Showcases and display cases. Often cases of unusual configuration can be used for displays of trophies and memorabilia. Also, race programs from the '55 & '58 Allentown Fair.

Group tours of the EARHS showroom are available by appointment for civic and auto related groups, car clubs, etc.

Call 610 398-2188 or 610 395-5303 for details.

We continue to fill our showroom—all members are invited to visit and check our progress. Please call Pete Trumbauer (610 398-2188) or Paul Weisel (610 395-5303) to arrange a time to visit.

