

Trans Am | SVRA | IGT | F4 | FRA

SpeedTour Quarterly

Vol. 7, Issue 3, 2020

A Celebration of Motorsports and Car Culture

\$ 13.95

DESTINATIONS:

Virginia

FEATURES:

Century of Style





1969 U.S. Grand Prix at Watkins Glen, Jochen Rindt

Big Stars and Small Occurrences

Trackside Stories: Kathie J. Meredith's Motorsports Photographs, 1968-1972

By Jenny Ambrose, Head Archivist

“**K**athie J. Meredith photographed Austrian racer Jochen Rindt immediately after he took the checkered flag in the 1969 United States Grand Prix at Watkins Glen International. Rindt, still behind the wheel of the red and gold Lotus-Ford, had just secured his first Grand Prix victory after a frustrating, five-year chase. While Rindt nabbed the headlines, Meredith explored the many other stories of the race weekend—Bruce McLaren blowing his engine, unpleasant weather, the arrival of a reluctant poodle, young campers collecting firewood and mechanics working in the pits. Meredith captured and shared the many moods of the Grand Prix at Watkins Glen.

As a newly-hired reporter, Meredith took her notebook and cameras to her first race at Watkins Glen International in the Summer of 1968. A native of Indianapolis, home of the Indy 500, Meredith knew racing and race drivers from days at the Speedway with her mother Geneva. Meredith covered races at Watkins Glen during one of the most exciting eras in the circuit's history, when it hosted major national racing events as well as top-level international races including the prestigious Formula One series.

Meredith focused her lens on big stars and small occurrences. Meredith's Press Pass gave her up-close access to stars of the motorsports world. Her intimate portraits →



1984 Trans-Am, Willy T. Ribbs

captured the intense emotion of the drivers in the cockpit and pit row. In addition to driver portraits, she photographed what happened behind the scenes...scorers recording lap times, team members, the safety crew and fans bundled up against the October chill, drinking beer and watching the races. She shared the latest innovations, engineering and design of race cars along with views of the new Watkins Glen pit area. Her photographs reflect her keen eye.

During her 40-year career as a regional editor, writer and photographer at the Daily Messenger newspaper in Canandaigua, NY, Meredith's focus was always on people. She was a perfect fit at a local newspaper. She reported on everything from politics to festivals to local theatrical productions. Her press access allowed her to promote local artists and musicians, interview celebrities, cover presidential inaugurations and even report on the second moon launch. Her skills as a photojournalist displayed the heart and great variety of activities in her community; people selling grapes, protesting the Vietnam war and watching races at Watkins Glen. Reflecting on her career at her retirement in 2008, Meredith said, "I have been really, really fortunate just to be able to tell stories."

The Trackside Stories exhibition of Meredith's photographs is part of a larger project undertaken by the International Motor Racing Research Center (IMRRC) in 2020 to celebrate the contributions of women to motorsports. This display reflects the theme of women "behind the lens" focusing →



1969 Trans-Am at Watkins Glen



1968 U.S. Grand Prix at Watkins Glen, Vic Elford

attention on women photographers. Launched to coincide with the Centennial of American women's suffrage, the project explores the experiences of pioneering and current women drivers "behind the wheel" as well as the role women have played "behind the scenes" in organizing races, overseeing timing and scoring, managing race tracks, owning teams, improving safety and engineering racecars.

Opening later this year, IMRRC will present the primary exhibition "Women of Speed: Legacies in Motorsports" at its

Visitors Center, 610 South Decatur, Watkins Glen, New York. Smaller complementary displays will be in satellite locations throughout the village, including the Watkins Glen Chamber of Commerce Visitors Center at 214 North Franklin Street.

The theme of women in racing will also be reflected in IMRRC's regular lecture series "Center Conversations" with free public programs featuring prominent women in the auto industry. Visit the Center's upcoming event page for more information: www.racingarchives.org/exhibitions/. Q



1970 U.S. Grand Prix at Watkins Glen, Pat Surtees keeping lap times



1969 Trans-Am at Watkins Glen, Ron Grable



Kathie J. Meredith