

## Women of Speed: Legacies in Motorsports

### Women Behind the Wheel



**Denise McCluggage**, winner of the 1957 Ladies Race at the Watkins Glen Sports Car Grand Prix in September of 1957, receives her trophy from Harold Jacques, Regional Executive for the Glen Region of the Sports Car Club of America. She drives a Porsche RS 500 Spyder racer and wears her signature polka dot crash helmet.

McCluggage was a pioneering woman driver and noted motorsports journalist. She helped launch and contributed to *Competition Press*, later *AutoWeek*.

She held both the Ken W. Purdy Award from the International Motor Press Association and the Dean Batchelor Lifetime Achievement Award from the Motor Press Guild for Excellence in Automotive Journalism. / *Bill Argetsinger Collection; Photo by William LaFayette*



A smiling **Janet Guthrie** makes history at the Daytona 500. In 1977, Guthrie broke gender barriers across America's top professional races becoming the first woman to qualify for and compete in the 500-mile races at Daytona and Indianapolis and in NASCAR's Winston Cup series. Over the course of her professional career, she had 45 starts in NASCAR and IndyCar races.

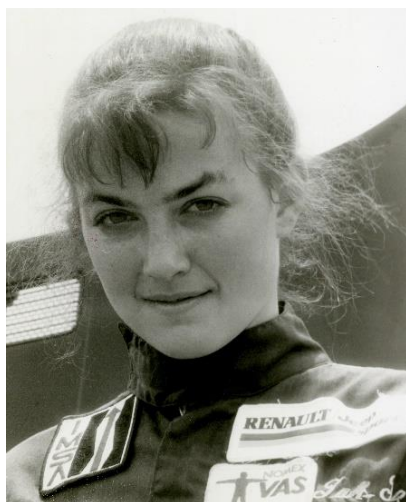
Guthrie has received numerous honors including inductions into the International Women's Sports Hall of Fame (1980), the International Motorsports Hall of Fame (2006), the Sports Car Club of America's Hall of Fame (2018), the Automotive Hall of Fame (2019), and the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Hall of Fame (2020). / *National Speed Sport News Photo Archive*



**Judy Kondratieff** (later Ganley) raced Spites and Mini-Coopers in the San Francisco Region of the Sports Car Club of America in the late 1960s. She capped her driving career in 1970 finishing 1st in class and 19th overall with co-drivers Janet Guthrie and Rosemary Smith in the 12 Hours of Sebring. She remained active in racing, serving as timer and scorer, administrative support staff, and technical advisor for major European race teams. / *Sports Car Club of America Archive*



**Catherine "Cat" Kiser** won the Sports Car Club of America's H-Production National Championship Runoffs at Road Atlanta in 1979. In a hard-fought race, Kiser defeated a field that included four previous Runoff champions by 0.162 seconds in an MG Midget. She became the first female driver to win the championship and the only woman to have been awarded SCCA's highly-coveted President's Cup. Here she dons her driving gloves in preparation for a race in IMSA's Champion Spark Plug Challenge series. / *International Motor Sports Association Archives ; Gloede Photography*



This early driver portrait captures **Trisha Hessinger** when she raced in IMSA's Renault Cup in 1985. Hessinger describes her diverse sports career - encompassing motorsports, dressage competition and professional ice skating - as having a common theme of balance.

Hessinger was a member of the Pace Car Team for the CART Indy World Series for two decades. In 1996, she became the first female Official Pace Car Driver. She has served as an automotive manufacturer product spokesperson and educator for more than 30 years. She also hosted several automotive shows for television, becoming "the Martha Stewart of the automotive world." / *International Motor Sports Association Archives*





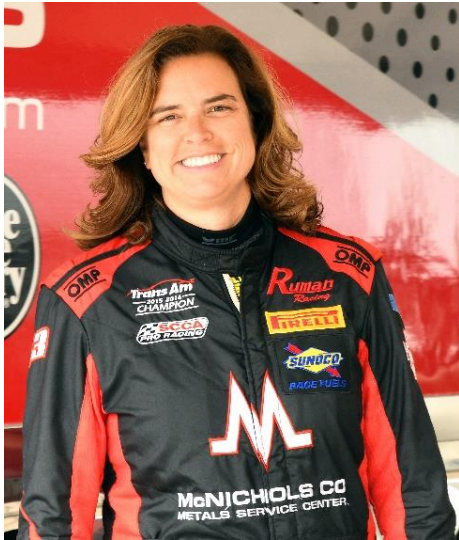
Canadian driver **Kathryn "Kat" Teasdale** crossed borders and racing series. She entered in wide ranging forms of competition including Formula 2000, Showroom Stock GrandSport, IMSA's Firehawk, Toyota Atlantic, and NASCAR's Busch series, racing formula, stock and sports cars. Teasdale joined the prestigious Bakeracing Corvette team for select events in the SCCA Escort World Challenge in 1990 & 1991. / *Sports Car Club of America Archives*



Known as the "Pink Lady" for her signature pink racecars and driving gear, **Donna Mae Mims** was the first woman to win a Sports Car Club of America national championship. She earned the H-Production points title in 1963, driving her pink Bugeye Sprint. The Club awarded her the Kimberly Cup trophy for "most improved driver" in recognition of her accomplishment. / *Sports Car Club of America Archive*



All-woman team composed of Kathy Rude, Bonnie Henn, and Deborah Gregg competed in the 24-Hours of Daytona in February 1983. They finished 13th overall driving a Porsche 924 Carrera for Brumos Racing. Heavy rain slowed the race and reduced the field from 79 cars at the start to 29 by the time the clock ticked 'round. / *Robert Fischer, photographer*



Two-time Trans-Am champion **Amy Ruman**, became the first female champion in the series in 2015, clinching the title a second time the following year. She is first woman to win a Trans-Am race with her inaugural victory in 2011. Her checkered flag in 2014 marked the first solo victory at the Daytona International Speedway by a woman in a professional automobile race.

Created in 1966, the American sports car series has attracted few women racers. Since her debut in 2005, Ruman racked up wins and firsts. She has 16 Trans-Am wins, 41 podium finishes and five poles. / *Anthony Bristol Images*

**Marianne "Pinkie" Rollo** (née Wheatley) sits in her Spitfire at the Thompson race track in 1963. Pinkie was tough behind the wheel and in her day job as a prisoner rehabilitation worker. She also trained and showed horses. Pinkie partnered with her first husband Fred Windridge to place 1<sup>st</sup> in the 6 Hours of Marlboro in 1956. / *Frank Cornell, photographer*



Media sensation **Danica Patrick** debuted in the Indianapolis 500 in 2005 behind the wheel of Rahal Letterman Racing team's Argent Pioneer Panoz/Honda. Patrick became the first woman to lead the Indy 500, falling late in the race to finish fourth, the highest finish for a woman in the competition.

Her phenomenal celebrity renewed popular interest in IndyCar racing and greatly increased sport's popularity among female fans around the world. An adoring public voted her IndyCar's "Most Popular Driver" for six year's running, 2005-2010. / *Bill Bauman, photographer*





**Patty Moise** raced with great success in IMSA's Kelly American Challenge series from 1982 to 1986. She was selected as most improved driver in the series in 1982 and took the highest-placed woman's title in four consecutive years, 1983-1986. Moise became the first woman to win a series race at Portland in 1986. She made the move from road courses to oval tracks the following year, competing in NASCAR's Winston Cup and Busch series races between 1986 and 1998. / *International Motor Sports Association Archives*



A librarian by profession, **Suzie Dietrich** took time away from her books to compete in more than 60 races between 1952 and 1967. She appeared in numerous ladies' races and other events sponsored by the Sports Car Club of America. Later she teamed up with other contemporary women drivers to enter endurance races at Daytona and Sebring. / *Bill Argetsinger Collection*



"In company with the first lady ever to qualify at Indianapolis, gentlemen, start your engines!" With these words, track owner Tony Hulman started a notable race. Janet Guthrie made history at the Indy 500 in 1977 by joining a field of 32 male drivers on the grid. Here she is climbing into her racer, the #27 Lightning-Offenhauser owned by Rolla Vollstedt, in which she qualified driving an average of 188 m.p.h. / *National Speed Sport News Photo Archive*



A racing legend with 18 National Hot Rod Association national race wins and National Top Fuel Championships in 1977, 1980 and 1982, **Shirley Muldowney** became the first woman to be licensed to compete in the top-level, professional supercharged gasoline dragster category in 1965. / *National Speed Sport News Photo Archive*



**Isabelle Haskell** (later de Tomaso) avoided ladies' races, preferring to compete in feature and international endurance events. In the mid-1950s, she drove in the Governor's and Nassau Trophy races as well as 12-hour events in Buenos Aires, Rheims, and Sebring. She is depicted here in her Siata 300BC. / *Sports Car Club of America Archives; David R. Allen, photographer*



**Deborah Gregg** inherited Brumos Racing from her husband Peter, who owned the team for fifteen years and led it to a record 47 IMSA GT race wins. As a young widow without any prior experience, Deborah took over the team and several car dealerships in Jacksonville, Florida in 1980. She began racing herself in 1983, competing in IMSA events and later in the SCCA's Trans-Am series. In 1987, she won rookie of the year in Trans-Am, driving for Jack Roush, and came in fifth overall. She sold the Brumos team in 1990. / *National Speed Sport News Photo Archive*





**Beulah Marshall Bailey**, an aviator in the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASPs) in WWII, turned her talents to racing in the post-war period. She competed in regional events in Upstate New York in the late 1950s. The Center holds six of Bailey's racing trophies, reflecting her success in races at regional tracks in Watkins Glen and Dunkirk, New York. / *Beulah Bailey Collection*

Driver **Lyn St. James** tests her new Ford Racing Mustang at Road Atlanta before competing in the IMSA's Kellygirl Challenge race on September 21, 1980. The series sponsor, Kelly Services, wanted to support women in the workforce and in non-traditional roles. The relatively low start-up costs for the series, which facilitated grassroots racing, helped provide an entryway for women to compete. In this race, women drivers made up 25% of the nineteen-car field. / *International Motor Sports Association*



**Grace Harris** waves her checkered flag after winning the Saturday ladies' race at the Sports Car Club of America regional at Coffeyville, Kansas, on May 31, 1959. Harris earned two 1<sup>st</sup> place finishes behind the wheel of her Elva Mk II that season.

Women drivers could obtain a competition license to participate in SCCA events starting in 1952, four years after the Club's founding. By 1958, 61 women, out of a total of 3000 drivers, held licenses. / *Sports Car Club of America Archives*



**Kara Hendrick** raced Midgets from her early debut in a Quarter Midget race at the age of 9. Raised in a family of race drivers, Kara took to the track competing along with her brothers on Southern California's oval tracks. In this photograph, she is posed next to her pink and white #7 Three-Quarter Midget in 1989. In the same year, she finished second in the Western States Three-Quarter Midget point standings, becoming the highest-ranked woman driver in United States Auto Club (USAC) history.

Like numerous racers in the sport, Hendrick's life and career ended tragically in a fatal crash at Cajon Speedway near El Cajon, California in 1991, just hours after she set the speedway's record with a 15.75 second Midget run. / *National Speed Sport News Photo Archive*