

TALLADEGA SUPERSPEEDWAY



KENT WHITAKER



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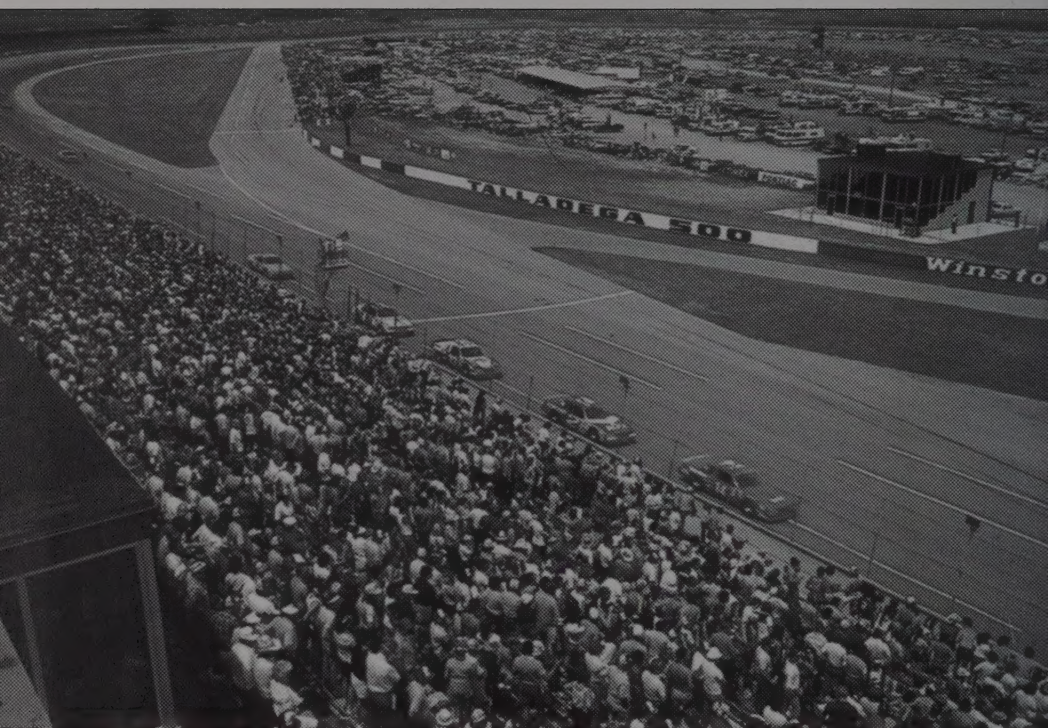
um...

* A book about a
Superspeedway for
a "Super Brother"
a late (or) early
birthday present!

Love ya bunches
hope you enjoy it 😊

Doris

Oct 4 2014



Pictured is a vintage postcard showing the action at Alabama International Motor Speedway (now Talladega Superspeedway) during the Talladega 500. (Author's collection.)

FRONT COVER: Shown are fan-packed grandstands and a view of the tri-oval coming out of turn four at Talladega Superspeedway during the 2008 running of the AMP Energy 500. Even though the image instantly implies "speed," the cars are actually stopped on the track due to red-flag conditions while safety crews clean debris from a wreck. (Courtesy of Curtis Palmer.)

COVER BACKGROUND: Race cars from the ARCA Racing Series compete during the 20th running of the 3 Amigos Tequila 250 at Talladega Superspeedway. (Courtesy Venturini Motorsports.)

BACK COVER: A pack of NASCAR Nationwide Series race cars powers its way through turn one at Talladega Superspeedway during the 2008 Aaron's 312. In the distance, the rolling hills of Talladega and Lincoln, Alabama, are visible above the steep-banked turns. (Courtesy of Rusty Eager.)



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*This book is dedicated to my wife Ally, son Macee,
family, friends, and race fans and those involved in the
sport from local dirt tracks to superspeedways.*

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I would also like to say thank you to the Alabama Auto Racing Pioneers, including Robert Robinson and original Talladega driver Charlie Roberts, for sharing their knowledge. I would also like to thank Don Radebaugh of Automobile Racing Club of America (ARCA), former NASCAR team owner Will Cronkrite, Ryan Owens of CottonOwens.com, and Danny "Chocolate" Myers for pointing me in the right direction on several occasions. Many thanks go to the photographers, public relations staffers, and media contacts for teams and organizations in the world of racing, including Kim Hall at Wood Brothers Racing.

I would especially like to thank Janet Guthrie, a true champion in my book.

Thanks to all, enjoy a look at Talladega Superspeedway.

Unless otherwise noted, all photographs included in the book appear courtesy of Talladega Superspeedway and the International Motorsports Hall of Fame and Museum.

INTRODUCTION

In the mid-1960s, Bill France Sr., the founder of NASCAR, decided to build a new race track. France had already constructed several race tracks, including two massive motor speedways that were the biggest and fastest the world of stock car racing had ever seen. His track at Daytona Beach, Florida, along with his newest project, would give birth to the term "superspeedway."

The only question was where would the new track be built. France Sr., along with his son Bill France Jr., started their search for a suitable location. Bill Ward of Anniston, Alabama, was aware of France's desire for a new track and thought he knew just the place. It was a piece of land once occupied by the Creek Indians between the small Alabama towns of Lincoln and Talladega, which was often called "Dry Valley."

France met with Ward and after a visit decided that the location was perfect despite the fact that a closed World War II-era airfield occupied much of the land. Ward went into action. He not only knew local politicians and businessmen, he was also a race car driver.

The France family and Ward went about the process of bringing locals on board with the project, acquiring land, and planning the speedway, which ended up incorporating much of the paved tarmac runways and roads of the old airbase. The ground-breaking ceremony for the new track, then called Alabama International Motor Speedway (now Talladega Superspeedway), took place on May 23, 1968.

In order to save time and streamline the construction process as much as possible, France Sr. utilized proven construction methods that were perfected when building his track in Daytona Beach. He also tapped the crews and workers from his previous projects whenever possible and seamlessly teamed them with local workmen. The last piece of the puzzle was the addition of William Moss, who was a former race car driver and head of the Moss-Thornton Company.

Moss, as well as his company, was asked by France to help build a "radically faster track." Despite the huge scale of the project, the track was ready less than a year after the ground-breaking ceremony. Alabama International Motor Speedway (now Talladega Superspeedway) opened in time for the first Talladega race weekend, September 14, 1969, with a price tag of \$4 million.

The track was impressive. It was 2.66 miles long with banking in the corners of 33 degrees. Even the frontstretch, which is 4,300 feet long, was banked at 16.5 degrees. The infield, which incorporated portions of the runways from the old air base as parking and roadways, was so massive that it was home to a four-mile infield road course. The Talladega road course was in operation from the track's founding until 1983 and hosted a wide range of events, including six International Motor Sports Association (IMSA) GT Championship races as well as motorcycle races.

With construction near completion and the first race at the new speedway quickly approaching, France put his skills as a promoter to work. The first race weekend at Alabama International Motor Speedway (now Talladega Superspeedway) was turning into a national event with race fans coming from all over the country. The only issue was the one thing that set the new track near Talladega apart from others: speed and how the tires would hold up.

Driver concerns over tire safety at high speeds caused the recently formed Professional Drivers Association to boycott the opening NASCAR Grand National (now NASCAR Sprint Cup Series) race. Despite races in smaller series taking place without issue, the boycott went on. Some of the biggest names in racing missed the first NASCAR race at Talladega.

France filled the field with several substitute drivers from other series, backup drivers, and local race car drivers, including the local businessman who helped locate the land for the new track; that driver was Bill Ward. The opening main-event race did not disappoint fans. At the finish, three cars screamed out of turn four almost side by side before Richard Brickhouse pulled ahead and captured the checkered flag.

The first race was a huge success and an instant fan favorite. Soon, the track would host two races a year in NASCAR's top series as well as events in other NASCAR series, ARCA, and others. It is worth noting that there were no reported problems with tire wear during the first race weekend. In fact, many teams noted that they only used one or two sets of tires during the race.

Since the completion of the superspeedway, the track has undergone several renovations, including being repaved four times. Thirty-five drivers have won poles at the track with 41 different drivers posting victories as of the beginning of the 2014 season.

The name of Alabama International Motor Speedway was changed in 1989. Finally, drivers, sports writers, and race fans could officially reference the track by its nickname. For years, everyone had known the facility, which becomes one of the largest cities in Alabama during race weekends, by the name of the small town nearby. Alabama International Motor Speedway would now simply be called Talladega Superspeedway.

One

FROM AIRSTRIP TO SPEEDWAY

We could have built a major speedway almost anywhere, but Talladega was in such a beautiful spot at the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, and it's conveniently located to millions of people.

—Bill France Sr.



While race fans, drivers, teams, and media often called the high-banked track in Alabama “Talladega,” the track was originally named the Alabama International Motor Speedway (AIMS). An official name change to Talladega Superspeedway did not take place until 1989. (Photograph by author.)



CALVIN COBB

STUDEBAKER GOLDEN HAWK
FAIRGROUNDS RACE TRACK
BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA
1957

Racing took place in the state of Alabama well before the construction of Alabama International Motor Speedway. Calvin Cobb is shown here at the fairgrounds race track in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1957.



Eastaboga Speedway was a high-banked, half-mile dirt track, which hosted racing in the 1940s and 1950s. Local resident "Doc" Brown constructed the speedway near his home. His friends joked that he originally built the track just so he could practice whenever he wanted to. Cars are shown here lined up at Eastaboga Speedway. (Courtesy of Ross Brown and the Alabama Auto Racing Pioneers.)

This photograph of Anniston Air Force Base, now Talladega Superspeedway, is from the 1949 US Geological Survey. The base opened on October 19, 1942, as a flying school for the Army Air Forces Training Command (AAFTC). Its main runway was 5,300 feet long. Pilots trained in Vultee BT-13 Valiants, B-17 and B-24 bombers, and the B-29 Superfortress. (Courtesy of the US Geological Survey.)



The only remaining building from the Anniston Air Force Base is a large hangar located between the current Talladega airport and the backstretch of Talladega Superspeedway. (Photograph by author.)





William Henry Getty France was also known as "Big Bill" in racing circles. Not only was he the founder of NASCAR, he was also a race car driver, track developer, businessman, and leader in the efforts to build superspeedways, such as Daytona and Alabama International Motor Speedway, now known as Talladega Superspeedway.

Bill France Jr., shown in this 1967 press photograph prior to the completion of Alabama International Motor Speedway, was often called "Little Bill" or "Bill Jr." France Jr. served as the head of NASCAR from 1972 to 2000. Prior to becoming the head of NASCAR, his background included working every job possible at a race track alongside his father as well as being a veteran of the US Navy. (Author's collection.)



This photograph from the 1973 Winston 500 race program at Talladega shows the France family. The founding family members of NASCAR are shown, from left to right, William C. "Bill Jr." France, Anne B. France, William H.G. "Bill Sr." France, and James C. "Jim" France.



Several members of the Talladega City Council are seen in a photograph from the 1978 Winston 500 race program welcoming race fans to the area. Pictured are, from left to right, (sitting) William Hurst, Mayor Charles Osborne, and John Taylor; (standing) James Shadrick, Raymond Tapley, and James Proctor.



During the ground-breaking ceremonies, a scale model of Alabama International Motor Speedway was on display. This image, scanned from a clipping in the collection of Talladega Superspeedway, shows, from left to right, Howard Sluyder, Claude Brinegar, NASCAR commissioner Harley J. Earl, and Bill France Sr.



Harley J. Earl, NASCAR commissioner, shovels dirt during the ground-breaking ceremony for Alabama International Motor Speedway in 1968. From left to right are Bill France Jr., Miss Talladega Peggy Duke, Harley J. Earl, Bill France Sr., and Del Hill.

Taken from an archived race program in the collection of Talladega Superspeedway, this photograph shows a team working on the steel-and-concrete track barriers of Alabama International Motor Speedway. The steep angle of the track surface can be seen on the right.



Dirt and concrete placements for the grandstands overlooking the track heading into turn one are visible in this photograph from the collection of Talladega Superspeedway. In the distance, turn one can be seen as well as construction underway on the track's apron.



The banked turns of the Alabama International Motor Speedway are so steep that heavy cranes were used during construction to help hold equipment, such as graders, bulldozers, and pavers, upright; otherwise, the equipment and operators would tumble down. The highest banking at the track is 33 degrees. The tri-oval banking is 16.5 degrees.



This photograph shows the extremely banked turns of Alabama International Motor Speedway under construction with a person walking along the track already on the steep grade while being only feet away from the flat portion of the track's apron.

Carl "Red" Pugh was the superintendent of Daytona International Speedway and was brought in by NASCAR and Bill France Sr. to help with the final construction details of Alabama International Motor Speedway. Pugh, seated on a temporary wood bleacher with a finished prefabricated concrete platform to his left, takes a break while also checking the sight lines of the track.

In this aerial photograph taken during the early days of construction, the basic layout of Alabama International Motor Speedway is taking shape. Clearly visible are the World War II-era airport runways as well as the grading work being done on the track. Construction began on the track on May 23, 1968, after Anniston, Alabama, businessman and race car driver Bill Ward helped Bill France Sr. locate the property needed for the speedway.



You Bet We're Proud!



We Built It!

Of course, we also build bridges, highways, airports, dams, investigate, design and prepare industrial sites and any general construction project you care to name.

Our pre-stressed and architectural concrete plant is one of the most modern anywhere.

Our engineering staff is the best in the business.

You bet we're proud!

And when you see Alabama International Motor Speedway, you'll see why.



Moss-Thornton Co., Inc.

Leeds, Ala.

This ad from a 1971 race program is for the Moss-Thornton Company, which was the construction company that built the track. William "Bill" Moss has been a longtime member of the board for the museum and is the vice chair of the speedway's construction committee. He has also been inducted into the Alabama Engineering Hall of Fame.

Two

GREEN-FLAG RACING UNDERWAY

It came natural to me. I enjoyed it; racing didn't worry me, didn't scare me, it was like riding a bike . . . I've done a lot of things. Flew airplanes, did skiing, but racing was always my true love.

—Richard Brickhouse

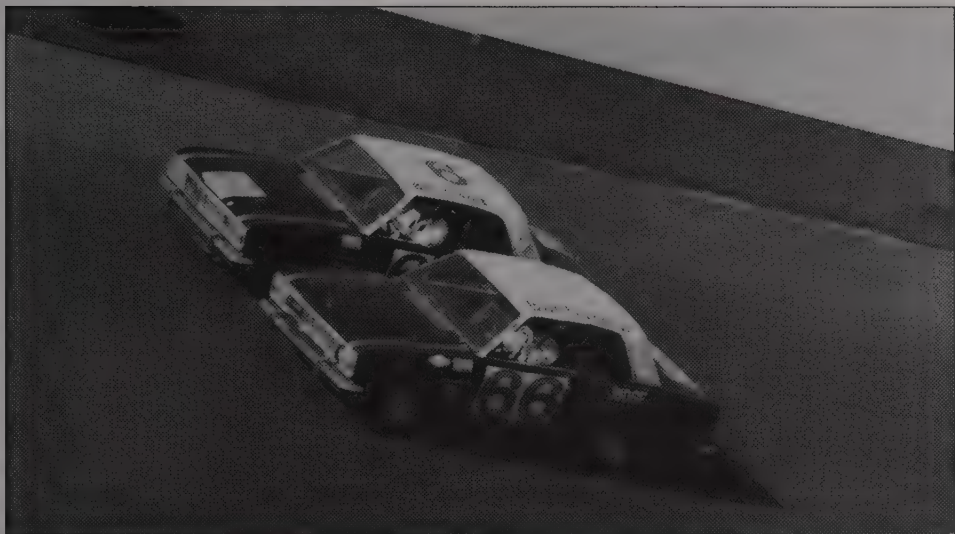


Charlie Roberts pilots his Dodge race car to the front during this ARCA race at Alabama International Motor Speedway. The photograph, looking toward the front straightaway, shows that much of the garage area has yet to be paved by the early 1970s. Car trailers that race cars were hauled on are also shown. (Courtesy of Charlie Roberts.)

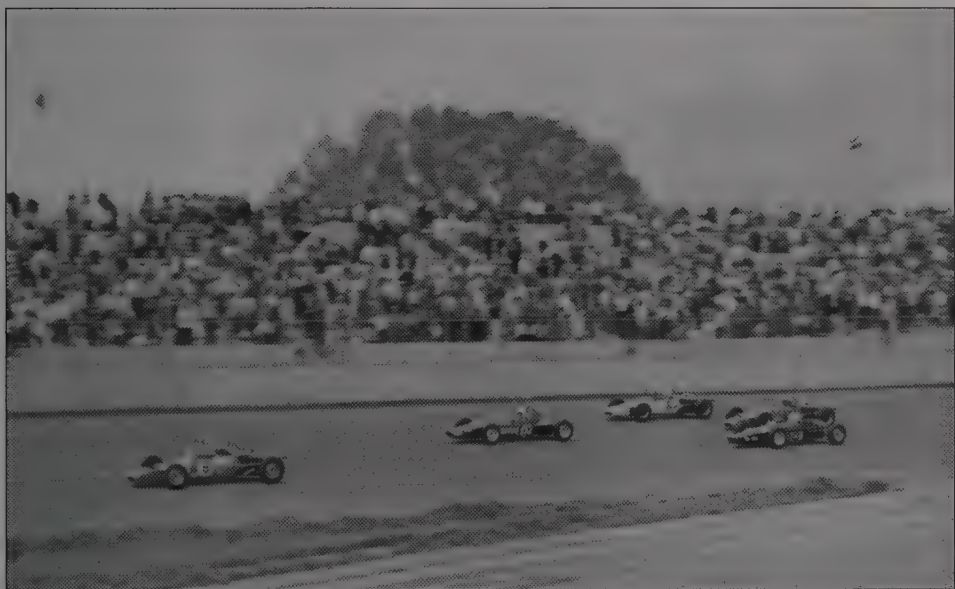


NASCAR founder Bill France is shown in these September 1969 press photographs talking to reporters prior to the first Talladega 500 at the new Alabama International Motor Speedway. France completed an official entry form after drivers from the Professional Drivers Association threatened to drop out of the race due to safety concerns. France ended up not competing in the race, but replacement drivers were used to fill out the starting field.





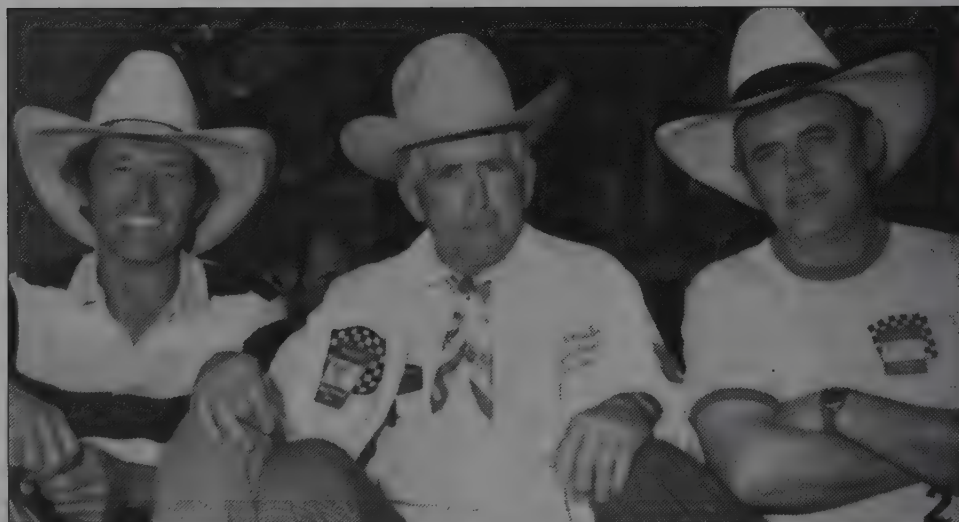
Bill France (No. 6) and Bill France Jr. (No. 66) take to the track in 1969. The two did everything possible to take part in the promotion of the track and to help alleviate concerns over tire wear. This photograph from the International Motorsports Museum, located on the speedway grounds, was taken during an International Motor Sports Association (IMSA) race in 1969.



Alabama International Motor Speedway, now Talladega Superspeedway, has hosted events for open-wheel racing, motorcycle racing, truck racing, and more. The facility formally hosted events on its own road course. Pictured are drivers, led by Carson Baird (No. 8) and Frank Marr (No. 72), who finished first and second, respectively, in the first of two 1970 IMSA Formula Ford Twin 50 races held at Talladega.

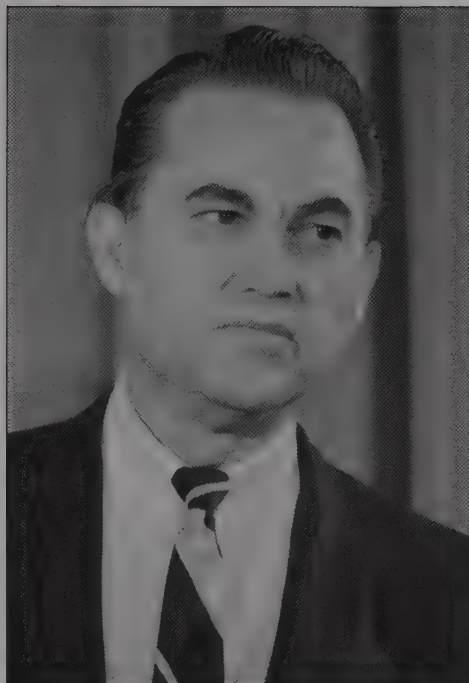


Pre-race events during the 1973 race season included several parties, including a cookout. NASCAR founder Bill France Sr. is shown here entertaining several guests around the grill prior to the 1973 Talladega 500. From left to right are France, an unidentified man, Dr. James Hardwick, and John Bishop, president of International Motor Sports Association. Hardwick was the mayor of Talladega who helped France move the speedway project forward.



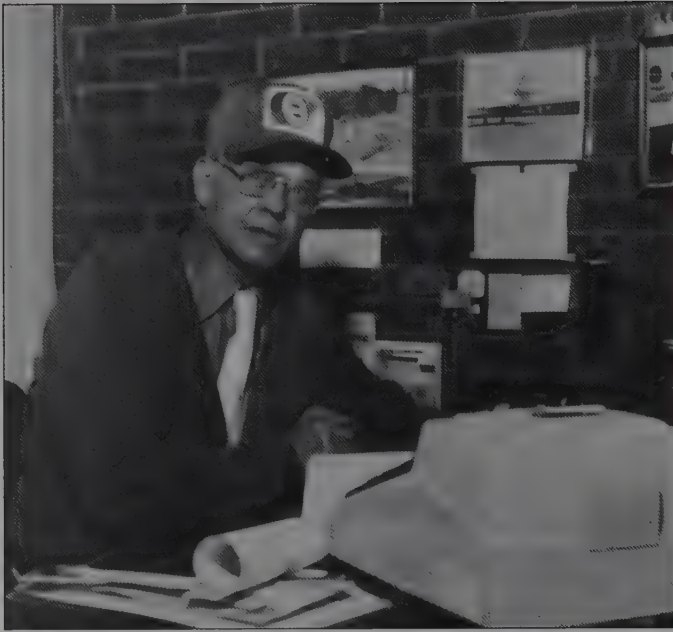
This image from the 1978 Winston 500 program shows two drivers and a rodeo star enjoying pre-race events. From left to right are Richard Petty, Jim Shoulders, and Benny Parsons. Shoulders, often called the "Babe Ruth" of rodeo, was a five-time All-Around Rodeo champion. He was also a spokesperson for companies such as Justin Boots, Miller Lite, and Wrangler.

Alabama governor George Wallace was an early supporter of bringing NASCAR to his state. Wallace often attended races at Talladega during his years as a candidate for political office. He served as grand marshal on several occasions and often greeted drivers, workers, and fans to the speedway. (Courtesy of National Archives.)



Gov. George C. and Cornelia Wallace are greeted by Fred Sington, president of the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce and former All-American on the University of Alabama football team, prior to the running of the 1973 Winston 500. Wallace is seated in the car due to being paralyzed after an assassination attempt in 1972.





Elgin T. Hutton is shown during the 1974 Winston 500 weekend. Hutton, a wounded World War II veteran, was the manager at the new Talladega airport next to the superspeedway. He noted that the original World War II Air Force base was not only named after Anniston, Alabama, but also was called the Eastaboga Army Airbase after nearby Eastaboga, Alabama.

The building of Interstate 75 between Atlanta and Birmingham was an economic boon for the local Alabama and Georgia economies, as well as NASCAR. The opening ceremonies of Interstate 20 included big names in politics as well as representatives from NASCAR and AIMS. Shown here in the foreground are longtime Alabama-based sponsor Sunny King (left) of Sunny King Ford and NASCAR driver Bobby Allison.



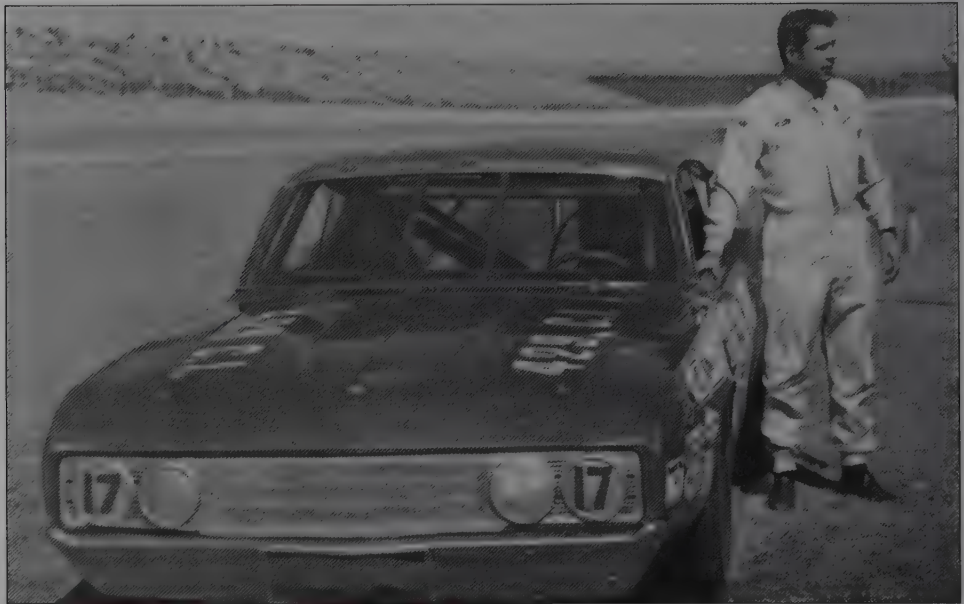
NASCAR president and founder Bill France Sr. checks the helmet for the wife of famed Alabama governor George Wallace prior to the start of the 1972 Winston 500. Mrs. George (Cornelia) Wallace had the opportunity to drive the car several times during the early years of the track's history.



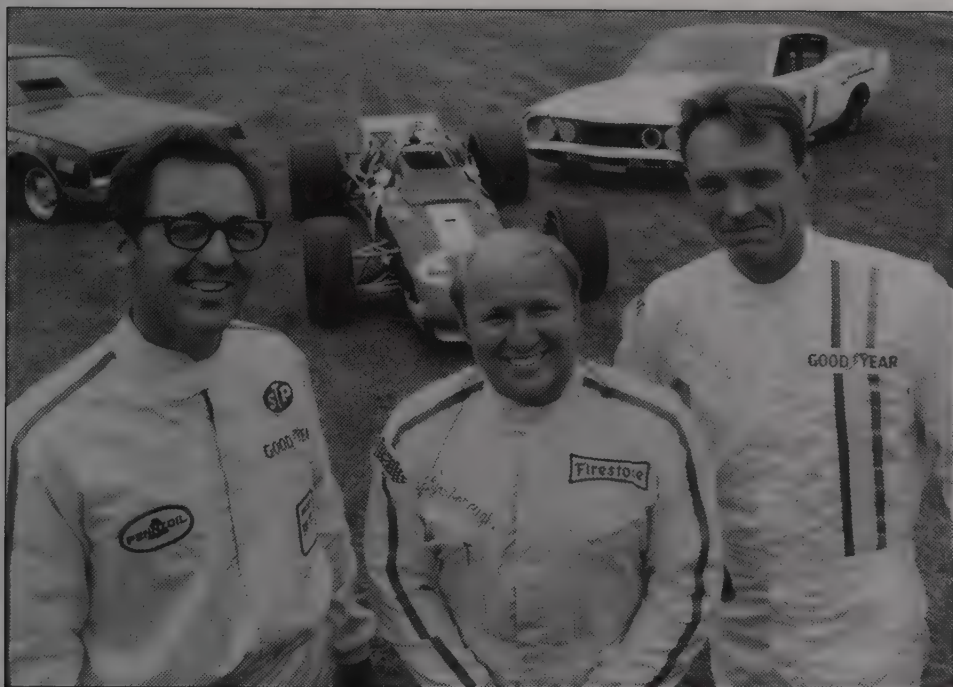
Governor of Georgia Jimmy Carter, prior to becoming president of the United States, is pictured in the 1973 Winston 500 race program in the back seat of the ceremonial pace car with Auburn University football coach "Shug" Jordan. In the front are Bill France Sr. and driver Mrs. George (Cornelia) Wallace.



Brothers Donnie (left) and Bobby Allison are in conversation in this photograph from the 1974 Talladega 500 race program. In the 1950s, the brothers moved from Florida to Hueytown, Alabama. They became known as the founders of the “Alabama Gang,” which was a group of talented drivers based in the state. Other members included Davey Allison, Hueytown brothers Neil and David Bonnet, Jimmy Means, Hut Stricklin, and others.



David Pearson is shown in the 1970 Alabama 500 race program with his No. 17 Ford. Pearson, the second driver to win three NASCAR Grand National (now Sprint Cup Series) championships at the time, was driving for Holman-Moody Racing. During the two Talladega races in 1970, Pearson finished third in the Alabama 500 and fourth in the Talladega 500.



This 1968 publicity photograph is from the Lincoln-Mercury Division of Ford Motor Company. The image promotes its "Mercuteers." From left to right are drag racer Don "Dyno" Nicholson, NASCAR driver Cale Yarborough, and Indy 500 winner Dan Gurney. Yarborough piloted his No. 21 Mercury at Talladega for Wood Brothers Racing during the 1970 season, where he finished fifth in the Alabama 500 and sixth in the Talladega 500.

Richard "the King" Petty was one of the leaders of the defunct Professional Drivers Association that led to many last-minute, fill-in drivers to take the wheel for the first NASCAR race at Talladega in 1969. From 1970 to 1992, Petty raced at Talladega 46 times, with 18 top-10 finishes and two wins.





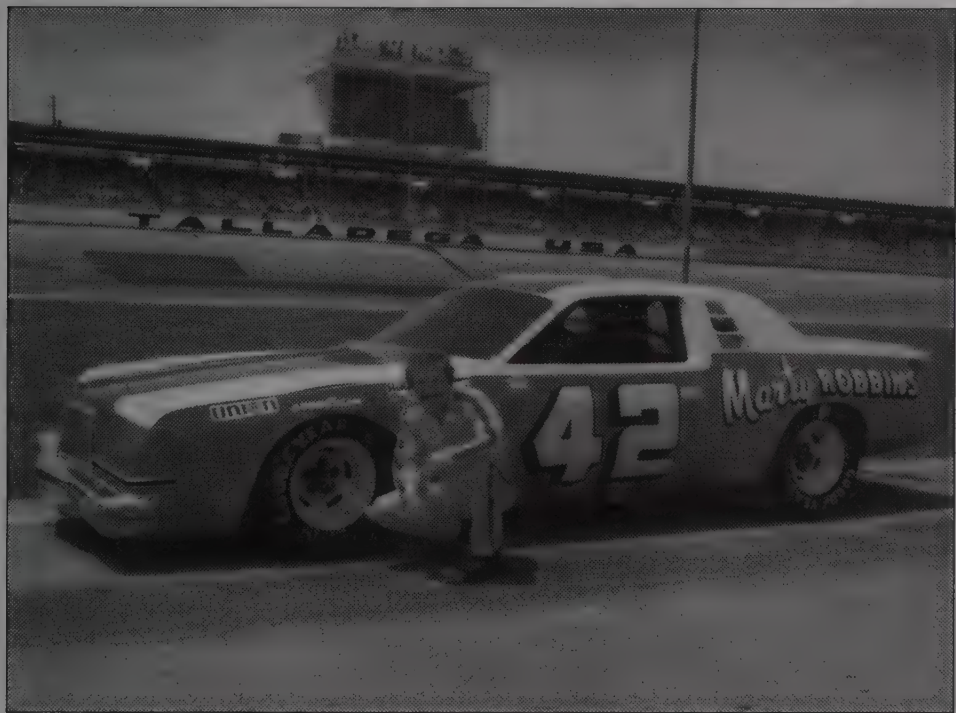
Wood Brothers Racing has been a fixture in NASCAR since 1953 and at Talladega since 1970. Glen and Leonard Wood are seen above talking in the garage area during a break in pre-race action in a photograph from the original 1974 Winston 500 at Talladega race program. Below are the Wood Brothers working a pit stop during a race at Talladega. Leonard Wood is seen leaping in front of his team's No. 21 car as he serves as tire changer during the race, while Glen (kneeling left) and Eddie Wood (right) complete their work during the 1972 Winston 500. Since 1970, Wood Brothers have finished in the top 10 at Talladega 29 times, with five wins.



Posing for a 1970 promotional photograph from the collection at the International Motorsports Hall of Fame is Cale Yarborough sitting in his No. 21 car while driving for Wood Brothers Racing. At Talladega, Yarborough had two top-10 finishes for Wood Brothers and 19 overall; he also captured three Talladega wins and the pole position six times from 1970 to 1988.

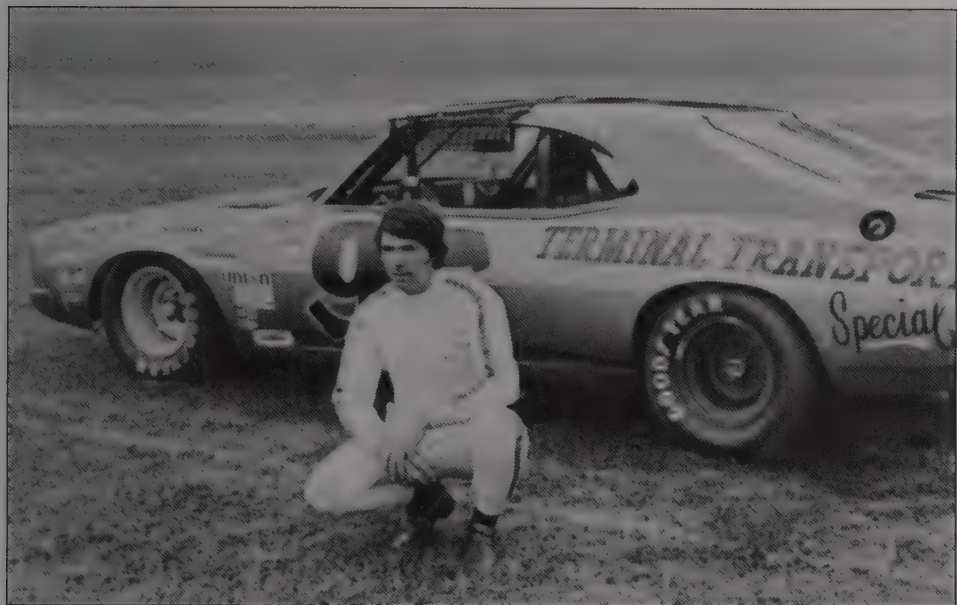


During the 1972 Winston 500, country music recording artist and NASCAR driver Marty Robbins (No. 42) passed stunned full-time drivers at a speed 15 miles per hour faster than his qualifying time. Robbins, known for his competitive spirit with well-funded teams, immediately alerted NASCAR officials that he had tampered with his carburetor in order to run near the front, stating his disqualification was "worth it just to see those guys' faces."

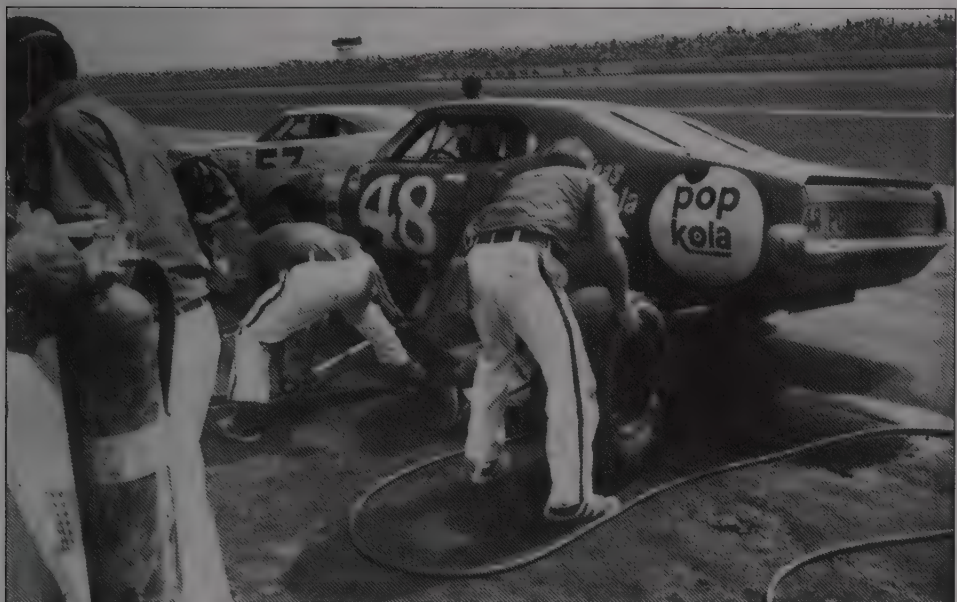




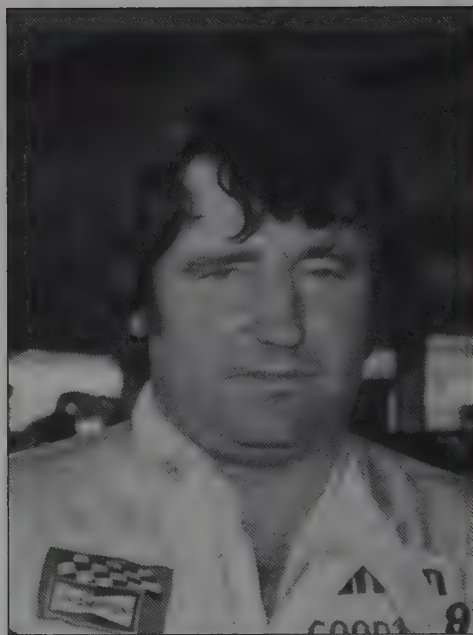
Ford Motors promoted its "Factory Stock Car Team" as the drivers to beat at Talladega in their Ford Torinos with the Boss 429 engine. This promotional item for the inaugural Talladega 500 in 1969 shows, from upper left counter-clockwise, Richard Petty, Cale Yarborough, David Pearson, Donnie Allison, and LeeRoy Yarborough. Ironically, none of these drivers participated in the first Talladega 500.



Darrell Waltrip (No. 95) is depicted in the 1973 Winston 500 race program posing in front of the car in which he had raced to a 12th-place finish during his first Daytona 500. The program touted Waltrip as being a possible contender for 1973 Sunoco Rookie of the Year. The award was given to Lennie Pond, who later won the 1978 Talladega 500.



James Hylton (No. 48) is seen in this action photograph during a pit stop. It took place during the 1972 Talladega 500, which Hylton won. While pit crews were not mandated to wear helmets or protective safety gear at the time, a fire extinguisher can be seen to the left in the grasp of a ready crew member.

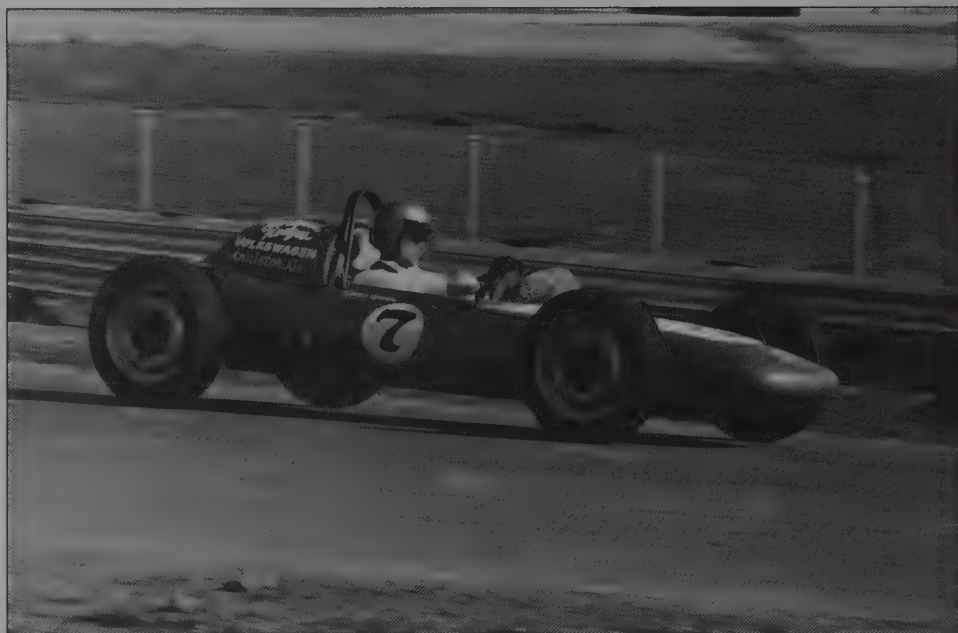


Many NASCAR fans know Richard Childress as being a NASCAR team owner. Childress was one of the original drivers in the first Talladega 500 in 1969. He raced, as a driver, at Talladega 19 times from 1969 to 1981. His best finish was sixth place during the 1980 Talladega 500. Both of these images are from the 1978 Winston 500 race program, with the one below showing Childress (right) talking to Lowell Booker of Kansas Jack. Booker was an executive with Kansas Jack, as well as a part-time crew member for Childress. Childress drove the No. 3 car before handing it over to Dale Earnhardt.

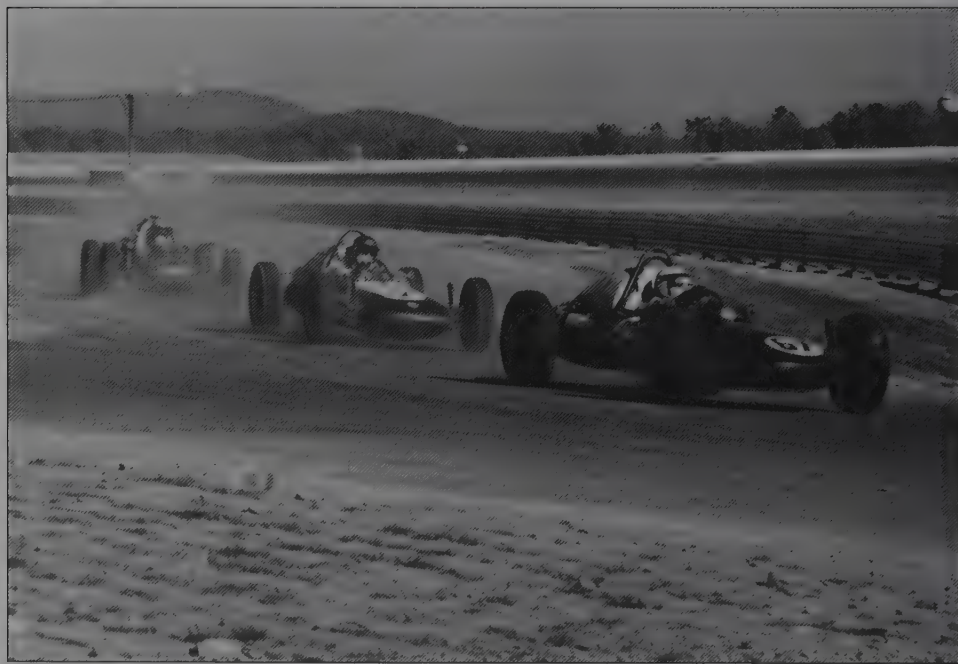




This 1969 nationally distributed public relations photograph from Ford Motor Company shows three famous NASCAR drivers in their new cars bearing the name of the new high-banked speedway in Alabama. From top to bottom are David Pearson (No. 17), Donnie Allison (No. 27), and Richard Petty (No. 43) driving 1969 Ford Torino Talladegas.



Talladega Superspeedway was also home to its own infield road course until 1983. Charlie Roberts of Anniston, Alabama, is driving during a race in these two photographs. Roberts is behind the wheel of the Norwood Hodges's Volkswagen-powered No. 7 Formula Vee car during a road race at Talladega, then called Alabama International Motor Speedway, in 1969. (Courtesy of Charlie Roberts.)

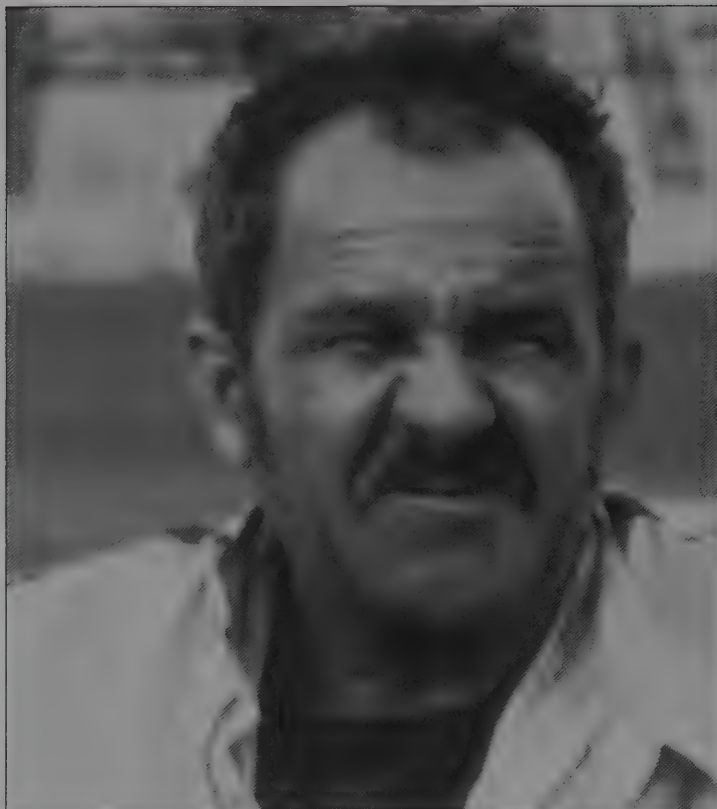


Charlie Roberts of Anniston, Alabama, raced at Talladega in both the NASCAR and ARCA Racing Series during the 1970s. Roberts, seen here with his late wife, Ann, and oldest son, Doug, in August of 1970 for the Talladega 500, says that this photograph was taken at "a time when women and children were not allowed in the garage area." The tents in the background were temporary garages for GRAND-AM.

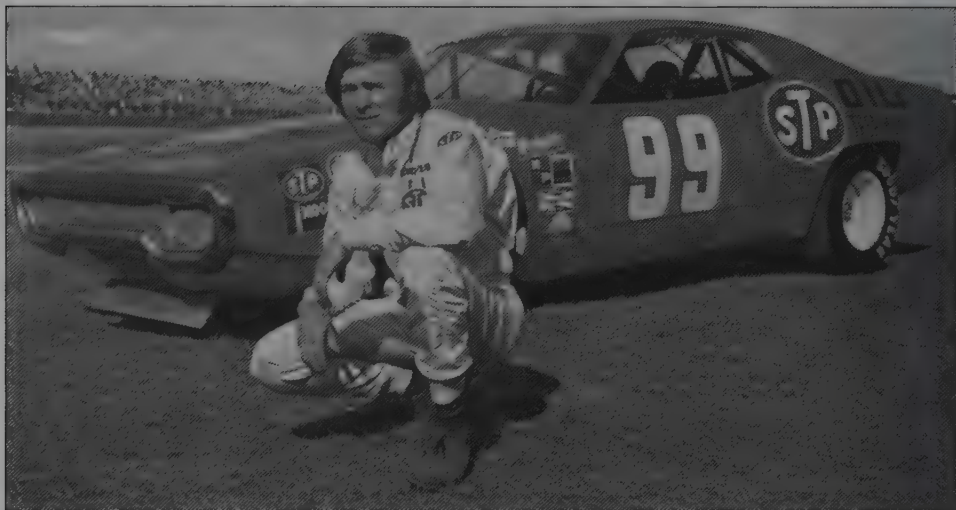
(Courtesy of Charlie Roberts.)



William S. Smith, chairman of the board for R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company, was instrumental in the successful branding of NASCAR as a sponsor. Smith is shown here with his son Bill and several Miss Winstons during the 1972 Winston 500. From left to right are Talladega mayor John McKinney, Marilyn Chilton, Smith, Jenny Lynn Andrews, Bill Smith, and Noneen Hulbert. R.J. Reynolds sponsored NASCAR from 1971 to 2003.



Wendell Scott, pictured here at the 1973 Winston 500, is the only African American driver to win a NASCAR premier series race. He was also a World War II veteran, member of the Black American Racers Association, and a family man. Scott raced at Talladega five times from 1970 to 1973, finishing in the top 20 twice.



Fred Lorenzen raced at Talladega five times from 1970 to 1972. Three of his five starts there resulted in top-five finishes. Lorenzen, often called the "Golden Boy" or "Fast Freddie," is also remembered for driving a bright-yellow illegal car during a 1966 race at Atlanta, which became known as the "Yellow Banana." NASCAR allowed the car to race once.

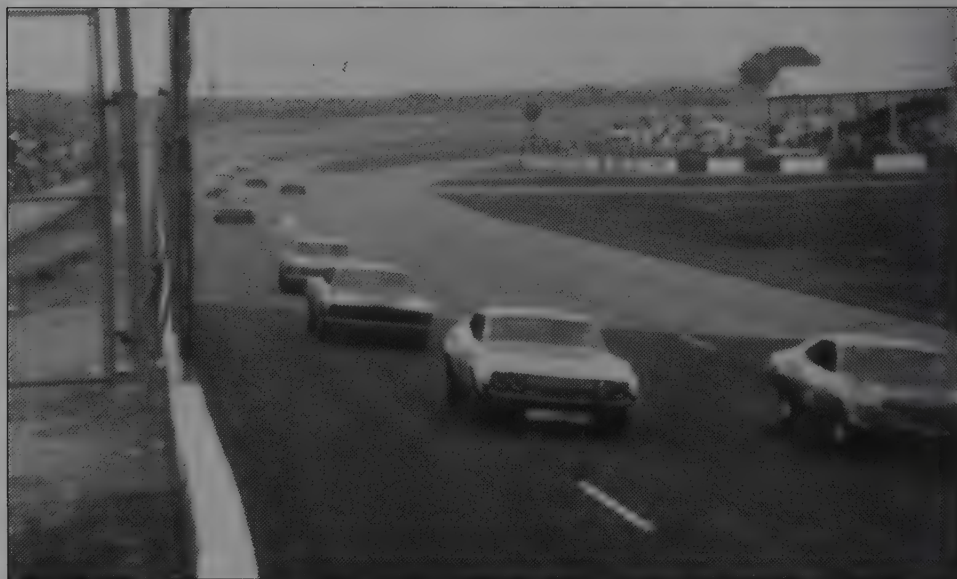
Legendary racer A.J. Foyt won the Indianapolis 500 four times, the Daytona 500, the 24 Hours of Daytona, the 24 Hours of Le Mans, and the International Race of Champions. He also brought his talents to Talladega 13 times from 1976 to 1990. His best finish came in 1978 when he placed third after starting second. In 1977, he captured the pole position.



According to the 1973 Winston 500 race program, Darrell Waltrip (center) is listening to advice "from the experts." Pictured are, from left to right, chief mechanic for the K&K Insurance Dodge Harry Hyde, Darrell Waltrip, and Leonard Wood of Wood Brothers Racing. In the article from the race program, Waltrip states, "I believe in driving a car as fast as it will run. Flat out and belly to the ground."

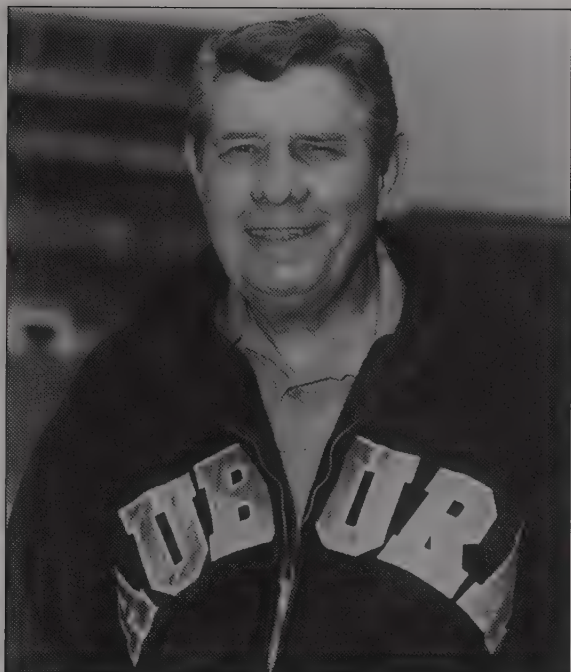


Richard Petty (No. 43) leads a pack of cars in this photograph from the 1970 Alabama 500 at Talladega. Petty started eighth and finished seventh. First- and second-place winners, Pete Hamilton and Bobby Isaac, respectively, were so dominant during the race that they were the only cars to finish on the lead lap.



Dean Dalton, driver of the No. 7 car, leads the field during the 1972 Winston 500. In the background, the Union 76 Oil logoed ball is shown. Union 76 and its logoed balls were a staple of NASCAR until 2003. They have since been replaced by Sunoco signs.

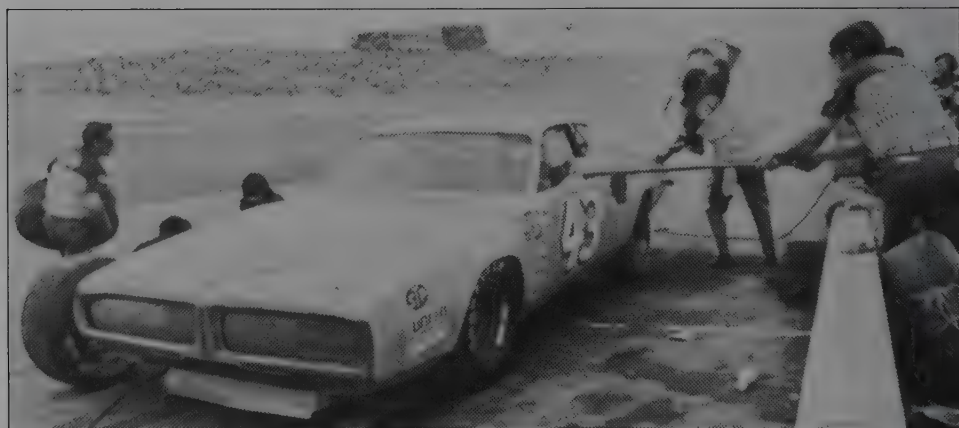
Auburn University football coach Ralph "Shug" Jordan, shown in this cover picture from the 1974 Auburn University Football Media Guide, served as the grand marshal for the 1972 Winston 500. During World War II, Jordan fought in four major invasions, including North Africa, Sicily, Okinawa, and Normandy, where he was wounded. He received a Purple Heart and Bronze Star. (Courtesy of Auburn University, Les King, Photographic Services.)



Auburn University football coach Ralph "Shug" Jordan is shown at the 1973 Winston 500 enjoying a day at Talladega. From left to right are Lynn Andrews, Coach Jordan, Noneen Hulbert, R.J. Reynolds chairman of the board William S. Smith, and Marilyn Chilton.



Sixty cars started the 1973 Winston 500, but only 17 finished the race. The winner, David Pearson, was the only car on the lead lap at the end of the race. The photograph shows Buddy Baker (No. 71) in the pole position. The No. 21 car is driven by the race winner David Pearson. Richard Petty's No. 43 is shown in the third position.



Richard Petty (No. 43) makes a pit stop during the 1972 Winston 500. At the time, Petty had never won at Talladega but had already been crowned NASCAR champion three times. In this photograph, a crew member is leaning over the pit wall with a beverage on a pole for Petty to quench his thirst.



These three images make up a single page from the 1971 Winston 500 race program that features the Jacksonville State marching band. Jacksonville State, located a few miles north of Talladega in Jacksonville, Alabama, is one of several college and high school marching bands that have taken part in the ceremonies during a Talladega race weekend.



The photograph on the left shows Birmingham sports reporter and Motor Racing Network member Tom York interviewing an exhausted James Hylton shortly after Hylton won the 1972 Talladega 500. Pictured below is Clifton "Coo Coo" Marlin, father of NASCAR driver Sterling Marlin, being interviewed by York during the 1972 Winston 500. Coo Coo Marlin raced 22 times at Talladega from 1969 to 1980. He had eight top-10 finishes at the superspeedway during his career.

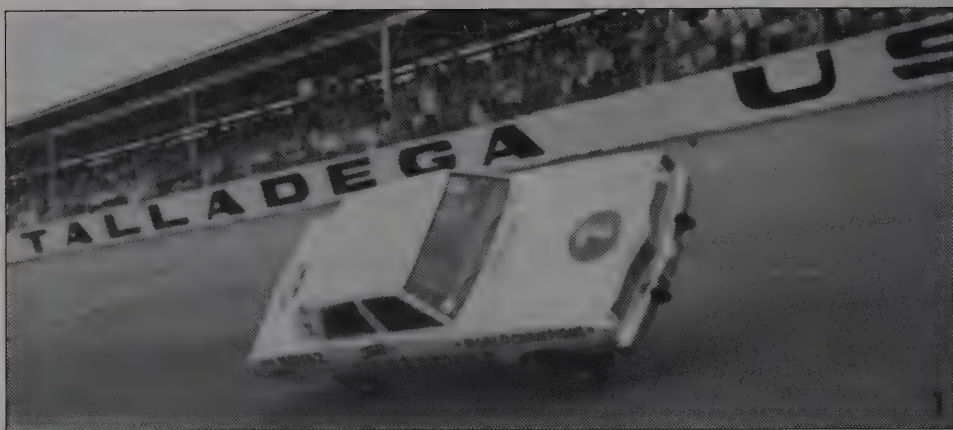




Don Naman, longtime general manager of Alabama International Motor Speedway, is shown in with his brand-new Pontiac Safety Car for the 1973 season. A common use across the industry is to utilize safety, or pace cars, when no races are taking place as a publicity tool. This means using the cars during events in surrounding areas such as parades.



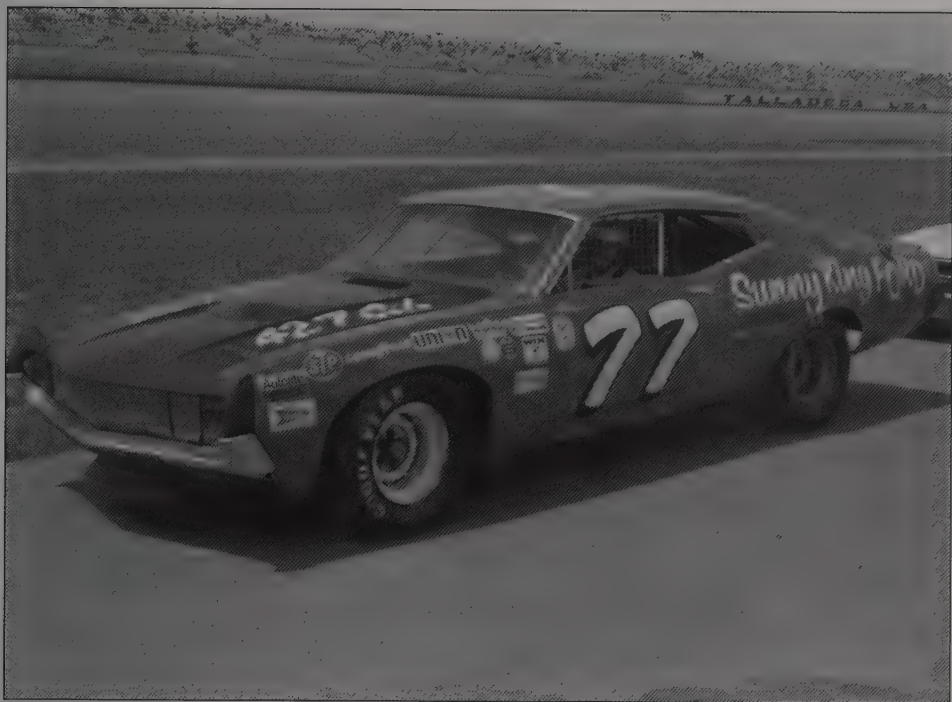
Kevin Naman, son of longtime general manager of AIMS Don Naman, is shown in 1974 trying out a scaled-down replica of Donnie Allison's Chevelle. Two of the replica cars were built by Stan Starr of Nashville, Tennessee. The cars were promotional giveaways in a contest for Shoney's Restaurants in cities around Talladega, Alabama and had a top speed of almost 20 miles per hour.



Pre-race activities prior to the running of the 1973 Winston 500 included driver Billy Little setting a world record for driving a car balanced on two wheels. Little, in a King Kovac Daredevil car, drove two miles balanced on two wheels on the 2.66-mile track.



This is a 1974 photograph of six-year-old Sandy Parsons, son of Mr. and Mrs. Phares Parsons, prior to the 1973 Winston 500. Parsons, from Dalton, Georgia, drove his replica of Richard Petty's car during the pre-race parade and activities for the Winston 500.



Driver Charlie Roberts (No. 77) waits in his car at the Alabama International Motor Speedway during the 1973 Winston 500. Roberts's day ended early due to an accident on the ninth lap. Note the chalk number under the front of Roberts's car: "There were 59 cars in the race, and they used chalk to make sure all of the cars lined up right." (Courtesy of Charlie Roberts.)

Longtime Anniston, Alabama, Ford dealer Sunny King poses with driver Charlie Roberts in this Sunny King Ford publicity photograph from the 1973 Winston 500. King's involvement in racing at Talladega includes sponsoring an assortment of drivers over the years. Currently, the Sunny King Criterium, a competitive cycling event, is held annually in Anniston. The event is promoted as being like a car "race but powered by legs and lungs!"





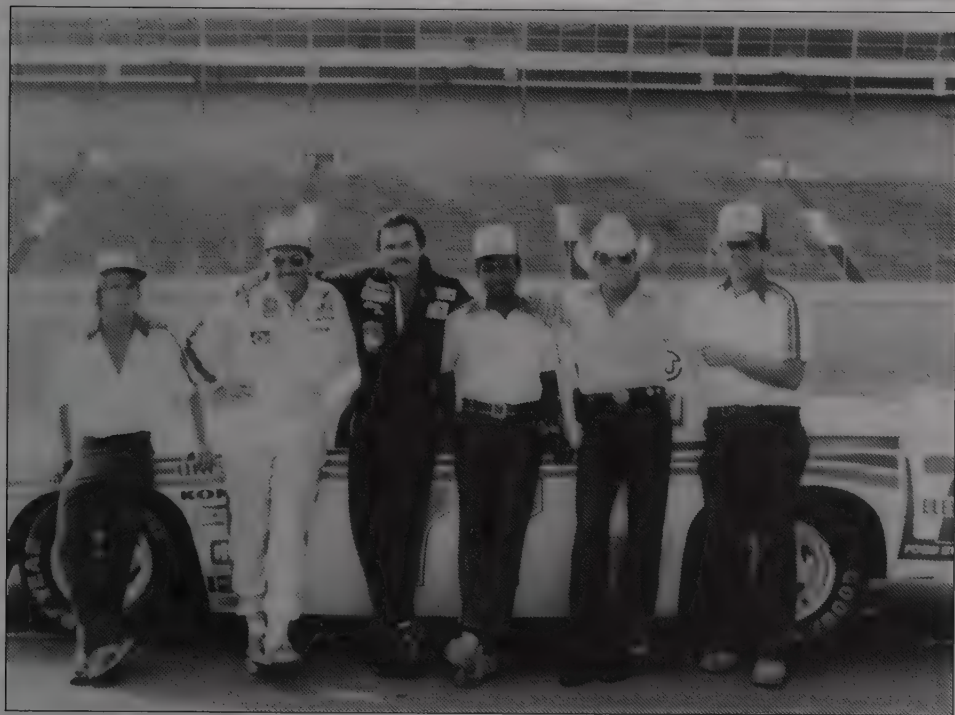
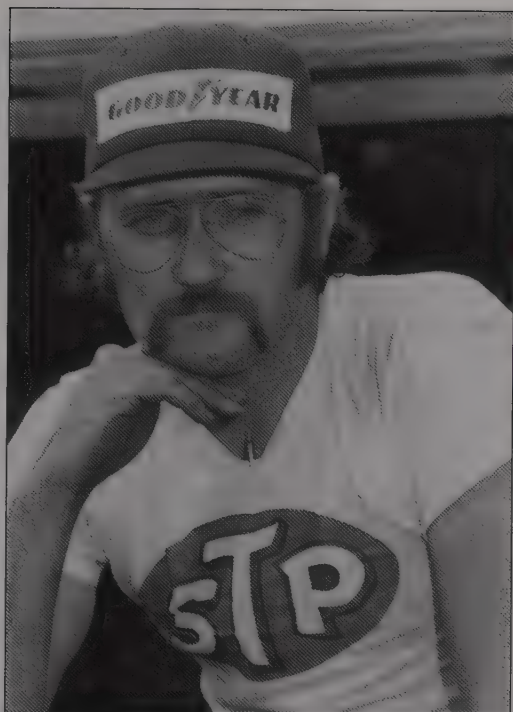
The Union 76 Racestoppers, photographed by Carl Daniels for the 1974 Winston 500 race program, made appearances at races in the NASCAR Grand National (now Sprint Cup Series) Division. Shown from left to right are Sharon Meitland, Cheryl Johnson, and Roshia Wall. The image was actually taken in Daytona with the caption noting that two of the three (Johnson and Wall) would appear in Talladega for the Winston 500. The women representing Union 76 as Racestoppers would vary from event to event and season to season.

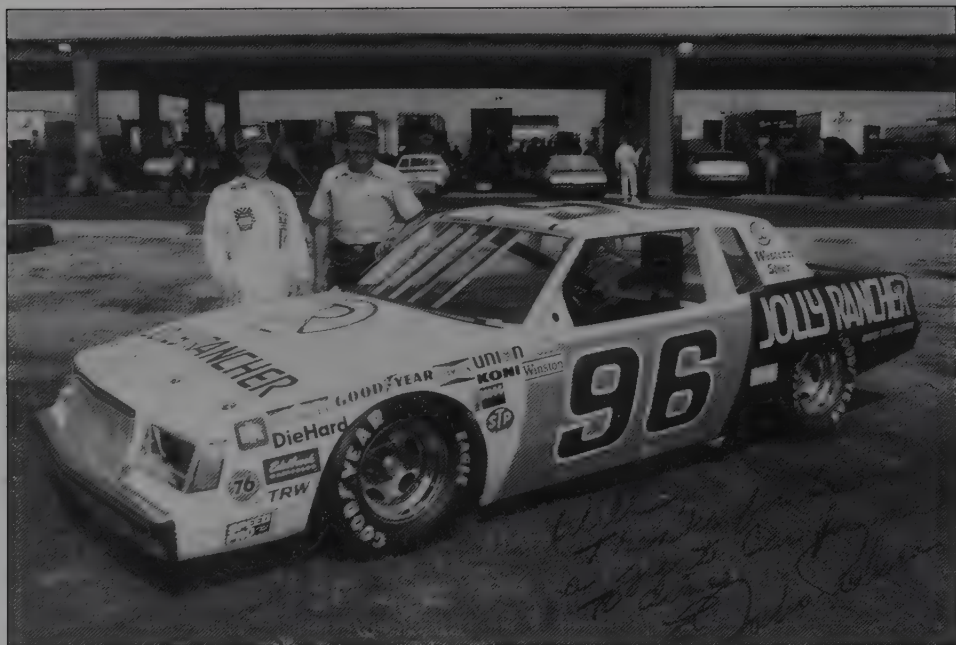
Patricia Moses is seen here serving as Miss Talladega 500 for 1972 in a photograph from the 1973 Winston 500 race program. Moses, who was also Miss Southland, took part in events representing the superspeedway and racing in Alabama and the Southeast for the entire year.



Will Cronkrite stated that he "loved building race cars for Talladega!" Cronkrite's background is in mechanical engineering, research, and fact gathering, as well as developing organizational skills. He spent 21 years as a NASCAR crew chief and car owner and helped develop and build cars used in NASCAR as well as those used in attempts to capture world speed records. (Courtesy of Will Cronkrite.)

Will Cronkrite is with one of the cars that he built and drove at Talladega for the movie *Stroker Ace*, starring Burt Reynolds, which was based on the book *Stand on It*. The movie was filmed at various NASCAR tracks, including Talladega. Cronkrite's expertise in motorsports ranges from builder, driver, owner, crew chief, and film adviser. Posing with an unidentified crew are Will Cronkrite (second from left) and Burt Reynolds (third from left). (Courtesy of Will Cronkrite.)





Elliott Forbes-Robinson (left) is shown with Will Cronkrite and their 1982 "Narrow Buick" Talladega No. 96 race car. Robinson started the 1982 Winston 500 in the 18th spot but finished 29th after engine problems forced him from the race. Robinson also raced in the American Le Mans Series, the Rolex Series, Trans-Am Series, CanAm, IMSA GTU, SCCA, and others. Robinson and Cronkrite teamed up three times during the 1982 NASCAR premier series season. (Courtesy of Will Cronkrite.)



Dale Earnhardt, shown exiting turn two driving his No. 3 Chevy, won the 1991 DieHard 500. After the race, Davey Allison, driving a Ford, was upset that other Ford drivers would not help with a draft in order to take the lead from Earnhardt. Allison punched a wall in his hauler, breaking his wrist. The iconic 76 Ball can be seen in the background. (Photograph by Bryan Hallman.)

Three

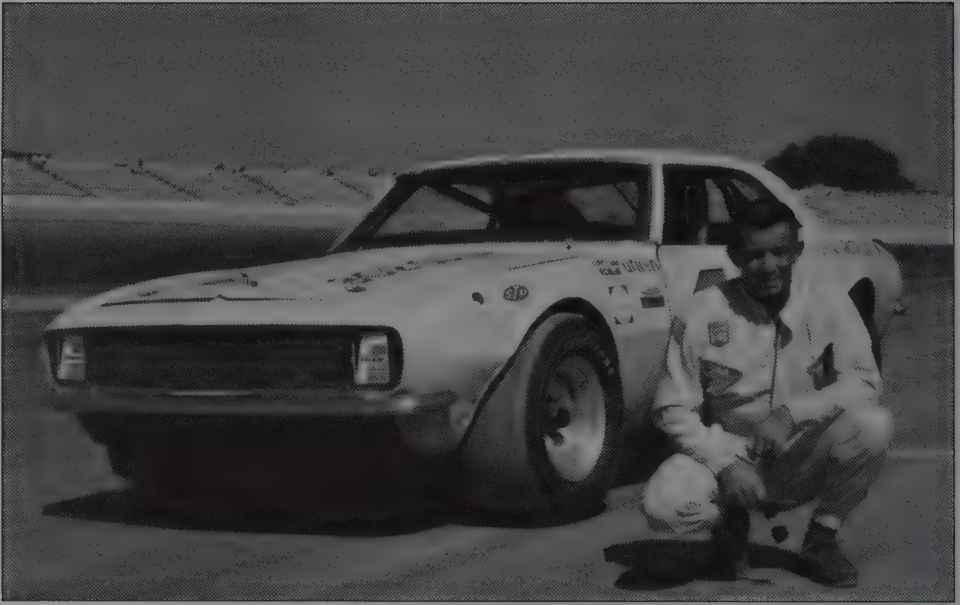
A LOOK AT TALLADEGA'S VICTORY LANE

It doesn't matter at all. It's such a crapshoot there in the last 20, 30, or 40 laps that you never really know who is going to win, what's going to happen, and where the wreck is going to come from.

—Kyle Busch

Many NASCAR fans associate Martinsville with hot dogs, but Talladega has its own story related to the tasty treats. After winning the 1973 Winston 500 at Talladega, David Pearson spent time in Victory Lane taking photographs. Union 76 Racestopper girl Doshia Wells took the opportunity to feed Pearson a hot dog.

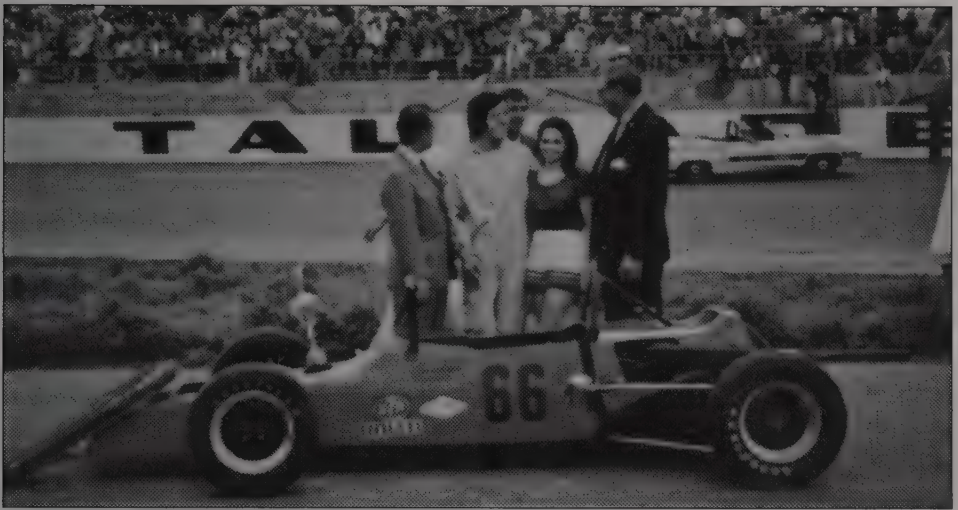




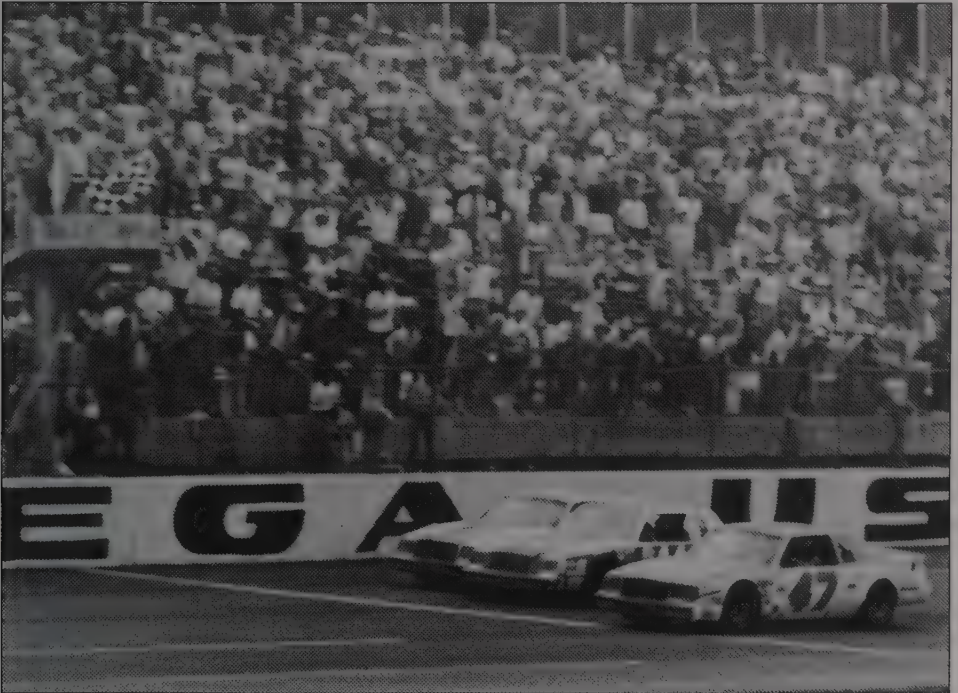
Ken Rush was the first driver to win a race at Alabama International Motor Speedway. The Bama 400, a race in one of NASCAR's regional touring series, was held one day before the first Talladega 500. The Bama 400 went off without issue. Rush stated, "My car owner Johnny Wheeler said we were going to run, and we did. We never even changed tires. We ran 400 miles on the same tires."



Ray Hendrick won the Talladega Sportsman 300 in 1977. He was named one of NASCAR's top 50 drivers in 1988 even though he only started in 24 races in NASCAR's two top series. Only 17 of those starts were in the NASCAR premier series. Hendrick was known as "Mr. Modified" and collected over 700 victories.



James Jenkins of Yonkers, New York, winner of the second IMSA twin 50 Formula Ford, is shown in a photograph from the International Motorsports Hall of Fame. Jenkins is in Victory Lane with Gov. George Wallace of Alabama and NASCAR president Bill France. Also pictured is Carolyn Colyard serving as Miss Alabama Speedway.



Ron Bouchard beats Darrell Waltrip and Terry Labonte by two feet for the victory in the 1981 Talladega 500. The No. 47 Race Hill Farm Buick that propelled Bouchard to victory that day is currently on display at the International Motorsports Hall of Fame. The win was Bouchard's first and only in NASCAR premier series competition.

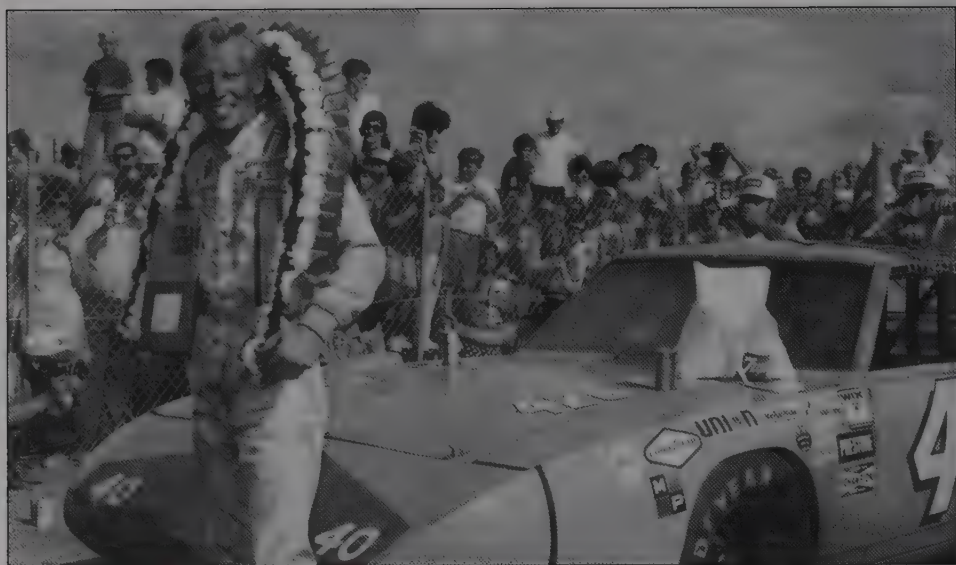


NASCAR driver DeWayne "Tiny" Lund is seen at left after he won the Talladega 300 in 1969. Lund is pictured below driving for Wood Brothers Racing in the No. 21 car. Lund, a Korean War veteran, gained his nickname from the fact that he was over six feet tall. He was popular with fans and appeared in the 1968 movie *Speedway*, starring Elvis Presley.





Richard Brickhouse won the first Talladega 500. He retired with 13 top-10 finishes in 39 races. In 1992, he returned to the driver's seat for a race in the ARCA Racing Series. Brickhouse is shown celebrating his 1969 Talladega 500 win with a kiss from Union 76 Racestopper girl Sharon Brown.



Pete Hamilton raced part-time in NASCAR from 1968 to 1973. His name is often associated with both Talladega and Daytona. In 1970, while racing for Petty Enterprises, he won both races in the Talladega 500 as well as the Daytona 500. In 1971, in the Talladega 500, he placed third while driving for Cotton Owens. Hamilton retired as a driver in 1973 due to neck problems.



Donnie Allison (No. 21) is shown being interviewed by Alabama International Motor Speedway announcer Hal Hamrick after winning the 1971 Winston 500 while driving for Wood Brothers Racing. His brother Bobby Allison came in second place. Allison raced in several series, including NASCAR, ARCA, K&N, and USAC, winning both the 1970 Firecracker 400 at Daytona and the 1970 World 600 at Charlotte while driving a Ford Torino Talladega. He later won the 1977 Talladega 500.

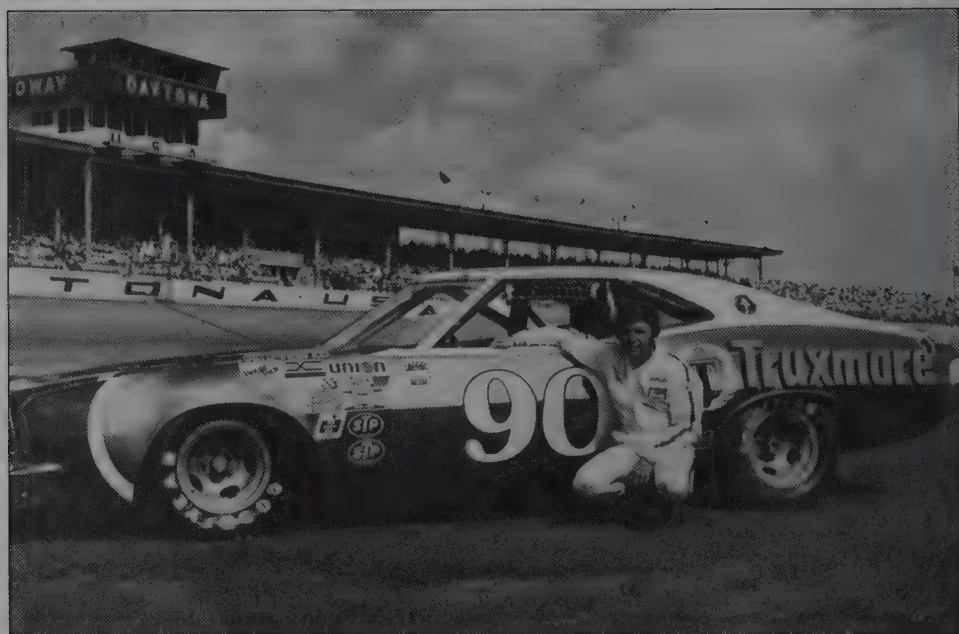
Bobby Allison is shown celebrating his 1971 Talladega 500 win. Allison started from the second position before taking the lead for 100 laps. Allison won four times at Talladega from 1970 to 1988 when he also garnished 19 top-10 finishes. Allison won 84 times in NASCAR's premier series over his 25-year career.



David Pearson smiles in a photograph from the 1973 Winston 500 race program. He is celebrating with the checkered flag after winning the 1972 Winston 500 at Alabama International Motor Speedway. Pearson, driving for Wood Brothers Racing, also won at Talladega in 1973 and 1974. From 1970 to 1985, Pearson had three Talladega victories and 11 top-10 finishes.



James Hylton has been a fixture at Talladega Superspeedway almost since its inception. Hylton has been racing in both NASCAR and ARCA from 1964 to 2013. He won the 1972 Talladega 500 on a set of old tires because his team could not afford extra sets. Hylton is shown celebrating after winning the Talladega 500 on August 6, 1972. (Courtesy of the ARCA Racing Series.)



Dick Brooks was the 1969 Rookie of the Year and winner of the 1973 Talladega 500. Brooks raced in NASCAR from 1969 to 1985 and started in 357 races. Despite only winning once in the NASCAR premier series, Brooks proved to be a constant popular figure among fans and fellow drivers.

This is Richard Petty's bio photograph from the 1970 Winston 500 race program. The caption describes Petty as being "a chip off the old block" because of the lessons learned from his father, Lee Petty. Richard won his first of two Talladega races in 1974, with his second coming in 1983. In 1985, his son Kyle Petty came close to winning at Talladega but ended up in second place behind Bill Elliott.



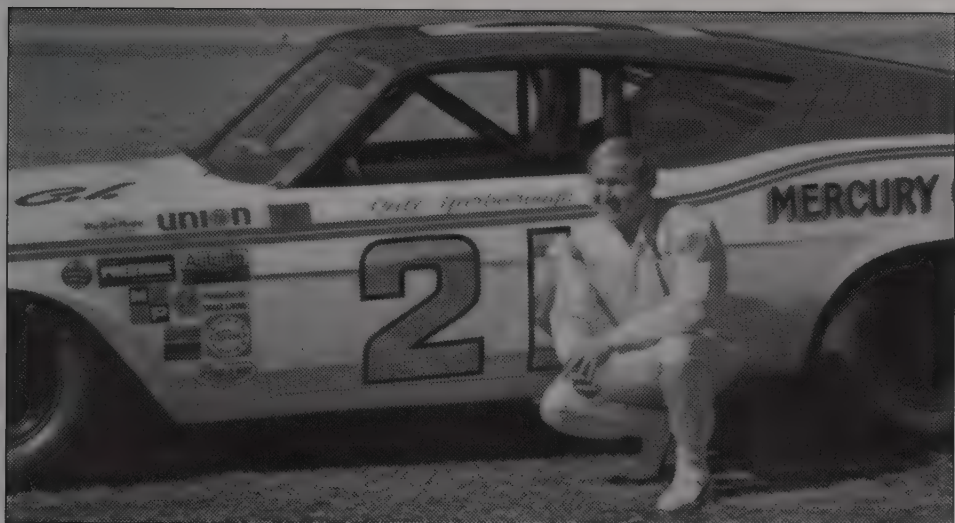
Elzie Wylie Baker Jr., also known simply as Buddy Baker, visited Talladega's Victory Lane four times as a NASCAR driver. Three of those four wins came in consecutive races in 1975 and 1976. He also amassed three pole positions and 20 top-10 finishes at Talladega from 1970 to 1992.



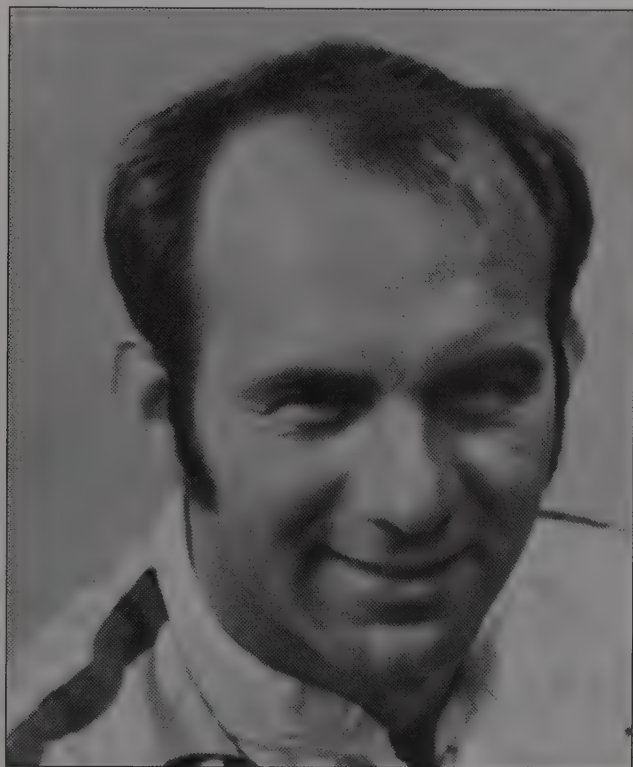
Dave Marcis was a driver-owner in NASCAR from 1968 to 2002. He raced at Talladega 61 times with one victory in the 1976 Talladega 500. He captured the pole at Talladega three times. Marcis is known as being a competitive owner and driver with 883 NASCAR premier series races, but he is also known for having wing-tipped driving shoes.

Darrell Waltrip celebrates in Victory Lane at Alabama International Motor Speedway after he won the 1977 Winston 500. As a rookie in 1972, Waltrip started his NASCAR professional driving career at the superspeedway, where he suffered a blown engine after 69 laps. During the last lap of the 1977 race, Cale Yarborough, who finished second, almost took Waltrip on the last lap but could not make a pass.

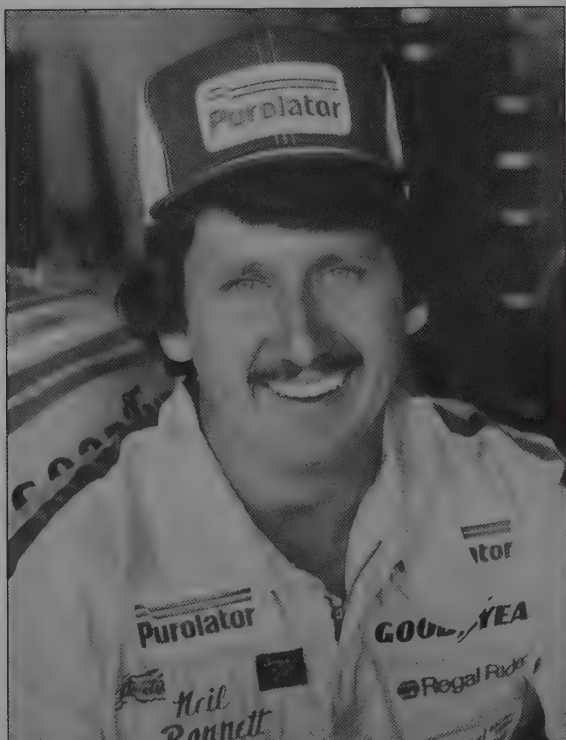




Cale Yarborough, pictured here with his Wood Brothers No. 21 race car, raced at Talladega 34 times from 1970 to 1988. He was one of the track's early stars with 19 top-10 Talladega finishes and three wins. He also won the NASCAR premier series championship three times and the Daytona 500 four times. Yarborough had 83 NASCAR premier series victories during his career, spanning from 1957 to 1988.



Lennie Pond beat out Darrell Waltrip for Sunoco Rookie of the Year honors in 1973. Several years later, in 1978, his only NASCAR premier series win came at Talladega. Pond set a then-record speed of 174.700 miles per hour in winning the race. Pond raced at Talladega 18 times from 1973 to 1985 with five top-10 finishes.



Wood Brothers Racing chalked up another Talladega victory in 1980 when its driver Neil Bonnett won the Talladega 500 in the No. 21 car. Bonnett, a member of the Alabama Gang, won the 1988 Goodyear NASCAR 500, which was held in Australia, beating fellow Alabama Gang member Donnie Allison to the checkered flag with Dave Marcis coming in third.

Dale Earnhardt Sr. poses with the checkered flag after winning the 1983 Talladega 500 driving the No. 15 Wrangler Ford. This was prior to moving to his famous No. 3 car. Pictured are, from left to right, Teresa Earnhardt, Dale Earnhardt, Miss Talladega, and car owner Bud Moore.



Dale Earnhardt Sr. is celebrating his 1984 Talladega 500 win in a scrapbook image from Danny "Chocolate" Myers. Chocolate, as he is known in the racing world, is pictured in the background and was the longtime gas man for Earnhardt and several other Richard Childress Racing (RCR) drivers over the years. He is currently the curator for the RCR Museum and a SiriusXM NASCAR radio host. (Courtesy of Danny "Chocolate" Myers.)



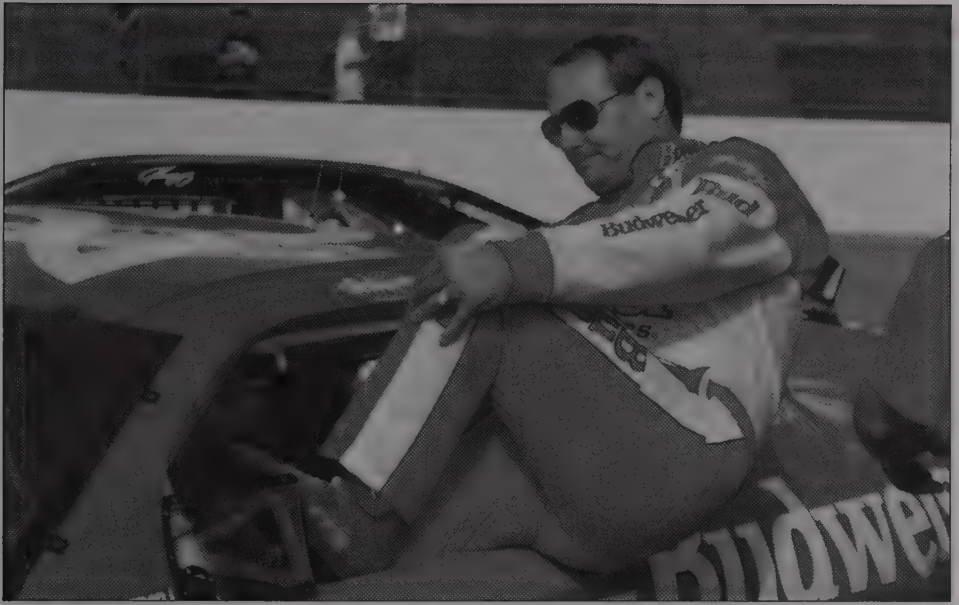
Bobby Hillin Jr. (No. 8) won the Talladega 500 in 1986 at the age of 22 years, one month, and 22 days. At the time, this made him the youngest driver to win a NASCAR race. The record was previously held by Richard Petty and "Fireball" Roberts. (Author's collection.)





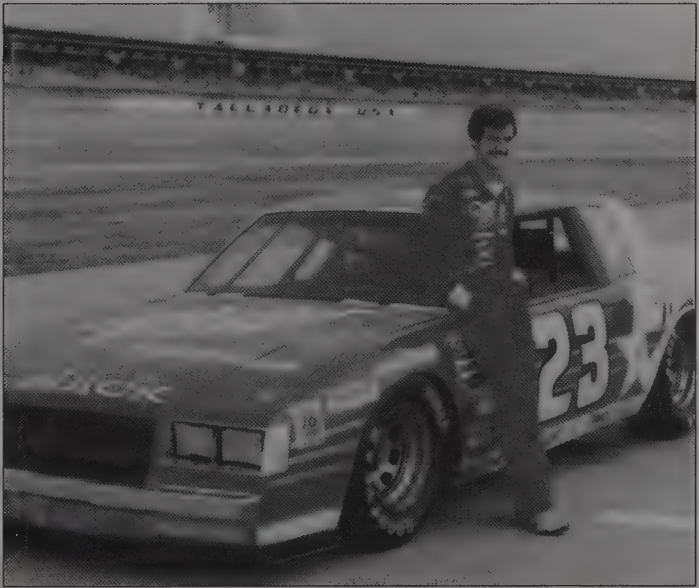
Bill Elliott won the Talladega 500 in 1987. He raced at Talladega 57 times in NASCAR premier series competition. In his third race at the track, he started 20th and finished sixth. At Talladega, Elliott had eight pole positions, 22 top-10 finishes, and two wins. He also holds the all-time NASCAR record for fastest qualifying speed, which was set at Talladega in 1987 with a lap of 212.809 mph. (Courtesy of Darryl Moran.)

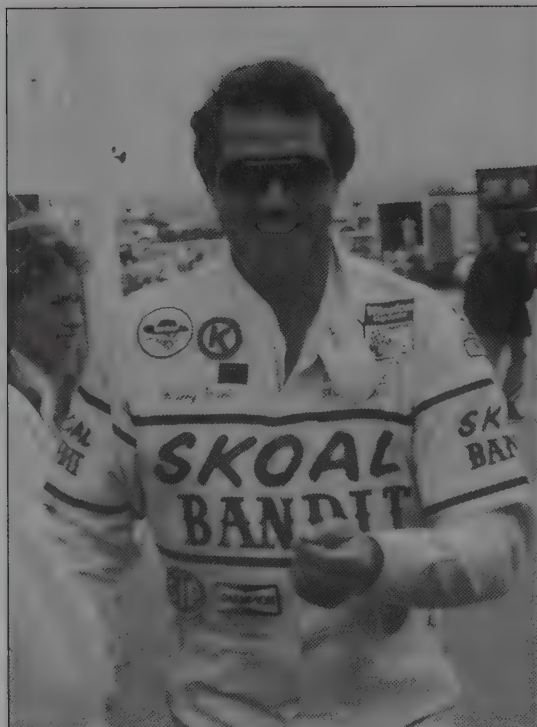
Jimmy Spencer won the 1994 DieHard 500 by beating Bill Elliott. Third place was taken by Ernie Irvan, who had led 90 laps during the race. During the 1992 Winston 500, Spencer's car went airborne on Talladega's backstretch but landed on its wheels. He re-fired the car and drove back to the pits. At Talladega, Spencer had one win and 11 top-10 finishes. (Courtesy of Darryl Moran.)



Ken Schrader has not only piloted NASCAR race cars for over 20 years, but he has also become a familiar sight in other racing series from ARCA to local dirt tracks. Schrader won the 1988 Talladega DieHard 500 while driving for Rick Hendrick. Schrader has 184 top-10 finishes in his NASCAR premier series career, with 23 pole positions and four wins. (Courtesy of Darryl Moran.)

Davey Allison is shown with his No. 23 Miller Buick during a 1983 photograph session in Talladega for the ARCA Racing Series. Allison carried on the family Talladega tradition by winning both ARCA races at the speedway that year. He also won three times at Talladega as a NASCAR driver from 1985 to 1993 and two more times in ARCA for seven career Talladega wins. (Courtesy of the ARCA Racing Series.)





Harry Gant won the 1991 Winston 500. Gant was known as “Handsome Harry” and “Bandit” due to his Skoal sponsorship. Gant started 32 races at Talladega from 1979 to 1994 and had 12 top-10 finishes. Gant’s 1986 Talladega car was fitted with the first racing telemetry data system, which broadcast live data on CBS during the television coverage of the race. (Courtesy of Ted Van Pelt.)

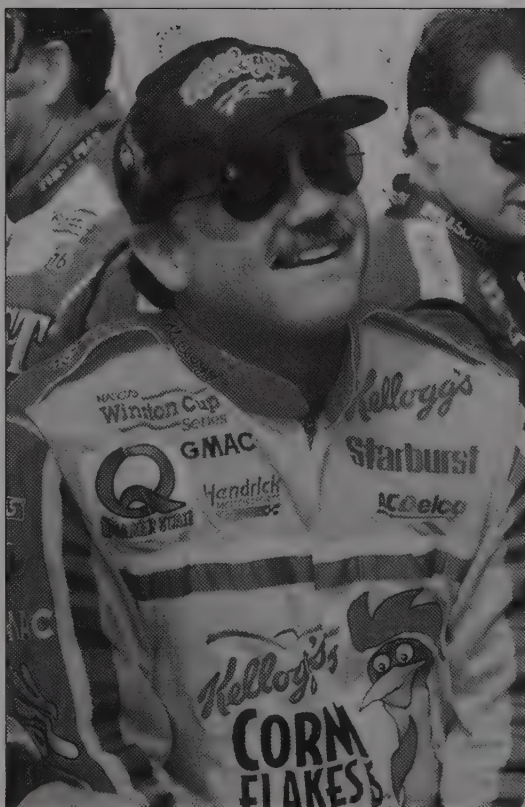
Sterling Marlin, son of Coo Coo Marlin, won the 1995 DieHard 500 and the 1996 Winston Select 500. During his career, his Talladega stats also include three pole positions and 17 top-10 finishes. Marlin (left) is seen with longtime Talladega general manager and head of the International Motorsports Hall of Fame Don Naman in the museum’s library.

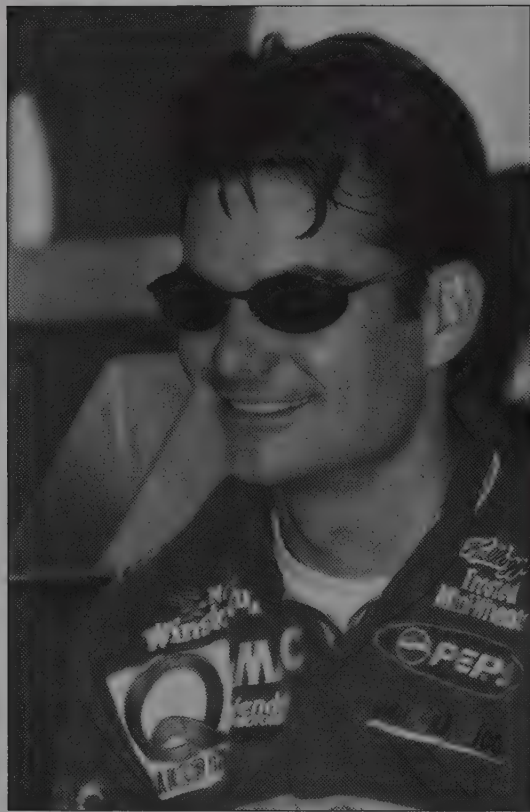




Virgil Earnest "Ernie" Irvan won back to back at Talladega with the 1992 DieHard 500 and the 1993 Winston 500. In 21 starts at Talladega, Irvan had 12 top-10 finishes and captured the pole five times. Irvan made a NASCAR comeback after a near fatal wreck at Michigan International Speedway in 1994. Upon his return in 1996, Irvan captured the pole for the Winston Select 500. (Courtesy of Darryl Moran.)

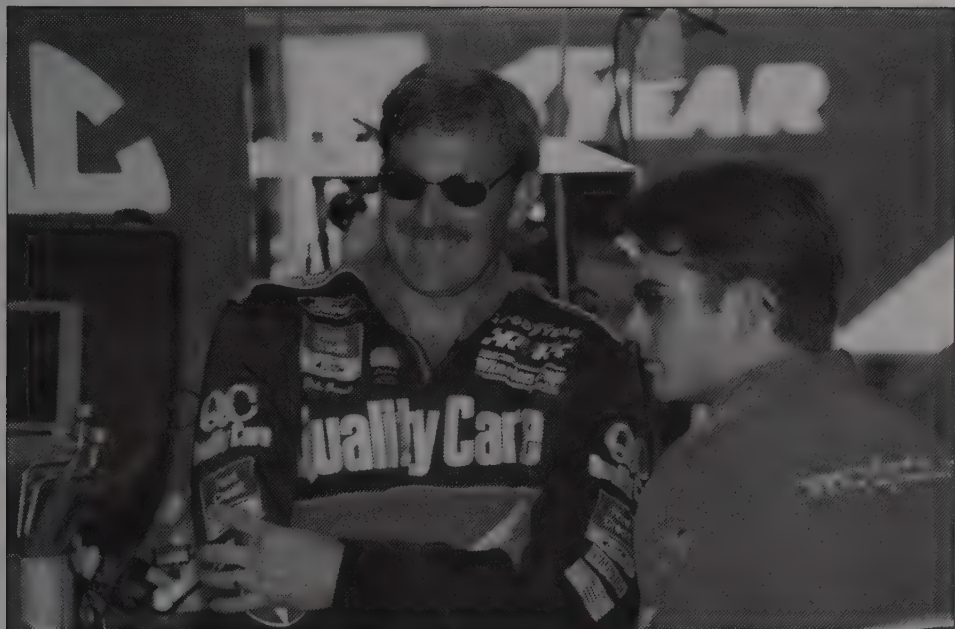
Terrance Lee "Terry" Labonte is a two-time NASCAR premier series champion and the 1989 International Race of Champions (IROC) champion. With 59 NASCAR premier series starts at Talladega, as of 2013 Labonte has 23 top-10 finishes with his first start at the track in 1979, resulting in a ninth-place finish. Terry, older brother of Bobby Labonte, won the Talladega DieHard 500 in 1989 and the DieHard 500 in 1997. (Courtesy of Darryl Moran.)





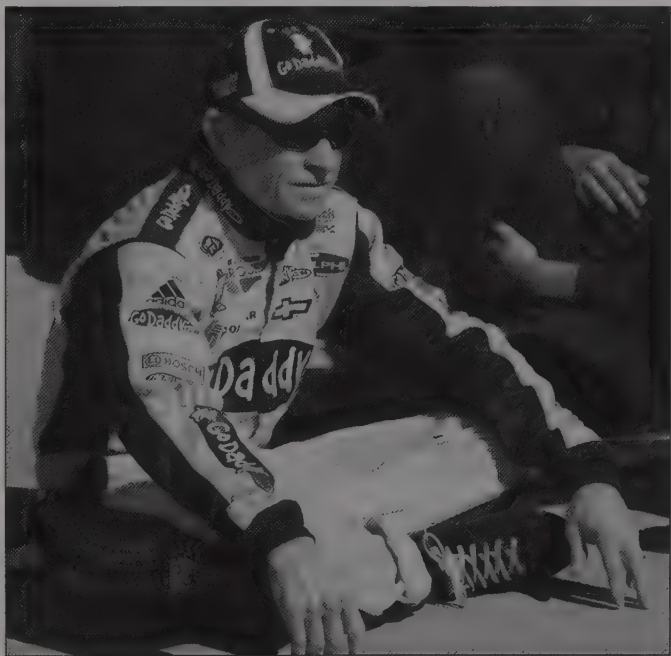
Bobby Labonte, younger brother to Terry, is a NASCAR Sprint Cup champion and NASCAR Busch (now Nationwide) Series champion. He also won the IROC championship in 2001. In 1998, at the DieHard 500 at Talladega, Labonte captured the pole position, led 60 laps, and won the race. His older brother Terry Labonte led 88 laps but finished fourth. (Courtesy of Darryl Moran.)

Jeff Gordon started racing at Talladega in the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series in 1993. In his first race, he finished 11th. A few years later, in 1996, Gordon won the DieHard 500. It would be his first of six wins at the superspeedway as of the 2013 season. Gordon has also captured the pole at Talladega three times as of 2013. (Courtesy of Darryl Moran.)



Dale Jarrett, son of legendary driver Ned Jarrett, is shown here with fellow Talladega race winner Jeff Gordon. Jarrett captured his first of two Talladega wins in the 1998 Winston 500. He followed that win up with a victory in the 2005 UAW-Ford 500. Jarrett led two laps during the race and beat Tony Stewart to the checkered flag after Stewart had led for 65 laps. (Courtesy of Darryl Moran.)

NASCAR driver Mark Martin is pictured here taking a break during the October 2010 race weekend at Talladega. Martin, often called the "best driver to have never won a NASCAR Sprint Cup championship," won his first Talladega race in the 1995 Winston Select 500. He also won at Talladega in the NASCAR Nationwide Series, as well as the first NASCAR Camping World Truck Series race held at the superspeedway. (Courtesy of Amanda Vincent of www.NASCAR-Examiner.com.)

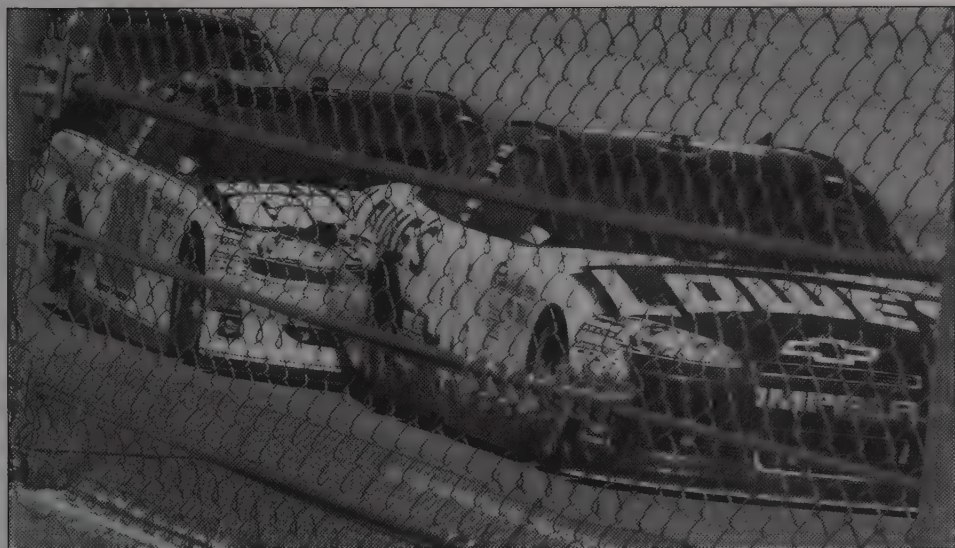




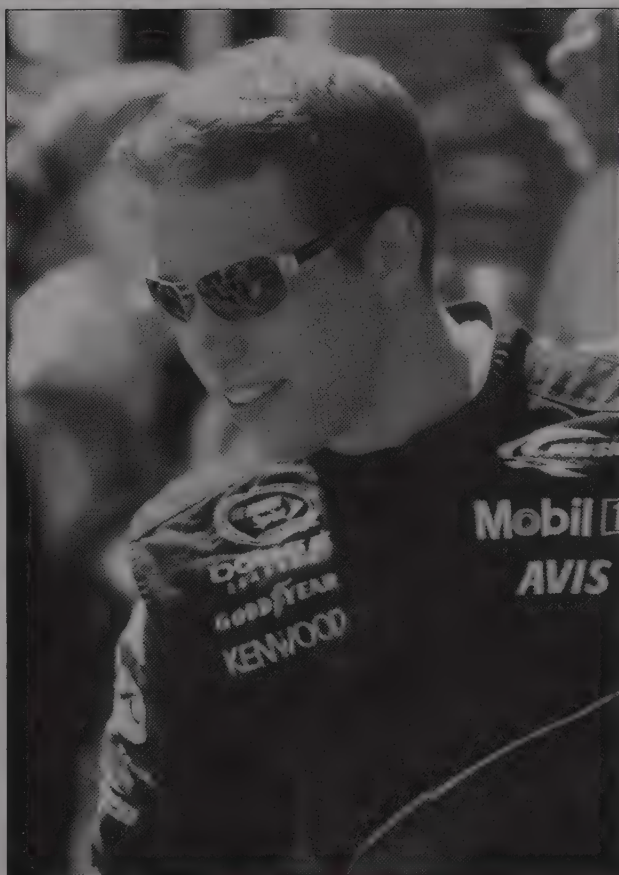
Bobby Hamilton, father of driver Bobby Hamilton Jr., won the caution-free 2001 Talladega 500. After pulling to a stop, Hamilton collapsed to the ground in need of oxygen. Several minutes later, he was able to give his post-race interview while sitting on the ground and leaning against his car. (Courtesy of Darryl Moran.)

Dale Earnhardt Jr. celebrates moments after exiting his car following his fourth consecutive victory at Talladega Superspeedway in 2003. Earnhardt followed up his four wins with runner-up finishes in the next two races and a return to Victory Lane in the fall of 2004. Both Dale Earnhardt Sr. and Dale Earnhardt Jr. have been enshrined in the Talladega-Texaco Walk of Fame. (Courtesy of Amanda Vincent of www.NASCAR-Examiner.com.)





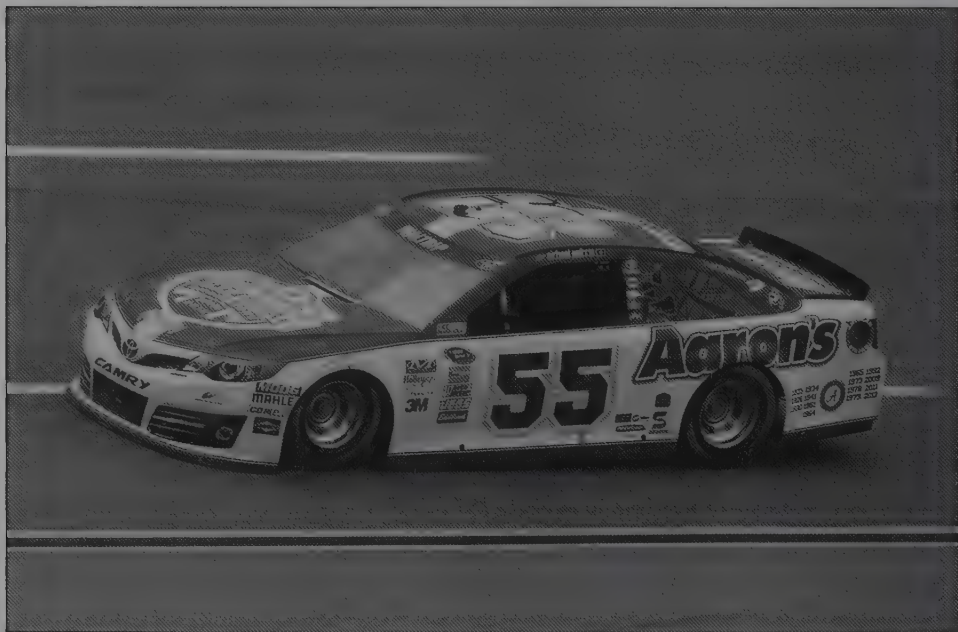
Dale Earnhardt Jr. (No. 88) is seen following behind Jimmie Johnson in this photograph from the 2011 Aaron's 499 at Talladega. Johnson held on to capture the win. He led for 14 laps during the race after starting in the second position. (Courtesy of Bentley Breland, BWB photographs.)

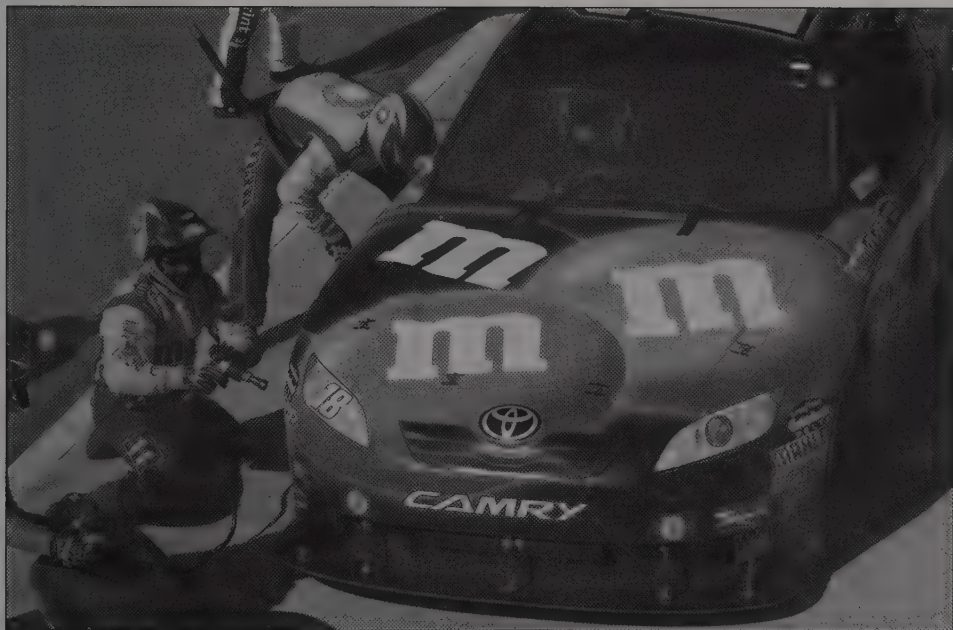


Brad Keselowski won his first NASCAR Sprint Cup race at Talladega by capturing the checkered flag at the 2009 Aaron's 499. He also won the 2012 running of the Aaron's 499. Keselowski's father, Bob, an original driver in the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series, raced at Talladega in the ARCA Racing Series during the 1990s. His brother Brian and their uncle Ron also competed at the track. (Courtesy of Bentley Breland, BWB photographs.)



The image above, taken during the 2011 Aaron's 499, shows Michael Waltrip in his No. 15 car honoring the Auburn University football team as national champions. His first race at Talladega as a NASCAR Sprint Cup driver came in 1986 with a 35th-place finish. Since then, he has had 16 top-10 finishes and 28 top-20 finishes. He also won the Talladega EASports 500 in 2003. The image below shows Waltrip (No. 55) sporting the colors of the University of Alabama football team in honor of their national championship the following year. (Courtesy of Michael Waltrip Racing.)

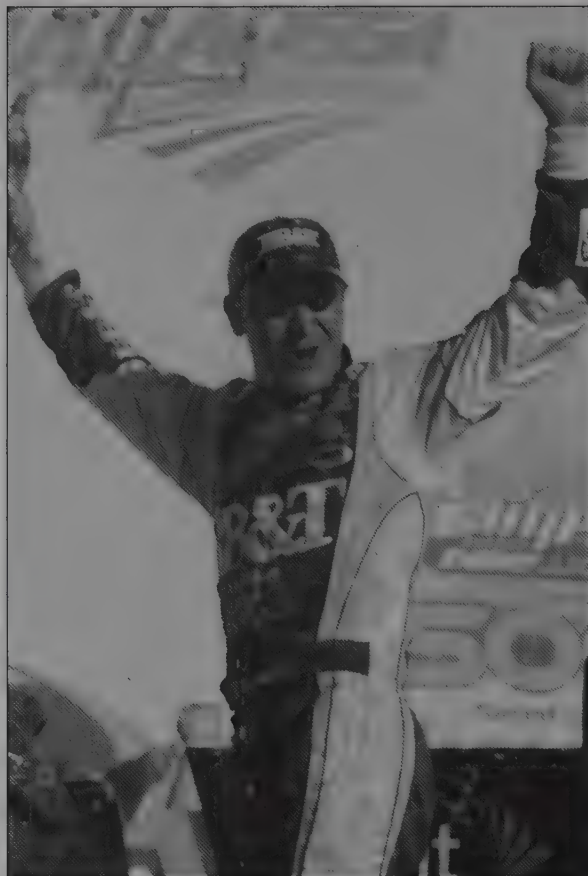




Kyle Busch (No. 18) won the 2008 Aaron's 499 at Talladega after leading 12 laps. Tony Stewart led 61 laps but was knocked out in an accident. Dale Earnhardt Jr. led for 46 laps but faded to a 10th-place finish. Busch battled Juan Pablo Montoya and Denny Hamlin to the checkered flag. (Courtesy of Amanda Vincent of www.NASCAR-Examiner.com.)



Kevin Harvick celebrates with his wife, DeLana, after the 2010 Aaron's 499 at Talladega Superspeedway. Harvick started fourth and only led two laps during the race. He captured the pole at Talladega for the 2005 Aaron's 499 but finished 12th. (Courtesy of Amanda Vincent of www.NASCAR-Examiner.com.)

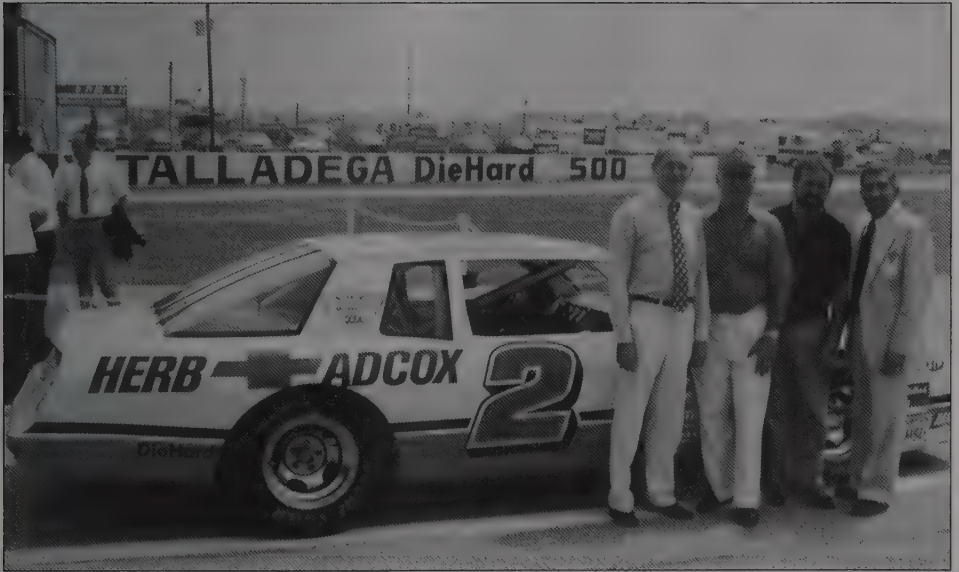
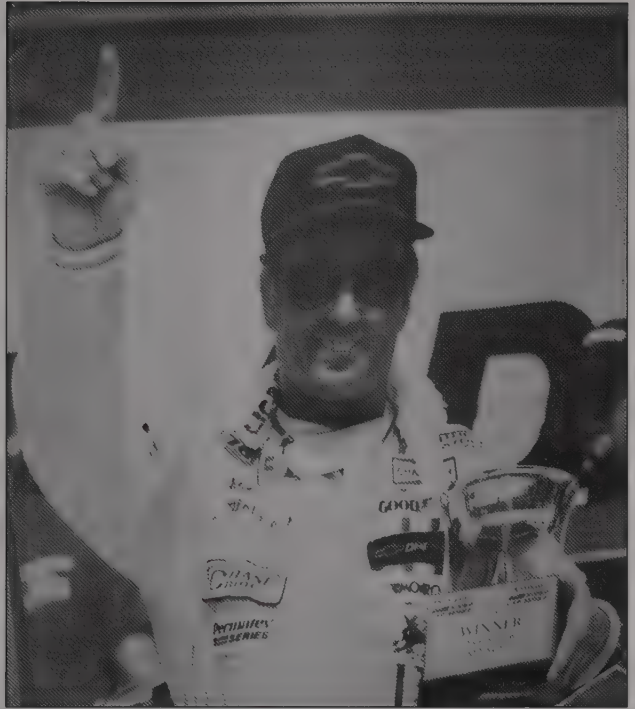


Clint Bowyer is shown here celebrating his victory in the 2010 AMP Energy Juice 500 at Talladega Superspeedway. Bowyer beat RCR teammate Kevin Harvick to the checkered flag for the win. Bowyer followed up with another Talladega win in 2011 Good Sam Club 500. (Courtesy of Amanda Vincent of www.NASCAR-Examiner.com.)

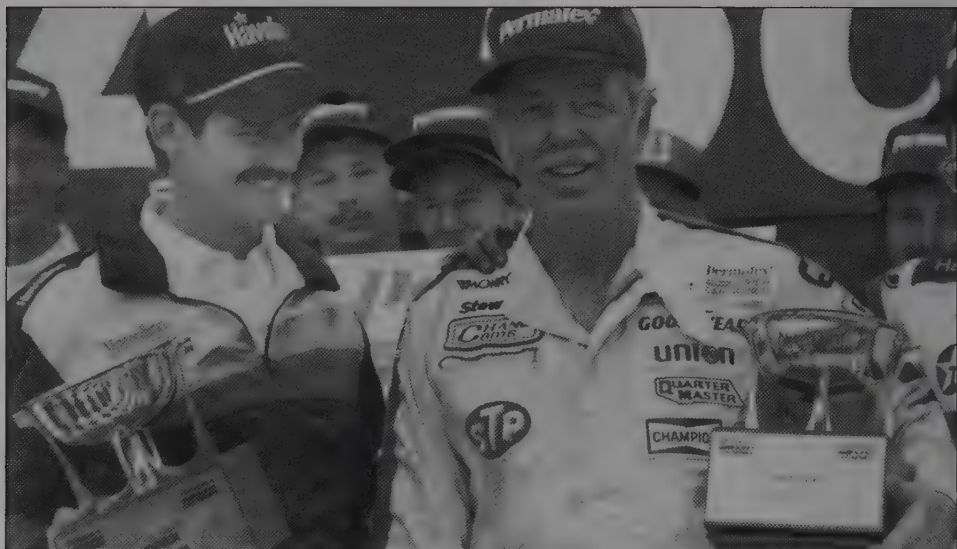
Brad Keselowski (No. 2) takes a victory spinout with the Stars and Stripes in hand after winning his second Aaron's 499 in 2012. (Courtesy of Bentley Breland, BWB photographs.)



Charlie Glotzbach was a fixture as a NASCAR driver in the early days of racing at Alabama International Motor Speedway, starting in the third position in three consecutive races from 1970 to 1971. While he never won a NASCAR premier series race at Talladega, he did win at Talladega in the ARCA Racing Series three times while capturing four poles.



Grant Adcox (No. 2) of Chattanooga, Tennessee, raced in the ARCA and NASCAR series. He won four consecutive ARCA races at Talladega from 1986 to 1987. He won again in the second ARCA Talladega race in 1988. Red Farmer won the first ARCA race at Talladega during the 1988 season, breaking Adcox's streak of consecutive Talladega wins. Pictured from left to right are Alabama senator Gerald Dial, Herb Adcox, Grant Adcox, and Don Naman.

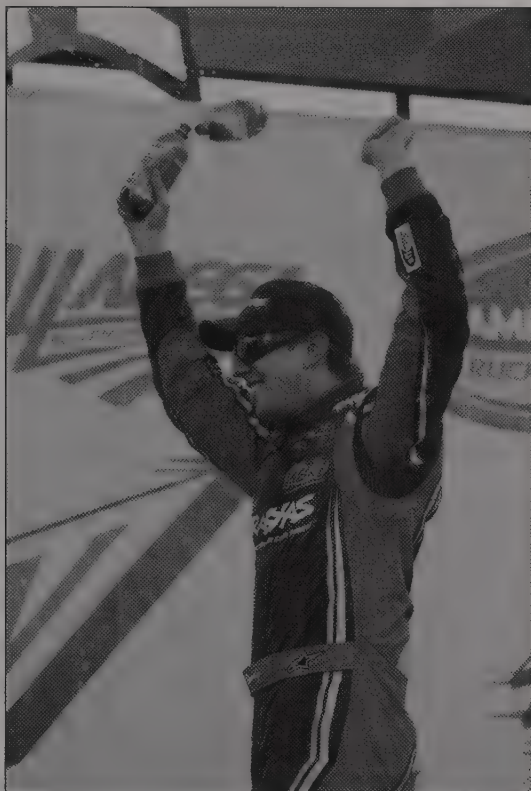


Davey Allison (left), son of Alabama Gang member Bobby Allison, is shown with mentor Charles "Red" Farmer after Farmer won the ARCA race at Talladega in 1988. Farmer was not only a good friend of the entire Allison family, he was an essential part of Davey Allison's development as a driver throughout his racing career. (Courtesy of the ARCA Racing Series.)



Ten-time ARCA Racing Series champion Frank Kimmel is pictured after winning the 2006 ARCA Food World 250. Kimmel's sponsor at the time was the National Pork Board. Shown with him are members of the Alabama Pork Producers Association. From left to right are Andy Pennington, Jerry Moore Jr., Jerry Moore Sr., Kimmel, Kris Logsdon, Mark Pennington, Renee Hall, Joe Hall, and Guy Hall. (Courtesy of the National Pork Board.)

Kyle Busch celebrates winning his second consecutive NASCAR Camping World Truck Series race at Talladega during the 2010 Mountain Dew 250 Fueled by Fred's. Busch started 18th and led eight laps during the race. (Courtesy of Amanda Vincent of www.NASCAR-Examiner.com.)



The flagman at Talladega is seen waving the Sunoco checkered flag to signal the end of the race. NASCAR utilizes eight flags of different colors and designs to communicate messages to drivers and fans. Today, teams, drivers, and track officials also communicate using radios. (Courtesy of Bentley Breland, BWB photographs.)





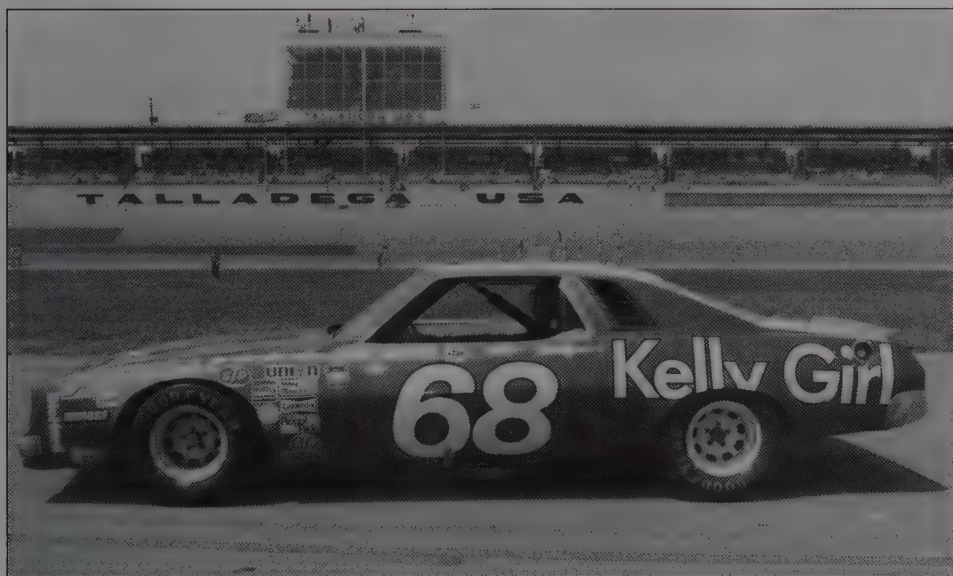
This bottle, nearly two feet tall, of Yellow Tail champagne is on display in the Library of the International Motorsports Hall of Fame. The over-sized bottles of champagne are often used during Talladega victory celebrations. Other beverages related to the sponsors of winning drivers are also used. (Photograph by author.)

Four

TALLADEGA'S WOMEN OF SPEED

Is it any wonder I feel such great affection for Alabama? Red clay blanketed with thick green kudzu vines, succulent barbecue and golden deep-fried catfish, coleslaw served in the celadon curl of a crisp cabbage leaf . . . and the tanned, weathered faces of the men at the heart of the business, which had opened up at last.

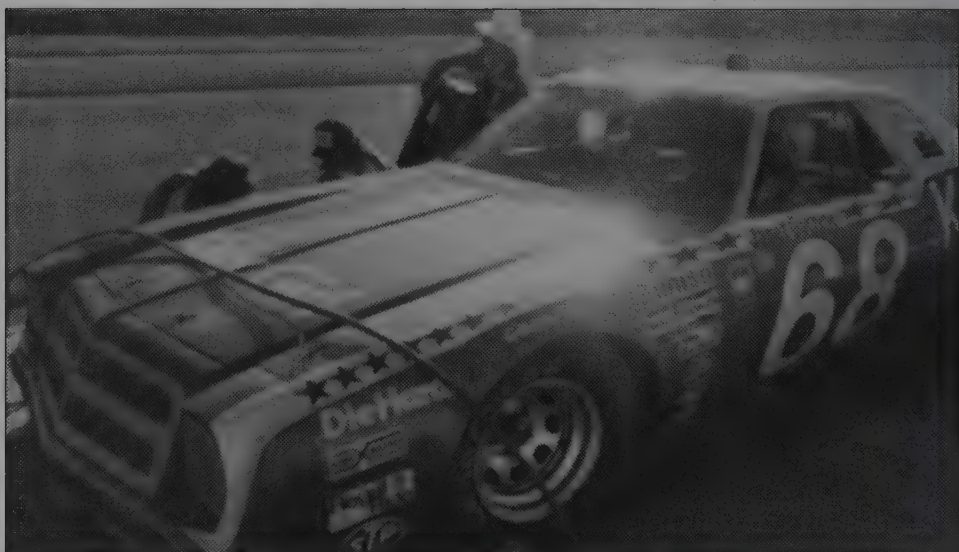
—Janet Guthrie



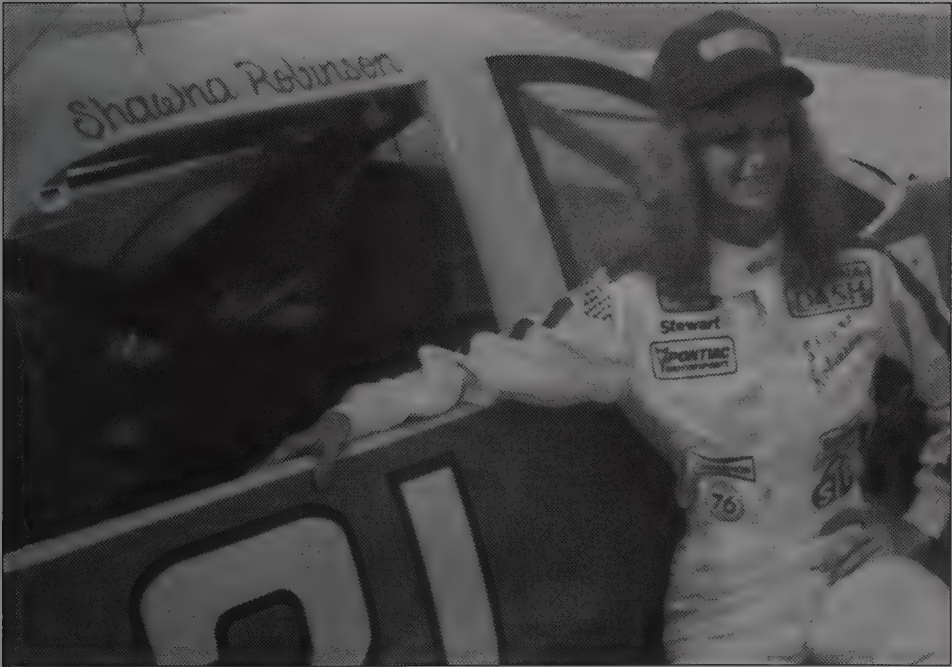
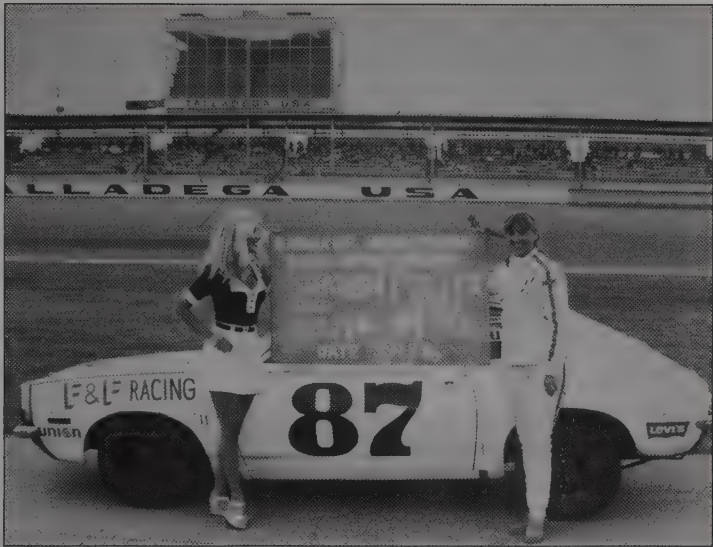
Several female drivers have taken their place behind the steering wheel in NASCAR races, starting with Sara Christian, Ethel Mobley, and Louise Smith in 1949. As of 2013, the three major NASCAR-sanctioned series have hosted 40 female drivers. Some of the ladies have competed in several of the NASCAR series. Janet Guthrie is considered NASCAR's first full-time female driver; pictured is her No. 68 car. (Courtesy of Will Cronkrite.)



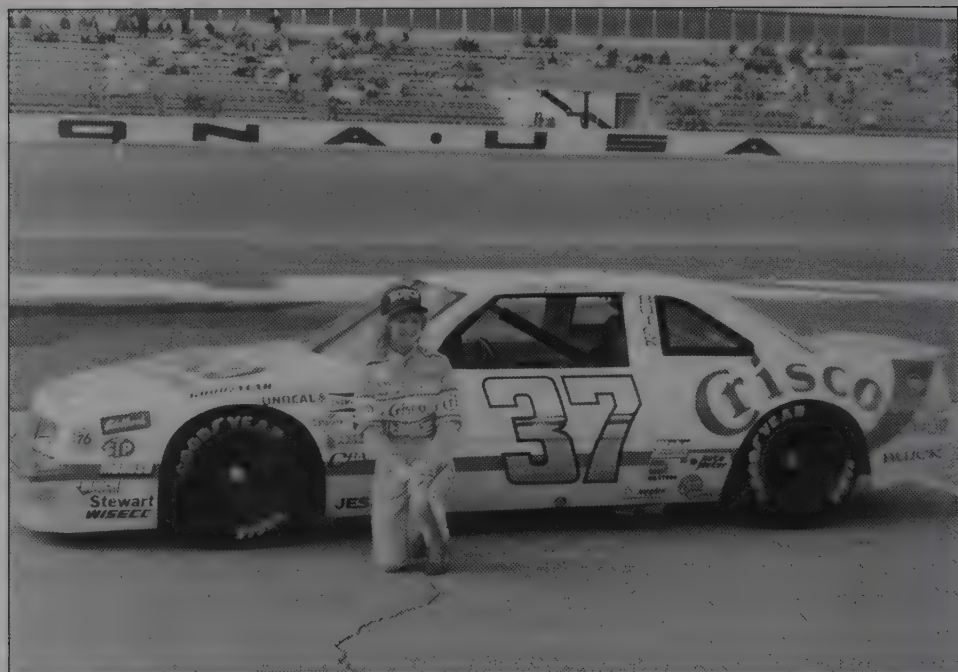
Janet Guthrie raced at Talladega three times from 1977 to 1978. Her best start came in the 1977 Talladega 500, where she qualified 9th; the other two starts were 12th and 13th. Her engine failed in two of three Talladega races, which was not uncommon at the time. Her best finish was 29th. Guthrie was the first female driver to race at the famed superspeedway. Pictured at left are Guthrie and her No. 68 Kelly Girl car and below Guthrie during a Talladega pit stop. She has fond recollections of Talladega, stating, "It was at Talladega, in August of 1977, when I really felt acceptance by the majority of other NASCAR drivers and crews." (Courtesy of Janet Guthrie.)



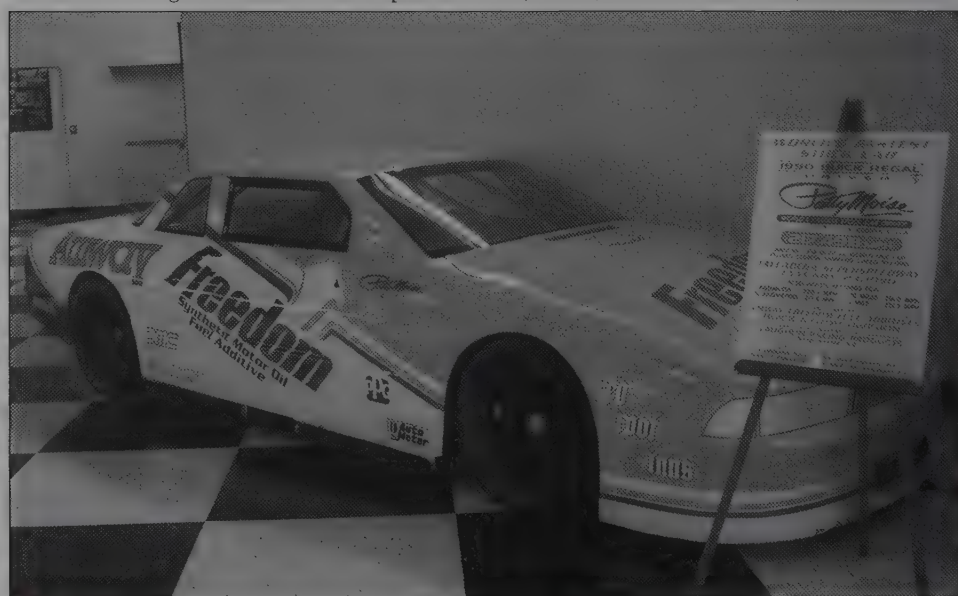
On August 1, 1976, Sharon Fuller drove her 1972 Ford Pinto race car to a top speed of 114.980 miles per hour, setting an IMSA RS Women's World Closed Course Sedan-Class speed record. This image shows Sharon and her No. 87 car shortly after setting the record. The car is on display at the International Motorsports Hall of Fame and Museum at the track.

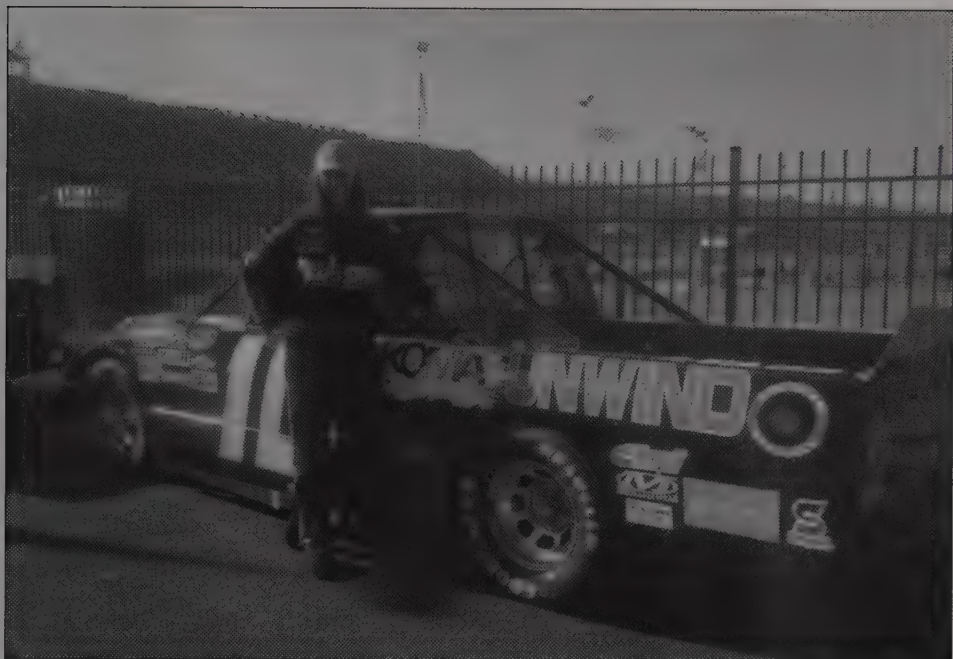


Shawna Robinson is pictured here with her 1988 Dash Series car. Robinson, driving for owner David Watson of Boone, North Carolina, became the first woman to win a NASCAR-sanctioned event. The car is now on display at the International Motorsports Hall of Fame and Museum, located on the Talladega Superspeedway grounds. Robinson also raced at Talladega in both the NASCAR Busch (now Nationwide) Series and ARCA Racing Series. (Courtesy of Shawna Robinson.)

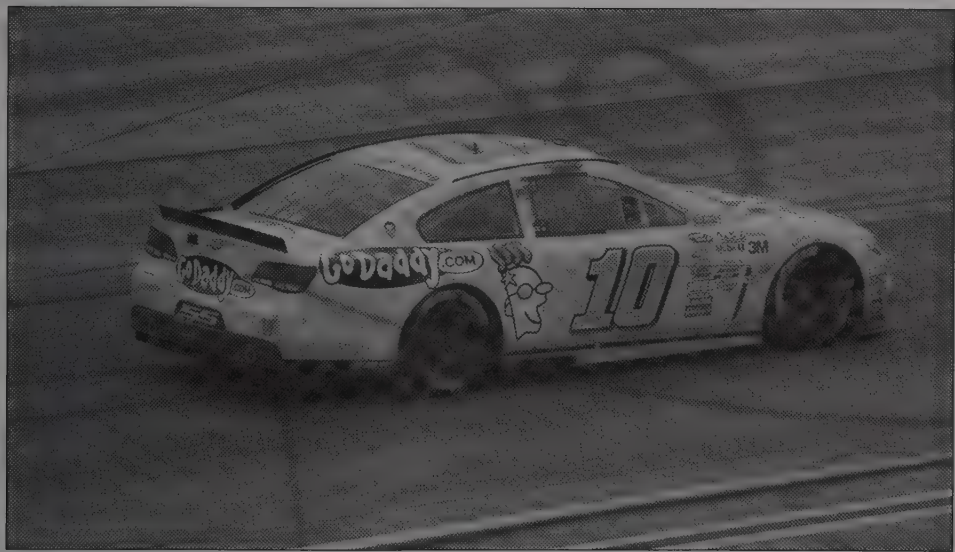


Patty Moise is a former female NASCAR driver who drove in five NASCAR premier series races from 1987 to 1989 and 133 NASCAR Busch (now Nationwide) Series races from 1986 to 1998, as well as several races in the ARCA Racing Series. She captured a seventh-place Talladega finish in 1995 and set a closed-course women's speed record at Talladega with a speed of 217.498 miles per hour. Above, Moise is posing with her No. 37 Crisco Buick race car, and below is the car she drove at Talladega in order to set the speed record. (Above, author's collection.)





Jennifer Jo Cobb has raced at Talladega in both the NASCAR Nationwide Series and the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series. In the ARCA Racing Series, she has three top-10 finishes. In 2010, Cobb (No. 10) finished 17th in points in the truck series. (Courtesy of Jen Jo Cobb.)



Danica Patrick (No. 10), pictured here in her NASCAR Sprint Cup car, crossed over from open-wheel racing to stock car racing in the ARCA Racing Series, where she finished sixth at Daytona in 2010. Patrick won the 2008 Indy Japan 300, and she scored a third-place finish in the 2009 Indianapolis 500. Patrick has since started at Talladega in two of the three top NASCAR-sanctioned racing series. (Courtesy of Bentley Breland, BWB photographs.)



Johanna Long is pictured as she prepares for the 2012 running of the NASCAR Nationwide Series Aaron's 312. Long, who has driven in American Speed Association (ASA), ARCA, and NASCAR, said she was excited to be one of the many drivers to tackle the high banks and speeds of Talladega: "I've really started to take a liking to superspeedway racing." (Courtesy of Johanna Long, CIA Stock Photography.)



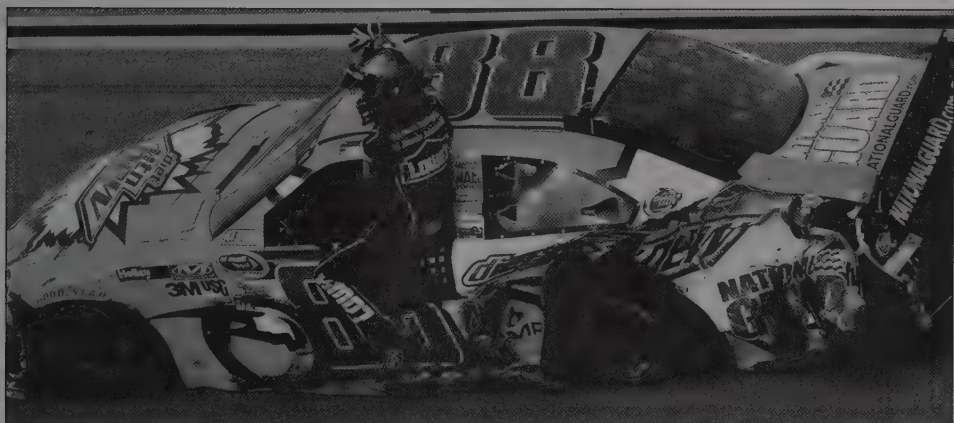
ARCA driver Milka Duno is pictured shortly after capturing the pole for the 2013 ARCA Racing Series International Motorsports Hall of Fame 250 while driving for Venturini Motorsports. Also seen is Bill Venturini, who set qualifying records at both Talladega and Daytona and was a successful NASCAR and ARCA driver. (Courtesy of the ARCA Racing Series.)

Five

SAFETY AT 'DEGA

I've been wrecked going for the lead. I've been wrecked riding in the back in 30th trying to stay out of trouble. In my opinion, I think the best strategy is to run up front and hope it all happens behind you.

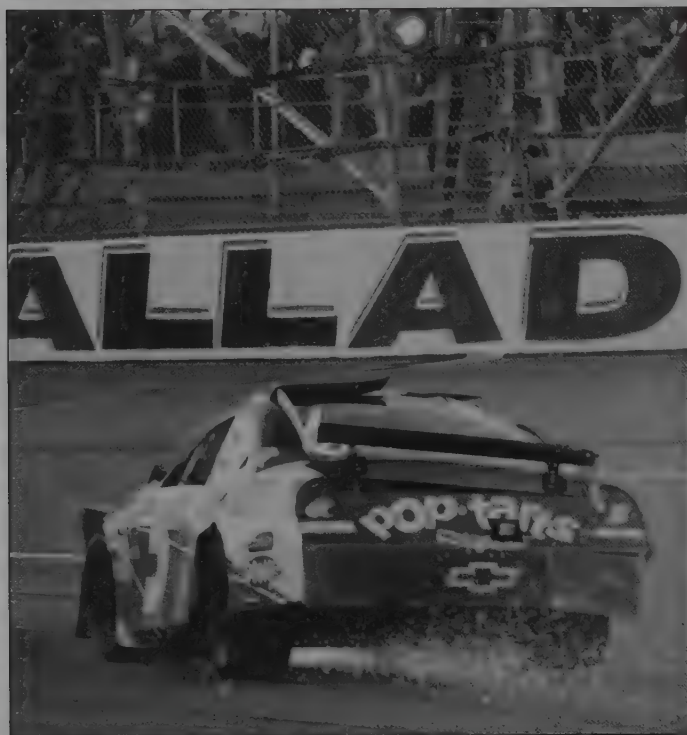
— Martin Truex Jr., on racing at Talladega



Jimmie Johnson hitches a ride to the garage area on teammate Dale Earnhardt Jr.'s No. 88 Chevrolet. The two were involved in a wreck that collected several cars in the 2012 running of the Good Sam Roadside Assistance 500 at Talladega. Both drivers later admitted that the move was not the safest thing to do.



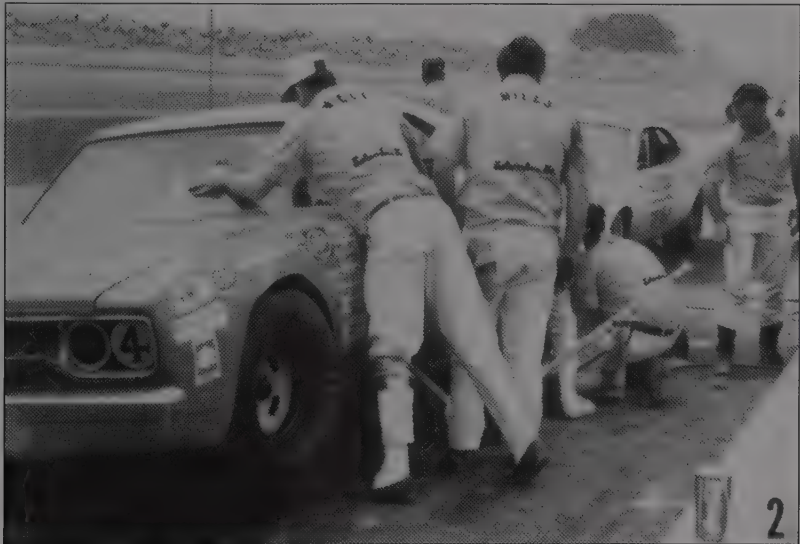
Buddy Arrington (No. 67) sits in his car as his crew checks under the hood during the running of the 1972 Winston 500. Arrington was forced out of the race due to a blown engine. The photograph, taken from the 1973 Winston 500 race program, shows Arrington's crew using a water hose in an effort to cool the car.



Mark Martin limps back to the pits after a wreck during the 2009 Aaron's 499. Martin's hopes for a NASCAR Sprint Cup championship in 2009 were put to an end after the wreck effectively erased any chance at making up ground on points leader Jimmie Johnson.

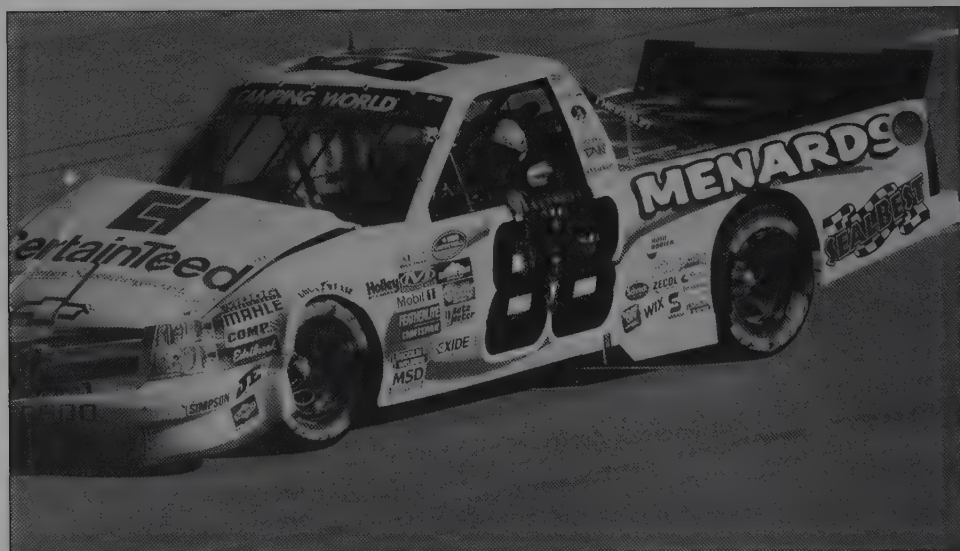


These two photographs from the 1973 Winston 500 race program show two sides of Pit Row life, waiting and working, for crews during the running of the 1972 Winston 500. Above, pit crews converse during a green-flag stretch during the race. The image below shows cars on pit row being worked on during stops. In the foreground is the car of "Big John" Sears (No. 4) as his crew works on the back left tire in an effort to get him back on the track. Big John started the race in the 23rd spot and finished 21st.

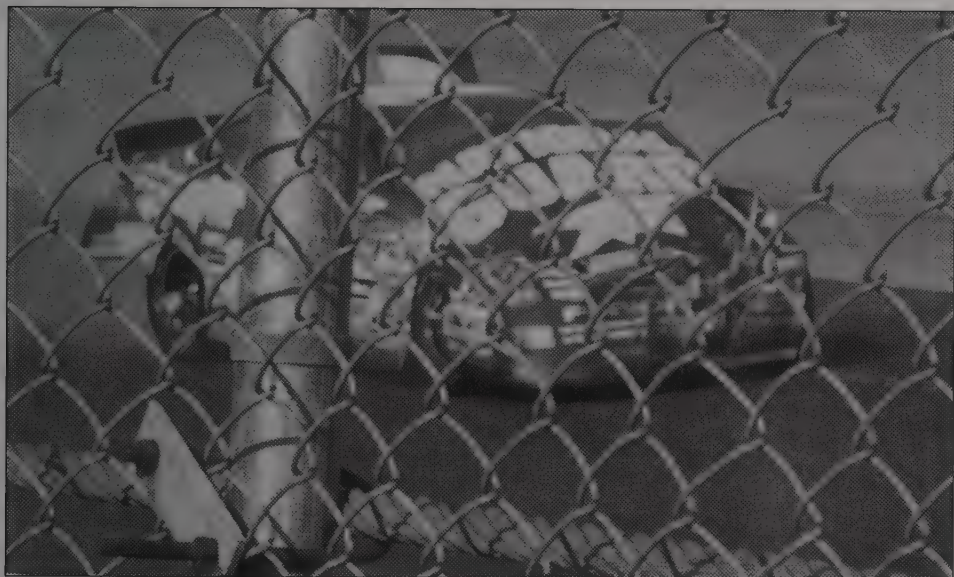




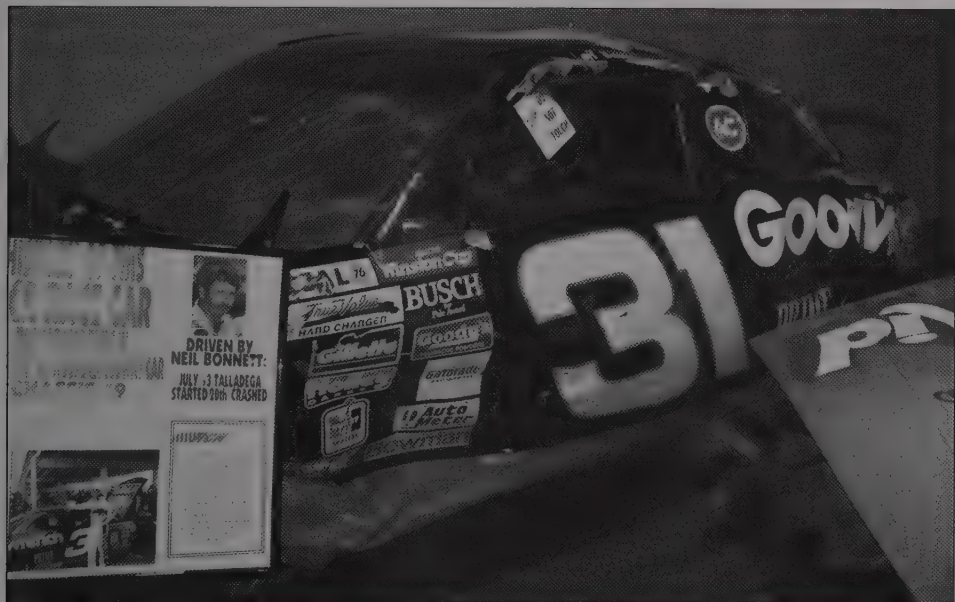
This photograph from the 1978 Winston 500 race program shows crews displaying brand-new wreckers from the Holmes Company. Holmes was then the official wrecker company of Alabama International Motor Speedway. Miller Industries, now the parent company of Holmes Wreckers, provides towing and specialized recovery equipment to Talladega Superspeedway.



Matt Crafton (No. 88) drives his damaged NASCAR Camping World Truck Series truck to the pits after an incident during the running of the 2011 Coca-Cola 250 Powered by Fred's race. Crafton started in the 12th position but finished 31st.



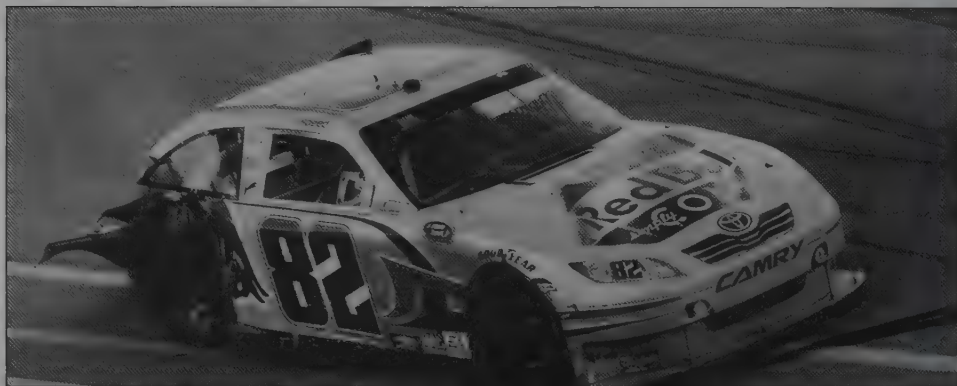
Greg Biffle is shown here after being involved in a wreck during the 2006 running of the UAW-Ford 500. Biffle, driving the No. 16 National Guard Ford, started in the fifth position but ended 41st after the wreck. The photograph shows not only a damaged front end but also a deployed roof flap on the roof of the car. (Courtesy of Chris Breeze.)



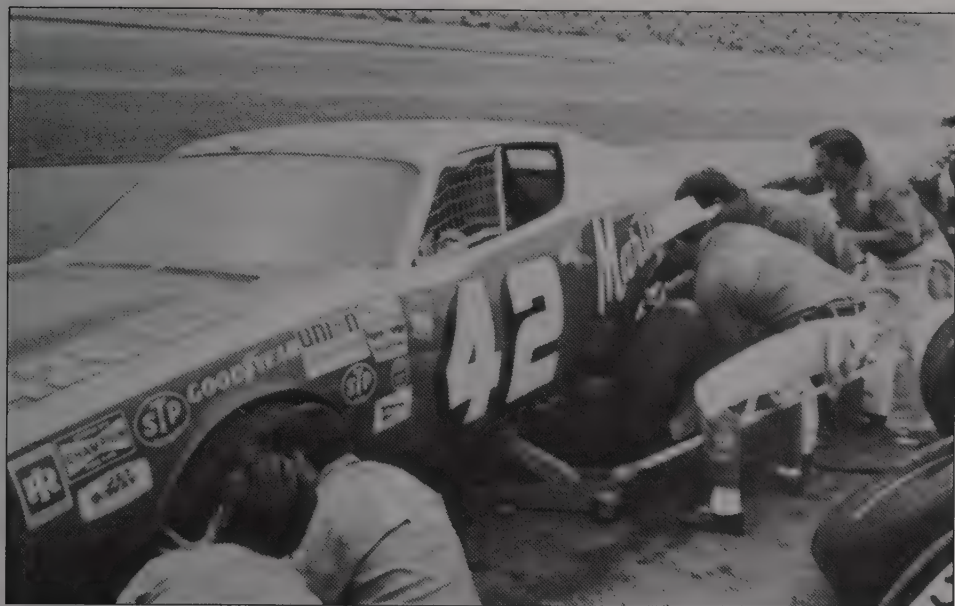
Neil Bonnett's wrecked No. 31 Chevrolet is on display at the International Motorsports Hall of Fame and Museum. Bonnett was involved in a wreck during the running of the 1993 Die Hard 500. After his car became airborne and flipped, he was checked out by the infield care center and released. A short time later, he arrived in the broadcast booth to offer color commentary for the television audience. (Photograph by author.)



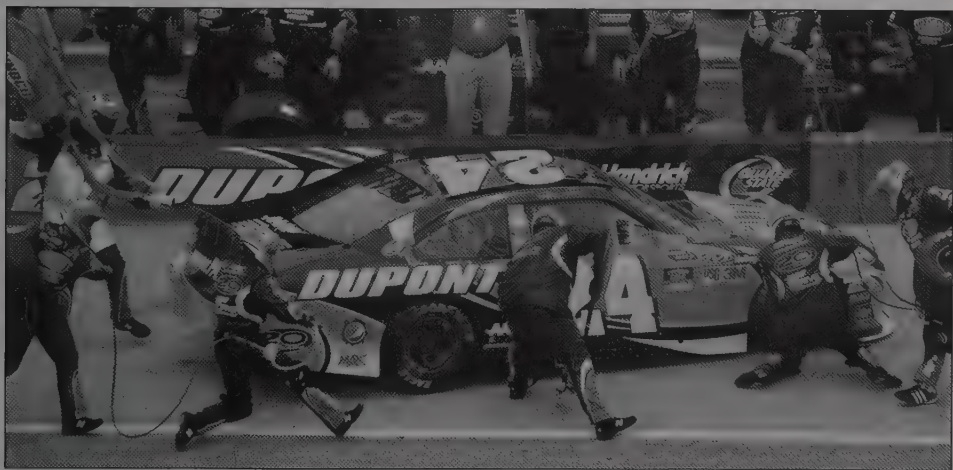
Carl Edwards's crew looks over his car in the garage area after a wreck during the 2008 running of the AMP Energy 500 at Talladega. Edwards started the race in the 12th position. He completed 173 laps of the 190-lap race. Tony Stewart took the checkered flag during the race after leading 24 laps. The race was set for 188 laps but finished under green-white-checker conditions.



Scott Speed (No. 82) saw his chances at a good finish at Talladega go by the wayside when he was caught up in an accident during the 2009 AMP Energy 500 at Talladega. Speed ended the race one lap off the lead, finishing with 190 of 191 laps completed.

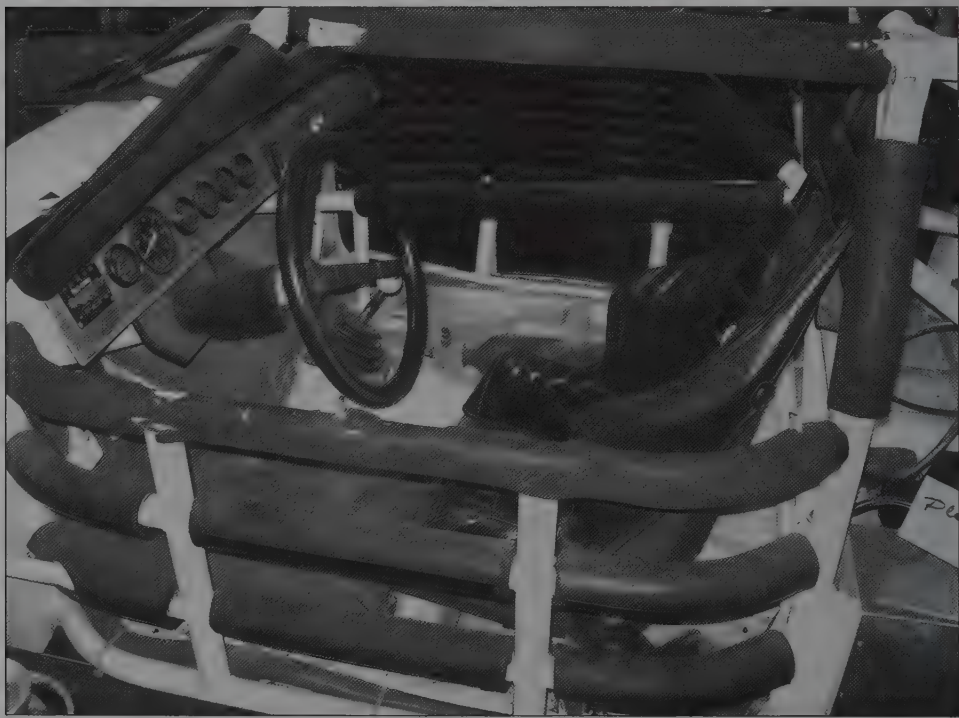


These two images, both from pit road at Talladega Superspeedway, depict how being on a NASCAR pit crew has changed. The image above shows Marty Robbins with his teammates during a pit stop going to work. Over the years, pit crews have evolved from members being shop workers and friends to professional, full-time athletes. Note the evolution of uniforms, which began as blue jeans, slacks, and a wide range of shirts, to durable and protective uniforms similar to driver suits. Ball caps, cowboy hats, and sunglasses have been replaced with helmets and protective eyewear. (Courtesy of Bentley Breland, BWB photographs.)





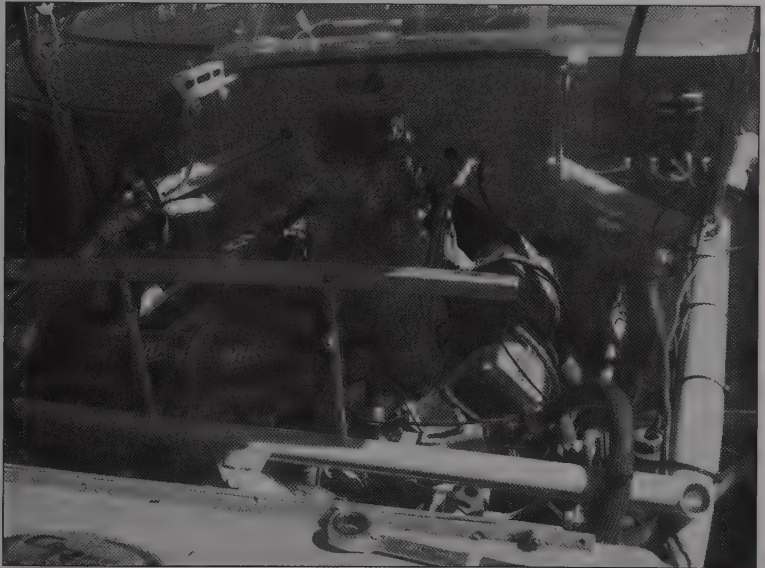
These two photographs show the continuing development of safety cages inside of race cars. At left, Cotton Owens is working on an improved version with driver David Pearson. Owens was instrumental in designing safer cars for his drivers and the stock car racing industry as a whole. The photograph below shows a 1983–1987 NASCAR race car built by Junior Johnson, which was turned into a cut-a-way display car currently at the International Motorsports Hall of Fame in Talladega. Today, additional bars and impact-absorbing materials have been added for increased driver safety. (At left, courtesy of Ryan Owens of www.cottonowens.com; below, photograph by author.)

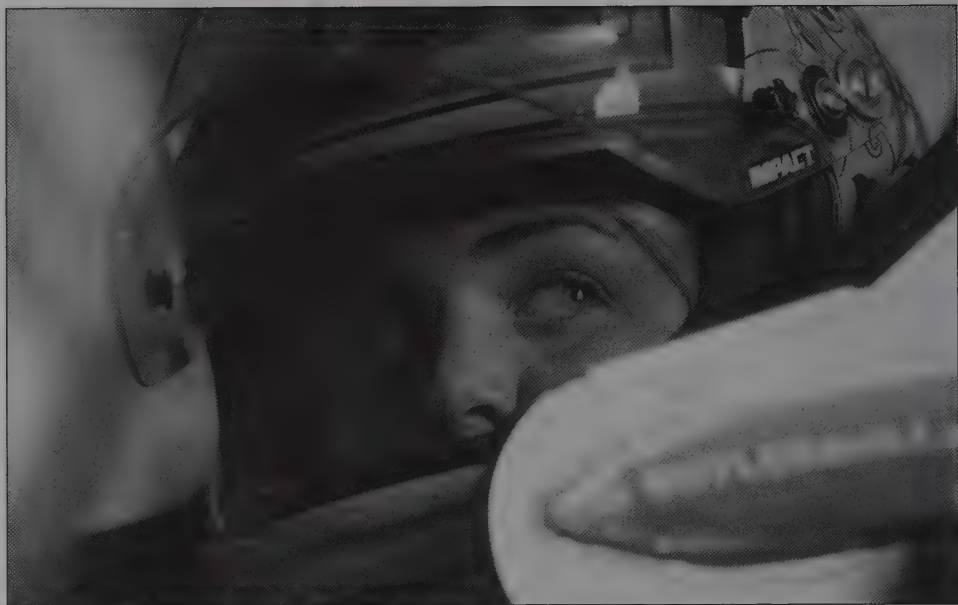




Pictured is a roof flap of Jeff Gordon's No. 24 car on display at the International Motorsports Hall of Fame and Museum. The flaps, mandated after the 1993 season, are designed to naturally disrupt airflow of a car that is involved in a wreck. The flaps only deploy when the car spins backwards in order to help keep the vehicle from going airborne. (Photograph by author.)

Safety measures are taken in all areas of race cars. This is the protective cage of Ryan Sieg's NASCAR Camping World Truck Series No. 39 Pull-A-Part Chevrolet. Also shown are tethers and safety chains built into the truck. (Courtesy of Pull-A-Part.)





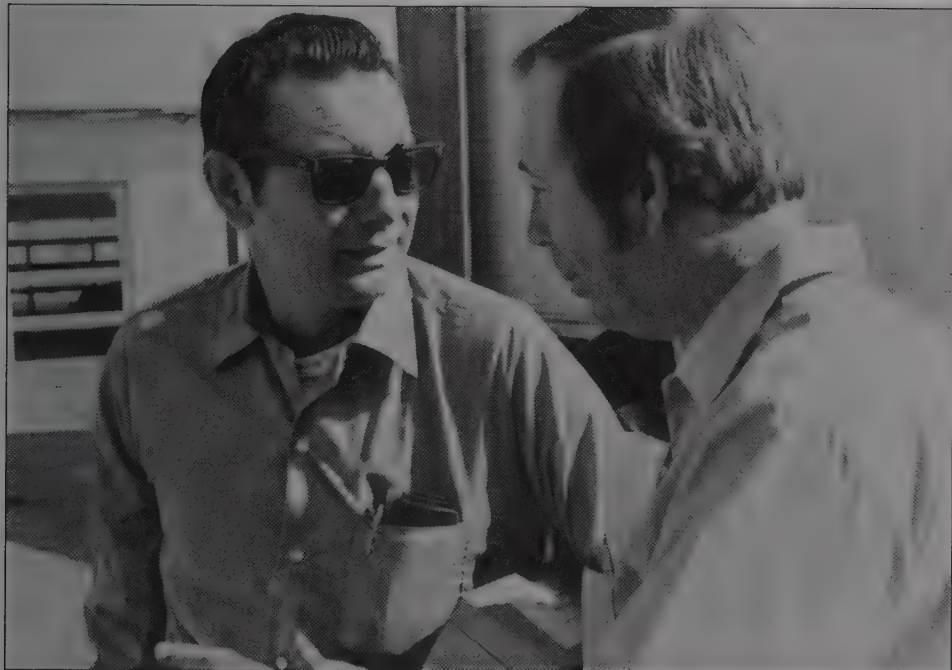
Johanna Long sits in her NASCAR Nationwide race car while waiting on pit road at Talladega Superspeedway. Also visible are portions of the head and neck support (HANS) device. The HANS device was mandated by NASCAR after the 2001 season in order to reduce the risk of basilar skull fractures. The device is now used in several racing series. (Courtesy of Johanna Long, CIA Stock Photography.)



Milka Duno is shown here in her Venturini Motorsports race car. Duno, who captured the pole for the 2013 ARCA Racing Series International Motorsports Hall of Fame 250, is wearing her protective gear, including a HANS device, harness, and protective cage with padding. Her window net has not been secured at the time of the photograph. (Courtesy of Venturini Motorsports.)

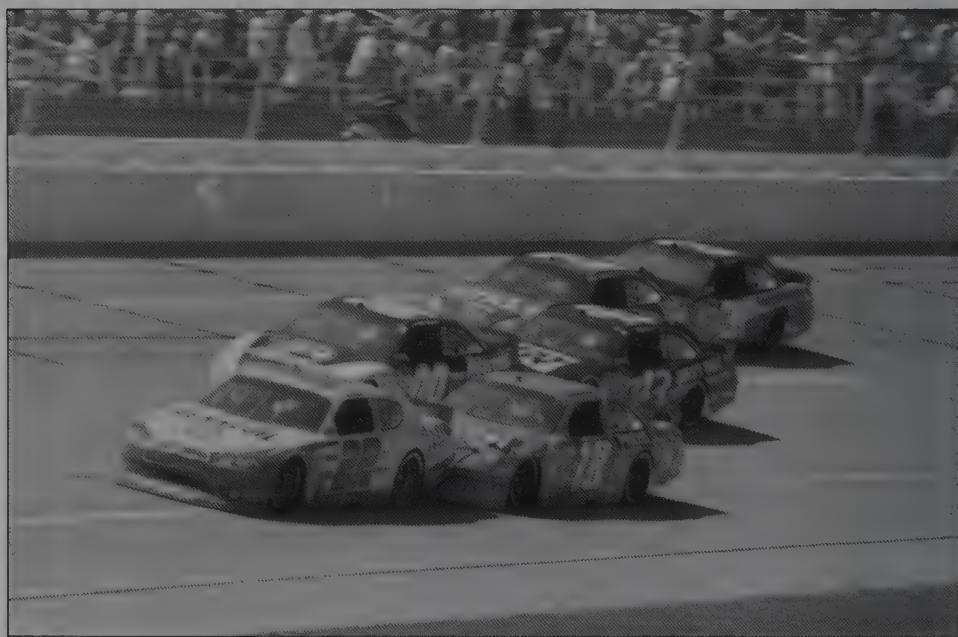
Will Cronkrite is testing components of a Chevy Small Block engine in his "Dyno" room. Cronkrite felt that the high speeds of Talladega demanded great safety equipment, high-performance tires, and high-performance engines. Cronkrite considered safety to be a top priority but knew drivers and fans love speed, stating, "You love to feel the thunder as you pull the throttle back!" (Courtesy of Will Cronkrite.)

This image from the 1973 NASCAR premier series program shows Charles "Red" Farmer (left) with NASCAR technical director Bill Gazaway. Farmer, a member of the Alabama Gang, is said to have won between 700 and 900 late model or feature races. His knowledge of racing, cars, and safety made him a valuable asset to NASCAR as well as several teams, including the Allison brothers and Davey Allison.





These two images depict the SAFER (Steel And Foam Energy Reduction) barrier, which was originally installed at Talladega Superspeedway in 2002 and has since been updated and improved. The SAFER barrier is in place with air-filled gaps between the spacers designed to absorb the impact of a car striking the barrier. (Courtesy of Amanda Vincent of www.NASCAR-Examiner.com.)

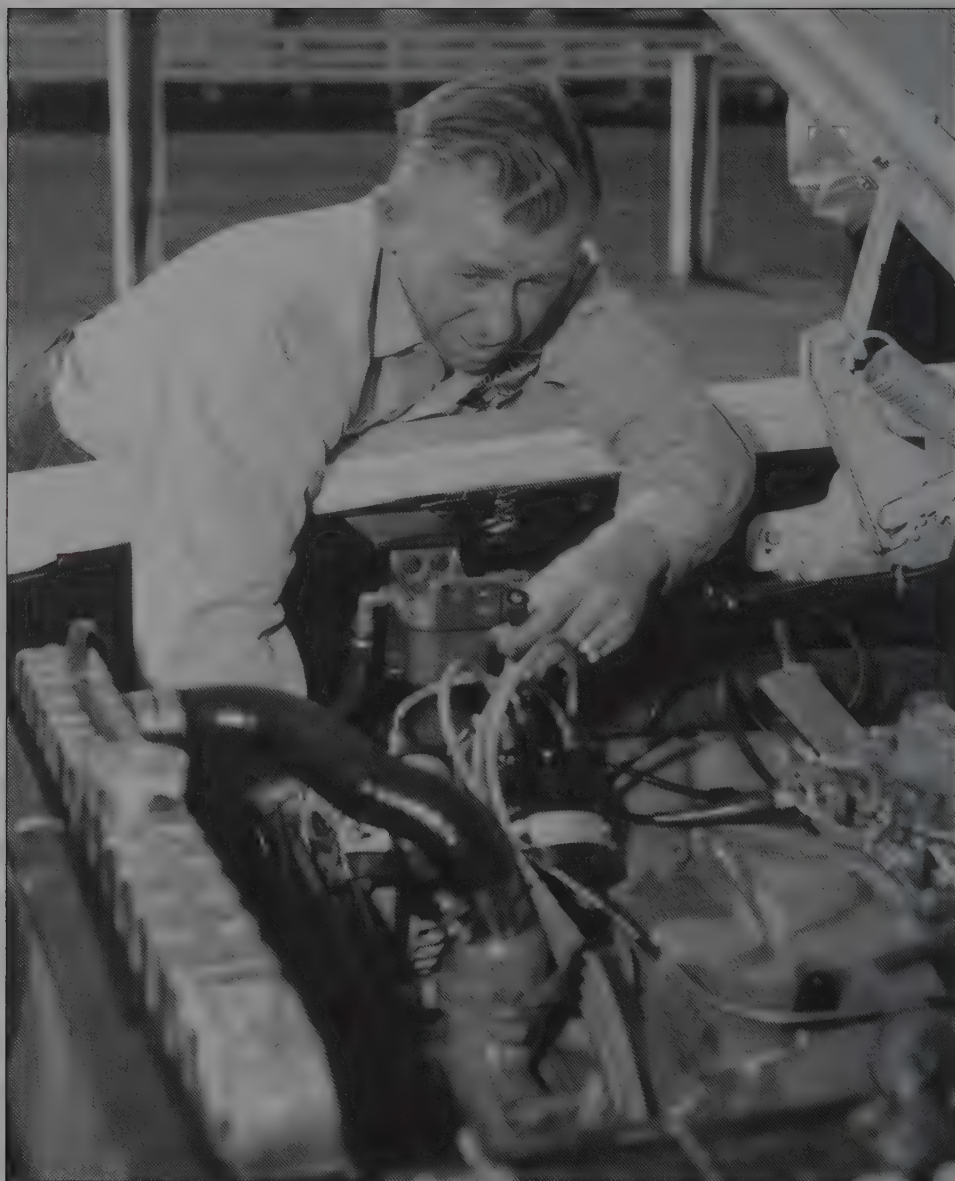




Pictured are the principles from the Midwest Roadside Safety Facility (MwRSF), at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, who were involved in the development of the SAFER barrier. From left front to back are Jim Holloway, Dr. John Rohde, and Dr. Ron Faller; from right front to back are Karla Lechtenberg, Robert Bielenberg, Dr. Dean Sicking, and Dr. John Reid. (Courtesy of Dr. John Rohde.)



The MwRSF broke new ground in 1998 in an effort to improve driver safety. The MwRSF was selected by the IndyCar Series, the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, and NASCAR to develop, test, and evaluate safety features for high-speed race tracks. It developed the SAFER barrier for use on high-speed oval race tracks. (Courtesy of Brian Cantoni.)



Cotton Owens was a pioneer in the development of safer race cars. Owens, shown here working on the engine of one of his race cars in his garage, often built them with safety measures above what rules required. Some of his racing safety innovations include padded steering wheel hubs and fuel-check valves. (Courtesy of Ryan Owens of www.cottonowens.com.)

Six

INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORTS HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM

The next thing I know, Elliott's going backwards and I'm in the lead!

—Cale Yarborough



The International Motorsports Hall of Fame and Museum was the brainchild of Talladega's first general manager, Don Namen, and Bill France Sr. The museum, open daily except on holidays, is also home to the ARCA Hall of Fame, the Quarter Midgets of America Hall of Fame, the World Karting Hall of Fame, Alabama Automobile Racing Pioneers Hall of Fame, and the Alabama Sports Writer's Hall of Fame. (Photograph by author.)



Don Naman

Talladega Superspeedway
November 1970 - March 1988

International Motorsports Hall of Fame
March 1988 - March 2000

This Sculpture Courtesy of

Bobby Allison

Alabama Gang Museum

Chevrolet 

Herb Adams Gary Claude
Jim Aronoff Herb Fisher
Alex Bowdoin Bill Toole
Jeff Chew Gus Scagland

"Once in a Lifetime"

Ned and Martha Jarrett

Richard and Lynda Petty

"Thanks for all your support
to racing and the Petty's"

John and Lillian Roberson

Roger Penske

Rusty Wallace

Jeremy Mayfield

Donald Miller

In Recognition of Dedication to
The Preservation of Motorsports History

Darrell and Stevie Waltrip

"I thank you very much for your
unselfish dedication to preserve
The History of our Sport"

Neil Bonnett

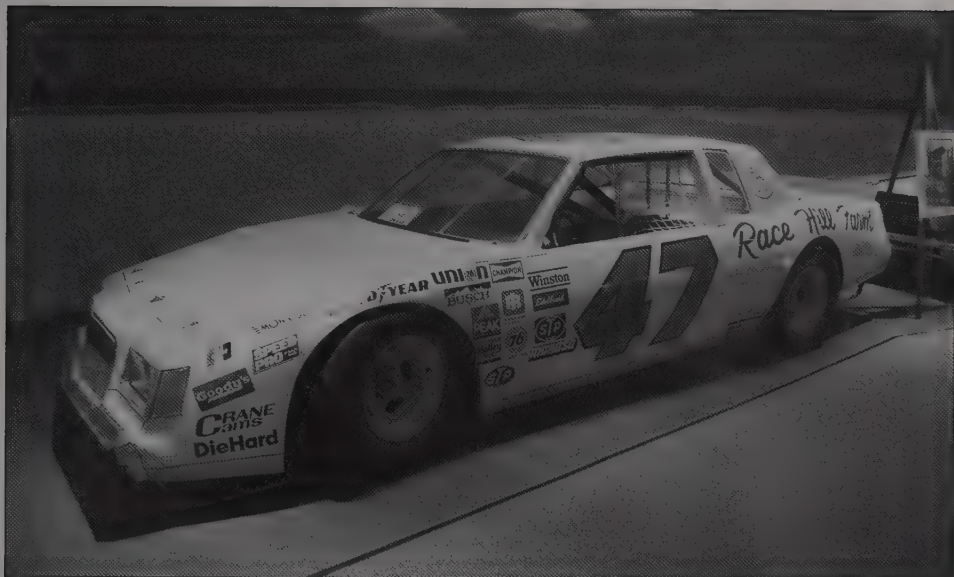
By
The Bonnett Family

and
Buck & Coker Nelson

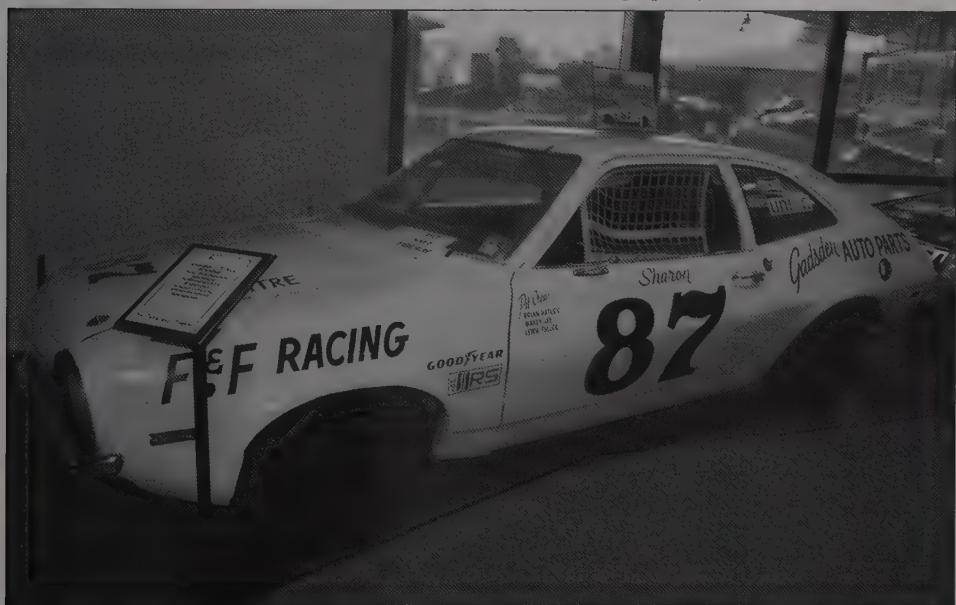
Designer Sculptor - Ivan Fuller

Don Naman (at left) was the general manager for Talladega from 1970 to 1988 and was with the International Motorsports Hall of Fame (below) until 2000. His love for racing came after serving in the military when he visited a track outside of Knoxville, Tennessee. He soon worked in the sport in a variety of positions, utilizing his keen business sense and knack for knowing what fans and people working in the sport enjoyed. He is credited with making Talladega the successful track that it is today. A plaque at the museum honors Naman, who died in 2011. (Photographs by author.)





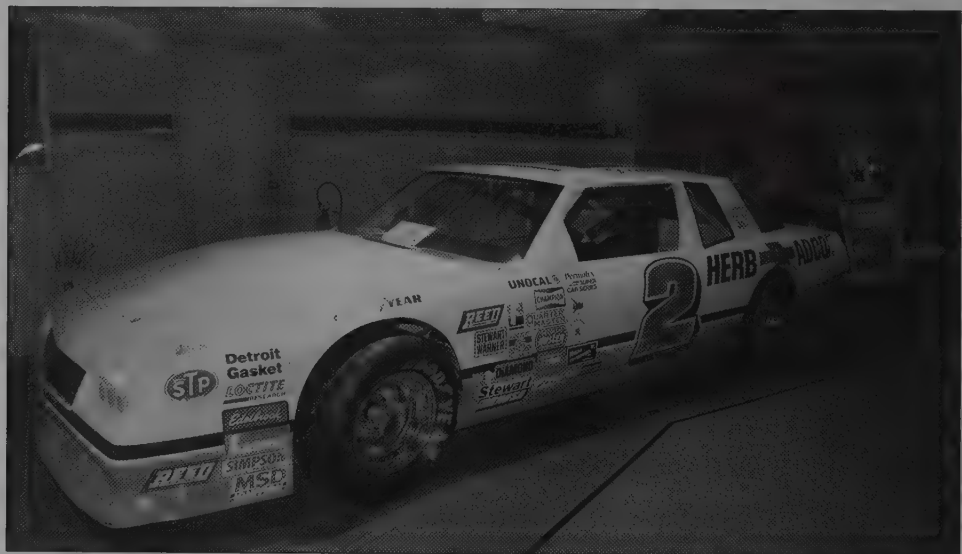
Ron Bouchard won the 1981 NASCAR premier series Sunoco Rookie of the Year award with 12 top-10 finishes. His only career win, a photo finish, came in the 1981 Talladega 500 when he passed Darrell Waltrip and Terry Labonte coming out of turn four. In 1988, his brother Ken was named Sunoco Rookie of the Year. Bouchard's No. 47 car, seen here, is on display in the International Motorsports Hall of Fame and Museum. (Photograph by author.)



The record-setting 1972 Ford Pinto that Sharon Allen (No. 87) drove on August 1, 1976, is on display at the International Motorsports Hall of Fame and Museum. Allen drove a top speed of 114.980 miles per hour to set the record for IMSA RS Women's World Closed Course Sedan Class. (Photograph by author.)



Bill Elliott, often referred to as “Awesome Bill from Dawsonville,” set a Talladega Superspeedway qualifying speed record of 212.809 miles per hour in 1987. NASCAR then began mandating restrictor plates on cars at superspeedways to keep speeds below the 200-miles-per-hour mark, which means that Elliott’s 27-year-old record still stands today and will likely never be broken. His car (No. 9) is on display at the International Motorsports Hall of Fame and Museum.

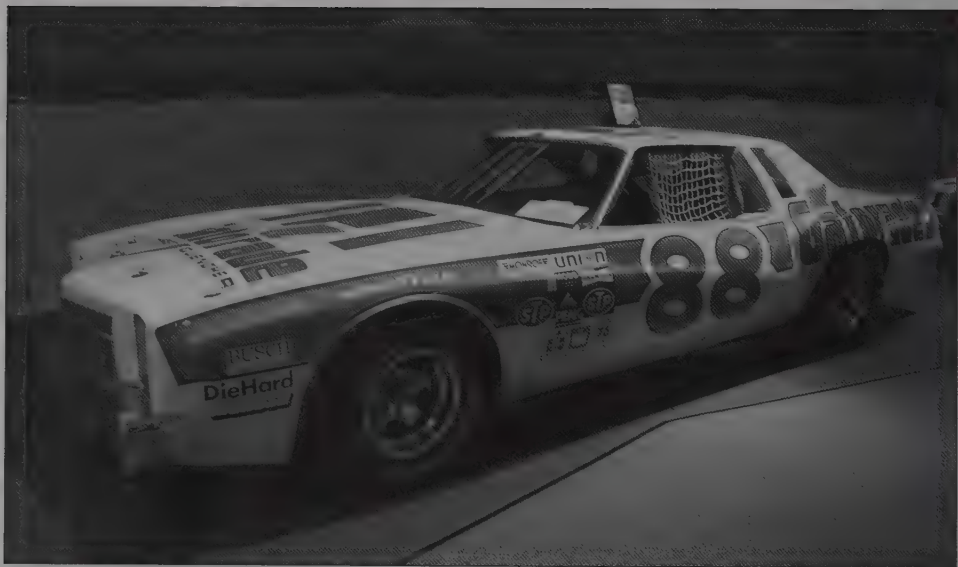


The No. 2 Chevy Monte Carlo that Grant Adcox piloted to three of his five wins at Talladega is now on display the International Motorsports Hall of Fame and Museum. Adcox won five of six ARCA races at Talladega between 1986 and 1988. This image shows the logo of his father’s car dealership, which was located in Chattanooga, Tennessee. The ARCA Racing Series presents the H.G. Adcox Sportsmanship Award every year during its awards banquet, and Mr. Adcox presented it in his son’s honor. (Photograph by author.)

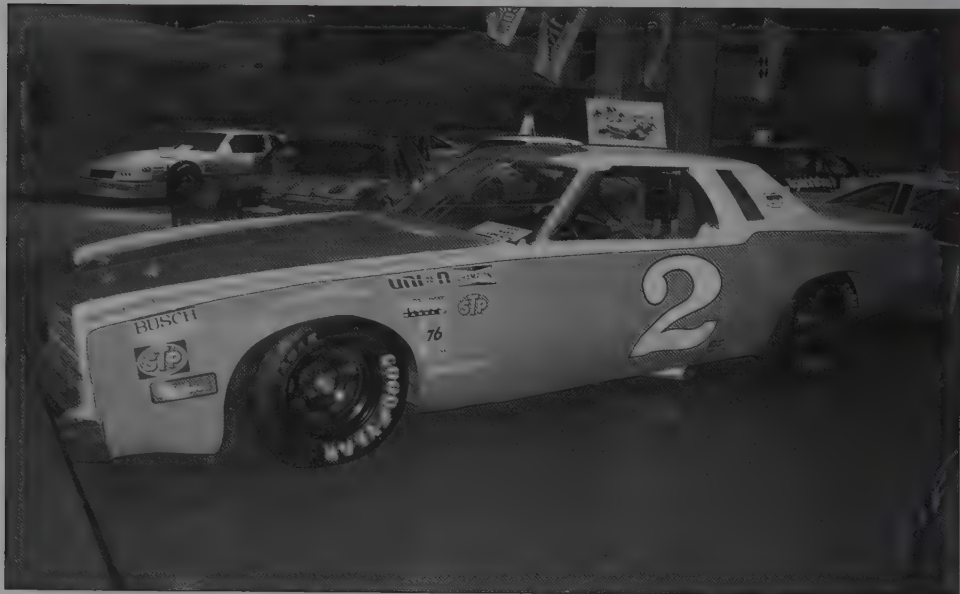
The truck that Lee Hurley of Birmingham, Alabama, drove to an IMSA closed-course record in the truck category at the Alabama International Motor Speedway in 1976 is seen here at the International Motorsports Hall of Fame and Museum. A little-known fact is that minutes before setting the truck record Hurley set a record while driving a Hornet. (Photograph by author.)



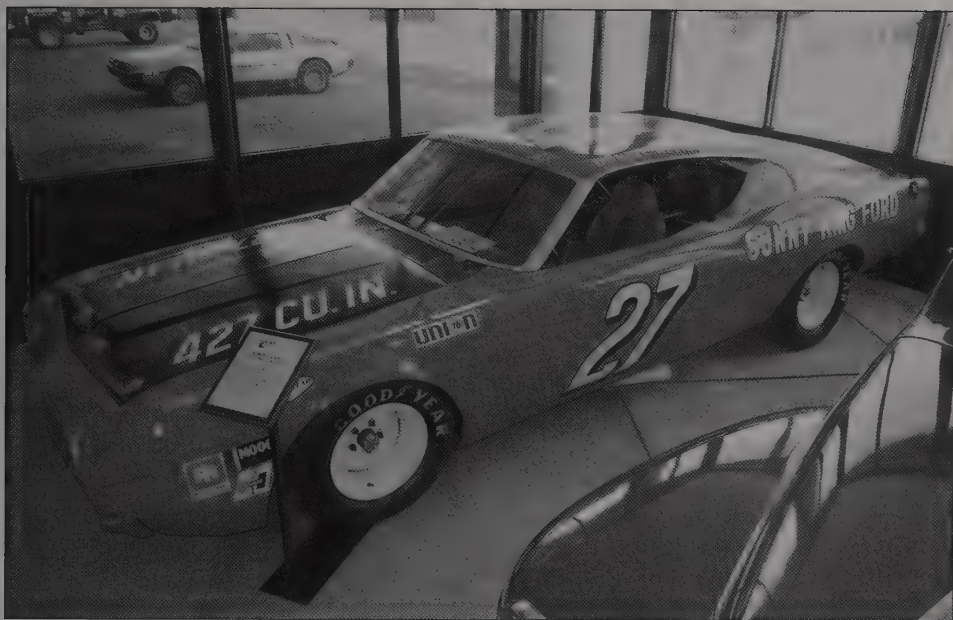
In 1986, three Saab 9000 Turbo vehicles were chosen at random from the assembly line in Sweden and sent to the Alabama International Motor Speedway in Talladega, Alabama. The test was to see how far and fast the cars could go. This Saab Turbo set 12 world speed records, averaging a speed of 132 miles per hour while traveling 60,000 miles—equal to almost trips around the earth. (Photograph by author.)



Darrell Waltrip, multiple Talladega race winner, piloted this car (No. 88), which is displayed at the International Motorsports Hall of Fame and Museum. The 1977 Chevrolet Monte Carlo was nicknamed "Bertha" by Waltrip. Together, Waltrip and Bertha won 12 races. The car was donated to the museum by the Quaker Oats Company and Gatorade Products. (Photograph by author.)



Dale Earnhardt donated his 1980 No. 2 Chevrolet Monte Carlo to the International Motorsports Hall of Fame and Museum. Earnhardt was an early supporter of the museum. The car was driven by Earnhardt during his first championship season in 1980, when he won five races and beat Cale Yarborough in the standings by only 19 points. (Photograph by author.)



Donnie Allison's 1969 Ford Grand Torino Talladega, named after the new Alabama International Motor Speedway at Talladega, is currently displayed at the International Motorsports Hall of Fame and Museum. Allison drove the No. 27 Sunny King Ford Talladega Grand Torino to victory in both the 1970 World 600 and Firecracker 400. (Photograph by author.)

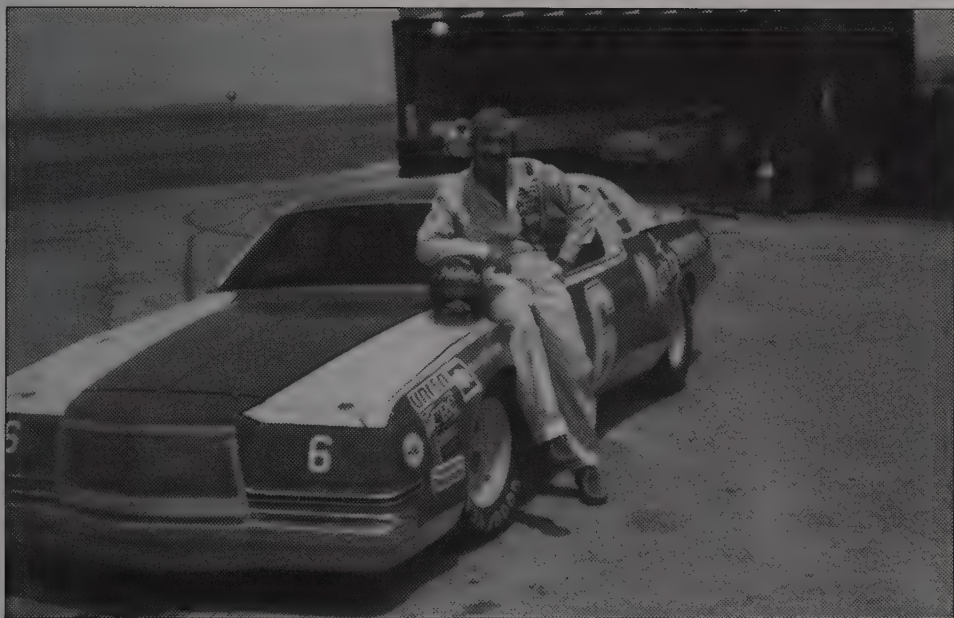


Richard Petty won his fifth NASCAR premier series championship driving this Petty Enterprises 1974 No. 43 Dodge. He felt that the car was so dominant that he ran it again in the 1975 season. He was right; Petty won his sixth championship that year. (Photograph by author.)



Will Cronkrite (seated) is pictured in a newspaper clipping with Stan Barrett as they discuss the car designed to break the sound barrier. Barrett, who piloted the Budweiser Rocket Car, was also a NASCAR driver. Cronkrite noted that the rocket car, now on display at the International Motorsports Hall of Fame in Talladega, was "a 39-foot-long speedster powered by a 48,000 horsepower hydrogen peroxide rocket—it's a 12,000 horsepower sidewinder missile!" Barrett raced in 19 NASCAR premier series races, with two top-10 finishes. Barrett's best finish at Talladega came in 1981, when he finished ninth. He and his son Stanton both raced in NASCAR, and Barrett's other son David is a stuntman and director. (At left, courtesy of Will Cronkrite; below, photograph by author.)





Darryl Kinnane purchased Marty Robbins's No. 6 car on ebay. The car was originally built by NASCAR legend Cotton Owens, who crafted cars for several drivers and teams. According to Kinnane, once the car was restored he had to take it out: "Oh yeah, I've taken the car to local tracks as a pace car for Saturday night events. We took it out to a road course and ran it. It's an amazing piece of stock car history!" After the car was displayed at Talladega, Kinnane took it to South Carolina during an event held in honor of Owens. Pictured below is Owens with Kinnane's father, Tom, in 2006. (Above, courtesy of Darryl Kinnane; below, Ryan Owens of www.cottonowens.com.)





Driver Thomas "Moose" Praytor (left) of Hixson Motorsports is shown here in a charity ice chest race with former Auburn and professional kicker Al Del Greco. The race took place during Race Fever 2013 at the International Motorsports Hall of Fame. The annual event is a fundraiser for the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind. (Photograph by Ashley Rowe for Thomas Prater Racing.)

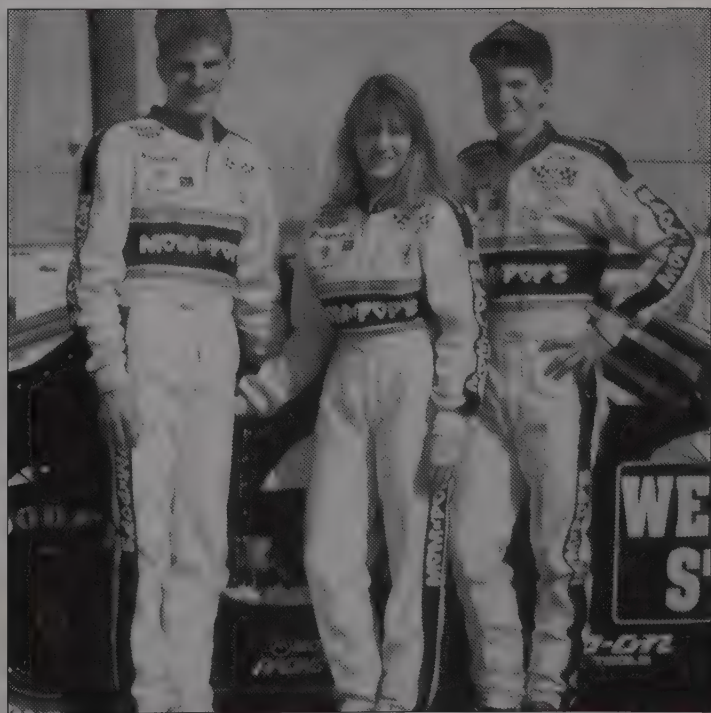


The library at the International Motorsports Hall of Fame not only serves as a reference source, now by appointment, but it also acts as a driver and team hospitality area during race weekends. Longtime museum librarian Betty Carlan is sharing her vast knowledge of the sport and track with a group of museum visitors.



The International Motorsports Hall of Fame and Museum at Talladega Superspeedway includes this Dale Earnhardt Sr. No. 3 car, which is being viewed by a museum visitor. The museum also includes the Dale Earnhardt Room, which celebrates the legendary driver and his entire family with images and memorabilia from several tracks. (Photograph by author.)

One of the photographs on display in the Dale Earnhardt Room at the International Motorsports Hall of Fame and Museum is of three of Earnhardt's four children during their early racing days as drivers for Mom & Pop's. Pictured are, from left to right, Kerry Earnhardt, Kelley Earnhardt, and Dale Earnhardt Jr.



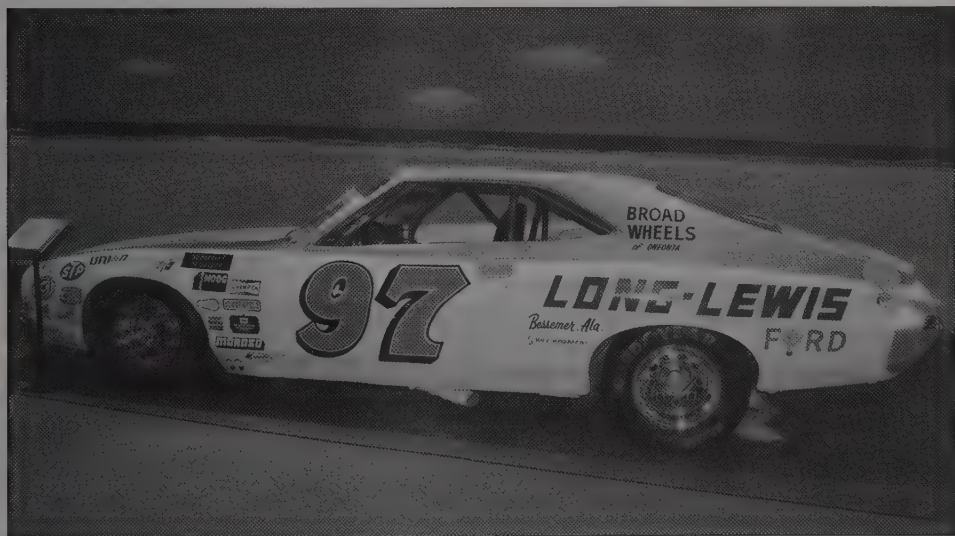


Above, Dale Earnhardt (No. 3), Ernie Irvan (No. 4), Kyle Petty (No. 42), and Davey Allison (No. 28) race in the Winston 500 on May 6, 1991. Col. Paul Sumner took the photograph from the infield as the drivers rounded turn two. The image below shows, from left to right, Dale Earnhardt Sr., preparing to sign the photograph, while Benny Ertle (white shirt), Mike Collier, and Sumner (standing) look on. The signing took place at an event a few months later. Ertle worked with many drivers in marketing, and Collier was Earnhardt's pilot. The images are on display in the McCaig-Wellborn Library at the International Motorsports Hall of Fame and Museum.





Tony Stewart is shown taking a break at Talladega Superspeedway. Stewart won the 2008 running of the AMP Energy 500 at Talladega. Due to a late-race wreck, two laps were added to the race with the checkered flag being taken by Regan Smith. NASCAR ruled that Smith had dipped below the yellow line to advance his position, thereby forfeiting the win to Stewart, who led 24 laps of the race. (Photograph by author.)



Red Farmer, the “dean” of the Alabama Gang, drove the No. 97 car, which is now on display at the International Motorsports Hall of Fame and Museum, to a fourth-place finish in the 1972 Talladega 500. Farmer finished behind James Hylton, Ramo Stott, and Bobby Allison. It was Farmer’s highest finish at Talladega in a NASCAR premier series race. Farmer did win at Talladega in the ARCA Racing Series. (Photograph by author.)

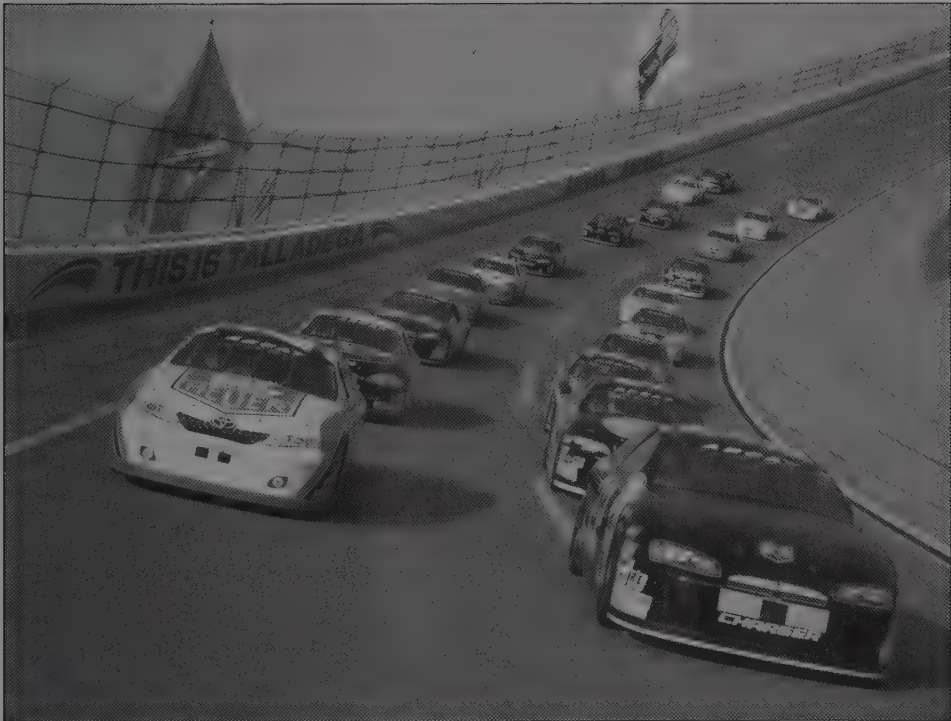
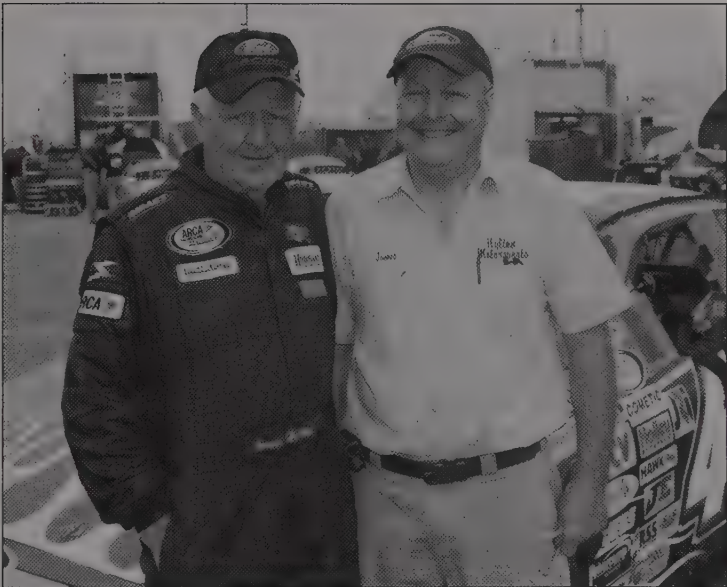


Race fans cheer as Dale Earnhardt Jr. (No. 88) leads the pack around the track during the 2010 Aaron's 499. Earnhardt Jr., a fan favorite at Talladega during race week, has also won the National Motorsports Press Association NASCAR Most Popular Driver award 11 times at the time this book was written. (Courtesy of Amanda Vincent of www.NASCAR-Examiner.com.)

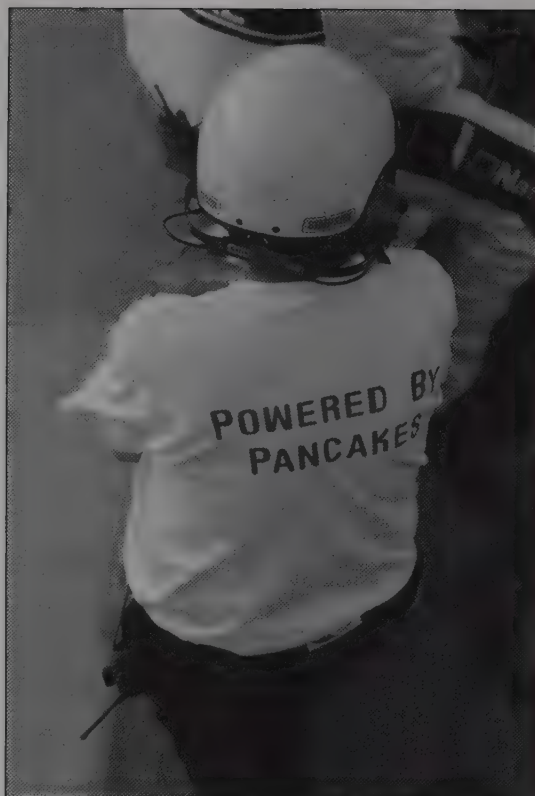


Drivers, crews, team members, and family members line up for the pre-race invocation and singing of the national anthem prior to the 2010 Aaron's 499 at Talladega Superspeedway. Six team members are allowed to go over the wall during a race pit stop. (Courtesy of Amanda Vincent of www.NASCAR-Examiner.com.)

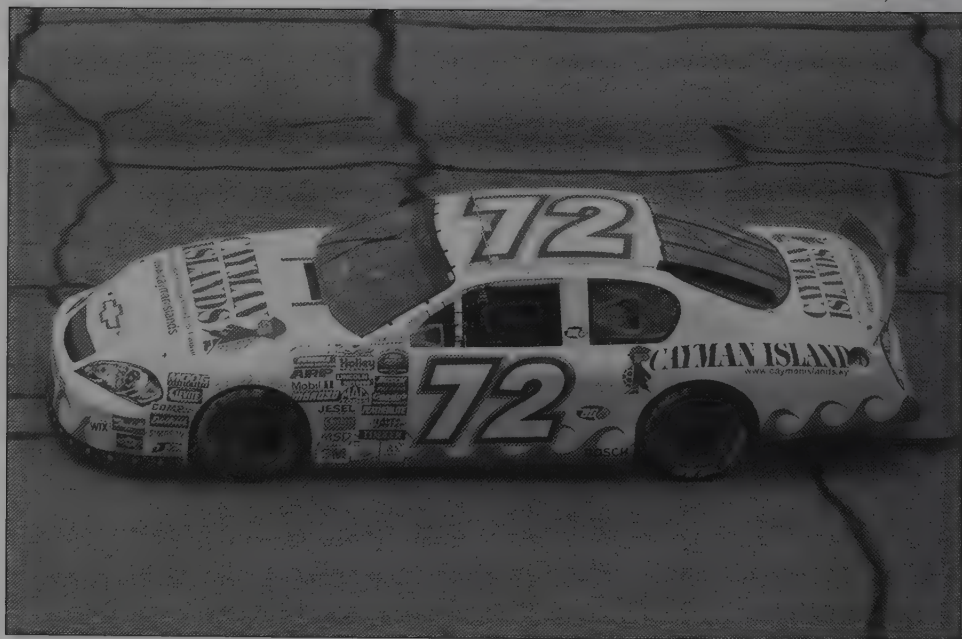
James Hylton drove in several racing series, including NASCAR and ARCA, from the mid-1950s to his last race with ARCA in 2013. Hylton won the 1972 Talladega 500. He is shown here with his son James Hylton Jr. at his last Talladega race at the age of 76 in 2013. (Courtesy of the ARCA Racing Series.)



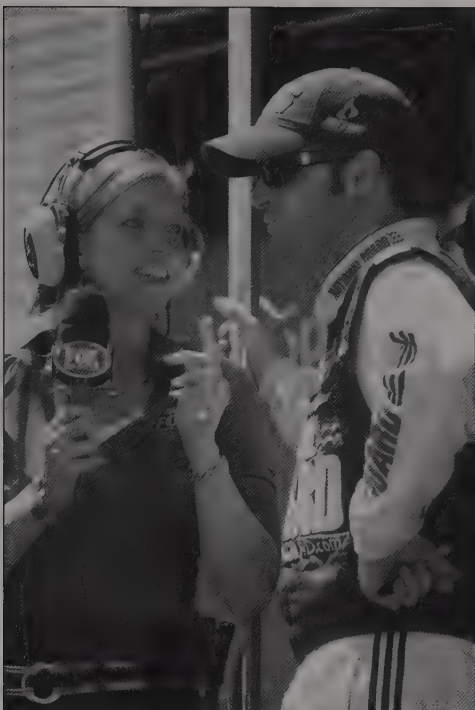
This photograph, taken from the pace car at Talladega Superspeedway during an ARCA race, shows the steepness of the high-banked turns of Talladega. To get a better idea of the gradient of the turns, simply locate the flagpoles in the background and rotate the book until they are level. (Courtesy of the ARCA Racing Series.)



NASCAR Camping World Truck Series driver Donnie Neuenberger's sponsorship by IHOP created one of the more popular shirts seen around the Talladega garage and pit area. Neuenberger, a cancer survivor, discovered he had the disease after pinching a nerve at Talladega and flipping his car at Dover. During routine testing for the pinched nerve, the cancer was detected. After successful treatment, Neuenberger not only returned to racing, he also entered the broadcast booth and started the Donnie Neuenberger Foundation, which helps support families coping with cancer. Shown is Neuenberger's classic IHOP 2010 crew shirt as well as his No. 72 Cayman Islands Chevy, which he drove in 2006 upon his return to Talladega. (Courtesy of Amanda Vincent of www.NASCAR-Examiner.com.)



Krista Voda, of FOX Sports, interviews Dale Earnhardt Jr. during the April 2010 race weekend at Talladega Superspeedway. Earnhardt has five NASCAR Sprint Cup Series wins and one NASCAR Nationwide win at the track. Always a fan favorite, Earnhardt is constantly fielding media requests for interviews on any given race weekend. (Courtesy of Amanda Vincent of www.NASCAR-Examiner.com.)

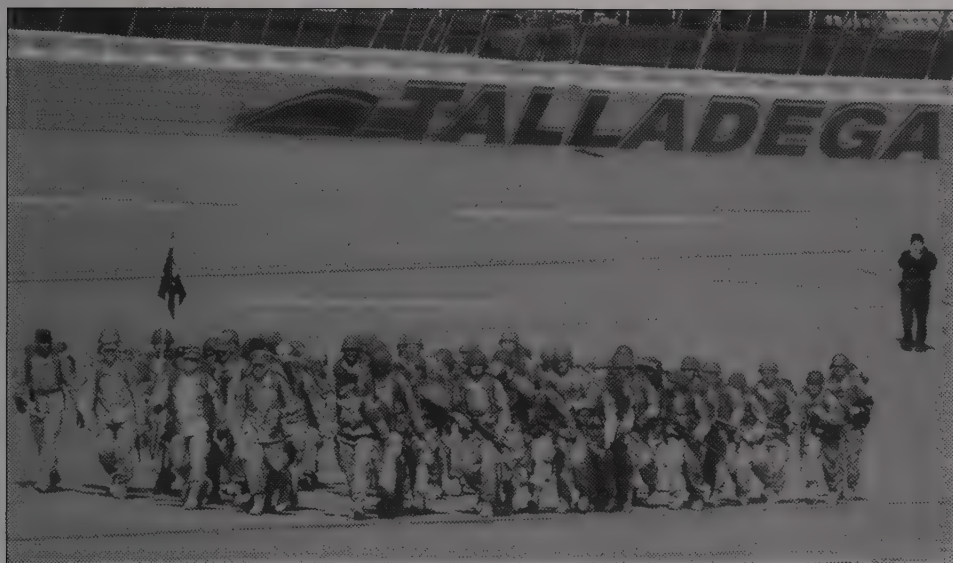


Kasey Kahne is shown autographing a helmet during the 2010 Aaron's 499 weekend. According to photographer Amanda Vincent, the helmet, which has signatures of many drivers, was for charity. Kahne, as a driver at Talladega, has captured the pole once, has seven top-15 finishes, and is enshrined in the Talladega-Texaco Walk of Fame. (Courtesy of Amanda Vincent of www.NASCAR-Examiner.com.)



There are more than just fans watching the racing action. Ryan Sieg, driver of the No. 39 RSS Racing Chevrolet in the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series, takes on gas in a pit stop during a race at Talladega Superspeedway in 2012 while a team member keeps tabs on the action. The pit crew shown working with Sieg and RSS Racing is from Hendrick Motorsports. The photograph below shows fans and officials keeping an eye out on the race. Track officials are responsible for monitoring everything from safety issues to rules violations and more. (Courtesy of Pull-A-Part.)

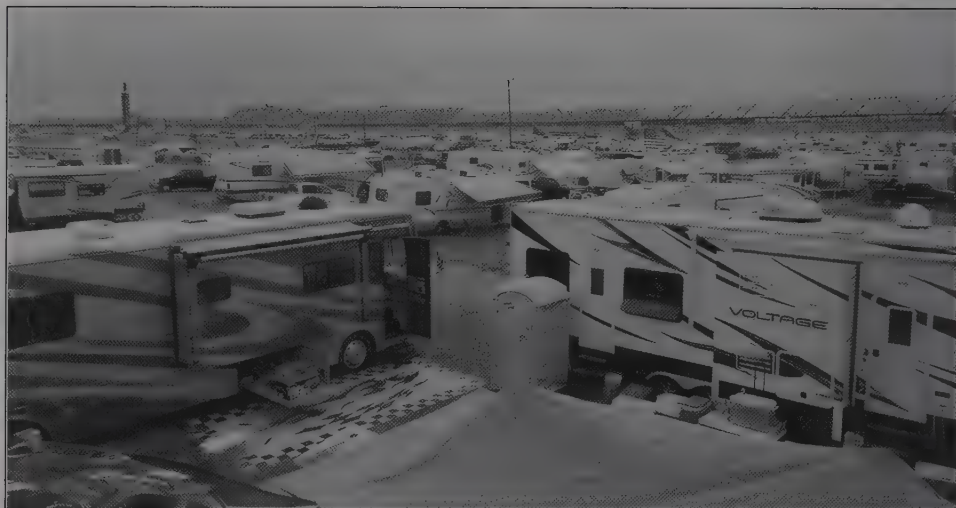




Talladega can be put to another use other than racing. In February 2009, approximately 190 officer candidates from the Alabama National Guard Training Site at Fort McClellan, Alabama, participated in a seven-mile march, including two miles around the Talladega Superspeedway. (Courtesy of the Alabama National Guard.)



Members of the band 3 Doors Down talk with NASCAR driver Dale Earnhardt Jr. at Talladega Superspeedway in 2009 when the band performed a concert for about 400 National Guard members and their families. Pictured are, from left to right, Brad Arnold, Chris Henderson, Todd Harrell, and Earnhardt. (Courtesy of the Alabama National Guard.)



These two images show Talladega Superspeedway from the perspective of fans in the infield. Many NASCAR fans build specially designed platforms atop motor homes in order to better view the race. Other fans simply enjoy the race atop their vehicles with a few lawn chairs. The photographs depict how tall the high-banked turns are as they tower above campers parked in the infield. Fans begin arriving for Talladega races upwards of a week in advance. Camping is allowed in campgrounds on the speedway property or private campgrounds nearby. The speedway is said to become one of the largest cities in the state every race weekend due to the large number of daily and camping fans. (Photographs by Wes Spencer and Rusty Eager.)

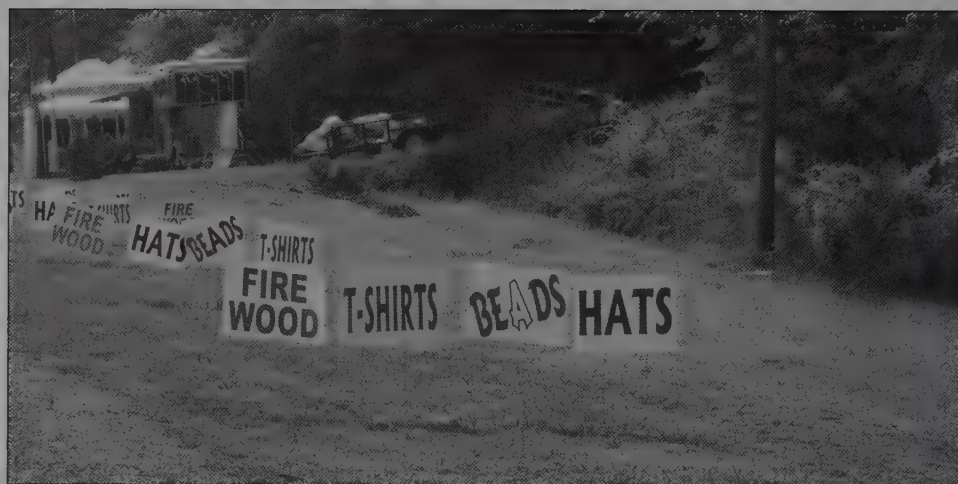




This is the Talladega Superspeedway infield in 2011 as seen from the Allison Grandstands. The concrete visible is a portion of the World War II airstrip, which has been renamed Eastaboga Boulevard after Eastaboga, Alabama, home of NASCAR drivers Johnny and Kevin Ray. The larger portion of the World War II runway in the infield, covered by motor homes and vehicles, is named Talladega Boulevard. (Courtesy of Rusty Eager.)



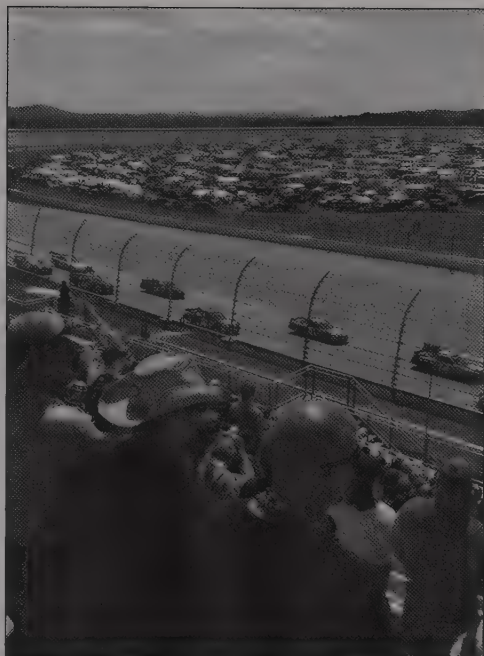
Visible in this aerial photograph, taken by pilot Reid McBayer in 2007, are the World War II runways in the speedway infield camping areas. In the upper part, the runway for the Talladega Municipal Airport can be seen. Also visible is one of the World War II runways extending under the backstretch and backstretch grandstands. (Courtesy of Reid McBayer.)

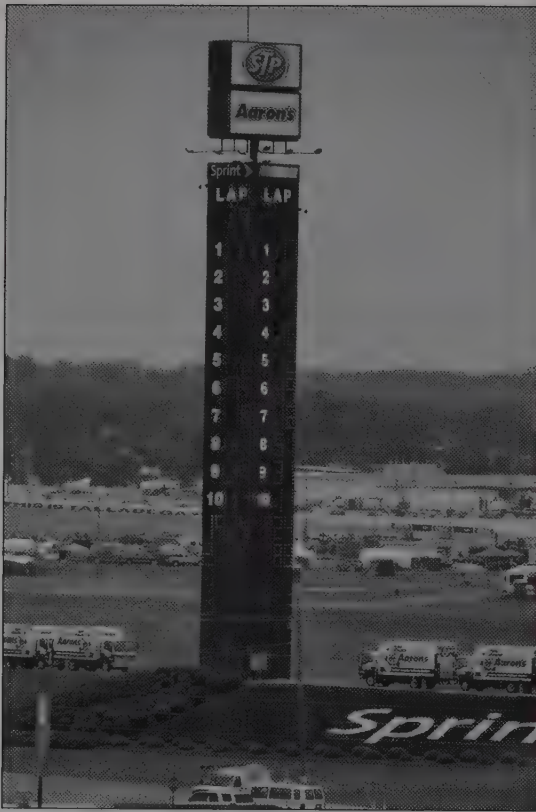


Talladega Superspeedway is not only a place to enjoy a race, the International Motorsports Hall of Fame and Museum, or an on-track driving experience on select weekends, it is also a shopping experience on a race weekend. Many local vendors set up roadside stands in order to capture the attention and business of visiting race fans. In addition, fans can purchase merchandise from track vendors, ranging from gift shops and merchandise haulers, representing a large number of drivers, teams, and sponsors. (Above, courtesy of Brian Cantoni; below, Rusty Eager.)



The track PA system is not the only way race fans can keep up with the action. Pictured are race fans taking in the action along the backstretch coming out of turn two at Talladega Superspeedway. Even though they are a seated a good distance from the scoring tower, there are many ways to follow the race. Many tracks offer jumbo television screens, and fans can also listen to the communications between drivers and crews, as well as a broadcast of the event. Personal hand-held receivers can range from a simple radio that can pick up several team frequencies to handheld devices displaying images, track times, laps, and more. Below, Nathan Divin is in the backstretch stands at Talladega listening in on driver communications as well as the MRN Radio broadcast of the Aaron's 499. (Courtesy of Rusty Eager.)





The scoring tower at Talladega Superspeedway is pictured during a race weekend for the Aaron's 499. Aaron's delivery vehicles can be seen as well for the branding effort. The tower is 148 feet tall and displays the first 10 positions during a race, while positions 11–43 rotate in the bottom two spaces. The tower has over 7,400 lightbulbs. (Courtesy of Bentley Breland, BWB photographs.)

Sunoco became the official fuel for NASCAR in 2004. Shortly after, it replaced the 76 fuel sign ball at the track with a Sunoco observation tower. Several people can be seen here using the tower during the 2011 Aaron's 499. The tower is used for everything from track observation by officials to media use. (Courtesy of Bentley Breland, BWB photographs.)



First Annual

Official Souvenir Program \$1.00

TALLADEGA 500

Richard Brickhouse
1969

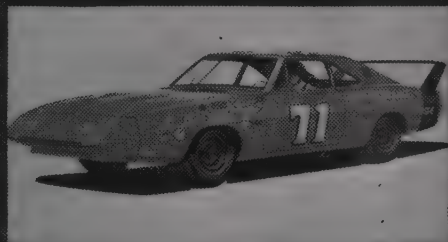
SUNDAY SEPT. 14, 1968

and the
'BAMA 400

SATURDAY, SEPT. 13



This Program Dedicated to the late Governor of Alabama - LURLEEN WALLACE



"DAYTONA DODGE"



"TALLADEGA FORD"

INTERNATIONAL ALABAMA MOTOR SPEEDWAY

TALLADEGA, ALA.

The cover of the program from the first race weekend at Alabama International Motor Speedway in 1969 is pictured here. Note the autograph of Richard Brickhouse, winner of the first Talladega 500, on the cover.

TALLADEGA ALL-TIME NASCAR PREMIER SERIES WINNERS

1969	Richard Brickhouse, Dodge	1987	Davey Allison, Ford
1970	Pete Hamilton, Plymouth	1987	Bill Elliott, Ford
1970	Pete Hamilton, Plymouth	1988	Phil Parsons, Oldsmobile
1971	Donnie Allison, Mercury	1988	Ken Schrader, Chevrolet
1971	Bobby Allison, Mercury	1989	Davey Allison, Ford
1972	David Pearson, Mercury	1989	Terry Labonte, Ford
1972	James Hylton, Mercury	1990	Dale Earnhardt, Chevrolet
1973	David Pearson, Mercury	1990	Dale Earnhardt, Chevrolet
1973	Dick Brooks, Plymouth	1991	Harry Gant, Oldsmobile
1974	David Pearson, Mercury	1991	Dale Earnhardt, Chevrolet
1974	Richard Petty, Dodge	1992	Davey Allison, Ford
1975	Buddy Baker, Ford	1992	Ernie Irvan, Chevrolet
1975	Buddy Baker, Ford	1993	Ernie Irvan, Chevrolet
1976	Buddy Baker, Ford	1993	Dale Earnhardt, Chevrolet
1976	Dave Marcis, Dodge	1994	Dale Earnhardt, Chevrolet
1977	Darrell Waltrip, Chevrolet	1994	Jimmy Spencer, Ford
1977	Donnie Allison, Chevrolet	1995	Mark Martin, Ford
1978	Cale Yarborough, Oldsmobile	1995	Sterling Marlin, Chevrolet
1978	Lennie Pond, Oldsmobile	1996	Sterling Marlin, Chevrolet
1979	Bobby Allison, Ford	1996	Jeff Gordon, Chevrolet
1979	Darrell Waltrip, Oldsmobile	1997	Mark Martin, Ford
1980	Buddy Baker, Oldsmobile	1997	Terry Labonte, Chevrolet
1980	Neil Bonnett, Mercury	1998	Bobby Labonte, Pontiac
1981	Bobby Allison, Buick	1998	Dale Jarrett, Ford
1981	Ron Bouchard, Buick	1999	Dale Earnhardt, Chevrolet
1982	Darrell Waltrip, Buick	1999	Dale Earnhardt, Chevrolet
1982	Darrell Waltrip, Buick	2000	Jeff Gordon, Chevrolet
1983	Richard Petty, Pontiac	2000	Dale Earnhardt Jr., Chevrolet
1983	Dale Earnhardt, Ford	2001	Bobby Hamilton, Chevrolet
1984	Cale Yarborough, Chevrolet	2001	Dale Earnhardt Jr., Chevrolet
1984	Dale Earnhardt, Chevrolet	2002	Dale Earnhardt Jr., Chevrolet
1985	Bill Elliott, Ford	2002	Dale Earnhardt Jr., Chevrolet
1985	Cale Yarborough, Ford	2003	Dale Earnhardt Jr., Chevrolet
1986	Bobby Allison, Buick	2003	Michael Waltrip, Chevrolet
1986	Bobby Hillin Jr., Buick	2004	Jeff Gordon, Chevrolet

2004 Dale Earnhardt Jr., Chevrolet
 2005 Jeff Gordon, Chevrolet
 2005 Dale Jarrett, Ford
 2006 Jimmie Johnson, Chevrolet
 2006 Brian Vickers, Chevrolet
 2007 Jeff Gordon, Chevrolet
 2007 Jeff Gordon, Chevrolet
 2008 Kyle Busch, Toyota
 2008 Tony Stewart, Toyota
 2009 Brad Keselowski, Chevrolet

2009 Jamie McMurray, Ford
 2010 Kevin Harvick, Chevrolet
 2010 Clint Bowyer, Chevrolet
 2011 Jimmie Johnson, Chevrolet
 2011 Clint Bowyer, Chevrolet
 2012 Brad Keselowski, Dodge
 2012 Matt Kenseth, Ford
 2013 David Ragan, Ford
 2013 Jamie McMurray, Chevrolet

ALL-TIME NASCAR BUSCH (NOW NATIONWIDE) SERIES WINNERS

1992 Ernie Irvan, Chevrolet
 1993 Dale Earnhardt, Chevrolet
 1994 Ken Schrader, Chevrolet
 1995 Chad Little, Ford
 1996 Greg Sacks, Chevrolet
 1997 Mark Martin, Ford
 1998 Joe Nemechek, Chevrolet
 1999 Terry Labonte, Chevrolet
 2000 Joe Nemechek, Chevrolet
 2001 Mike McLaughlin, Pontiac
 2002 Jason Keller, Ford

2003 Dale Earnhardt Jr., Chevrolet
 2004 Martin Truex Jr., Chevrolet
 2005 Martin Truex Jr., Chevrolet
 2006 Martin Truex Jr., Chevrolet
 2007 Bobby Labonte, Chevrolet
 2008 Tony Stewart, Toyota
 2009 David Ragan, Ford
 2010 Brad Keselowski, Dodge
 2011 Kyle Busch, Toyota
 2012 Joey Logano, Toyota
 2013 Regan Smith, Chevrolet

TALLADEGA ALL-TIME NASCAR CRAFTSMEN (NOW CAMPING WORLD) TRUCK SERIES WINNERS

2006 Mark Martin, Ford
2007 Todd Bodine, Toyota
2008 Todd Bodine, Toyota
2009 Kyle Busch, Toyota

2010 Kyle Busch, Toyota
2011 Mike Wallace, Chevrolet
2012 Parker Kligerman, Toyota
2013 Johnny Sauter, Toyota

AUTOMOBILE RACING CLUB OF AMERICA TALLADEGA RACE WINNERS

1969 Jim Vandiver
1970 Ramo Stott
1970 Ramo Stott
1975 Jim Vandiver
1976 Johnny Halford
1977 Ron Hutcherson
1978 Bruce Hill
1979 Sandy Satullo
1980 Billie Harvey
1981 Mark Martin
1982 Jim Vaughan
1982 Rick Roland
1983 Davey Allison
1983 Davey Allison
1984 Davey Allison
1984 Red Farmer
1985 Davey Allison
1985 Rain Out

1986 Grant Adcox
1986 Grant Adcox
1987 Grant Adcox
1987 Grant Adcox
1988 Red Farmer
1988 Grant Adcox
1989 Tracy Leslie
1989 Tracy Leslie
1990 Jimmy Horton
1990 Charlie Glotzbach
1991 Jimmy Horton
1991 Charlie Glotzbach
1992 Charlie Glotzbach
1993 Tim Steele
1994 Jeff Purvis
1995 Mike Wallace
1996 Tim Steele
1997 Tim Steele

1998 Tim Steele
1999 Bob Strait
2000 David Keith
2001 Bobby Gerhart
2002 Keith Segars
2003 Paul Menard
2004 Blake Feese
2005 Kraig Kinser
2006 Frank Kimmel
2007 Michael Annett
2008 Justin Allgaier
2009 Justin Lofton
2010 Dakoda Armstrong
2011 Ty Dillon
2012 Brandon McReynolds
2013 Frank Kimmel

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kent Whitaker is a culinary writer, sportswriter, and author. He has penned eight cookbooks, including *Smoke in the Mountains* and *Checkered Flag Cooking* (Quail Ridge Press), as well as six books in the Hometown Cookbook series; to date, the series includes the states of Tennessee, Texas, Georgia, Mississippi, Louisiana, and South Carolina. Whitaker has also written and illustrated two children's books, *Why Are the Mountains Smoky?* and *Big Mo's Tennis Ball Hunt*. His history titles include *Bullets and Bread* and *USS Alabama*.

Whitaker is the winner of the Emeril Live Food Network Barbecue Contest, has appeared on the Food Network and other network television stations, frequently hosts cooking classes throughout the South, and writes monthly articles for both the *National Barbecue News* and covers NASCAR and football for select media outlets. Whitaker's short-format radio show is broadcast on over 60 affiliates across the country, and he is heard on the Middle Tennessee State University football radio broadcasts as a pregame tailgate reporter.

Kent and his wife, Ally, live in East Tennessee with their son Macee, a golden retriever named Moses or "Big Mo," a shih tzu named Lucy, and a great dane-mastiff mix named King.

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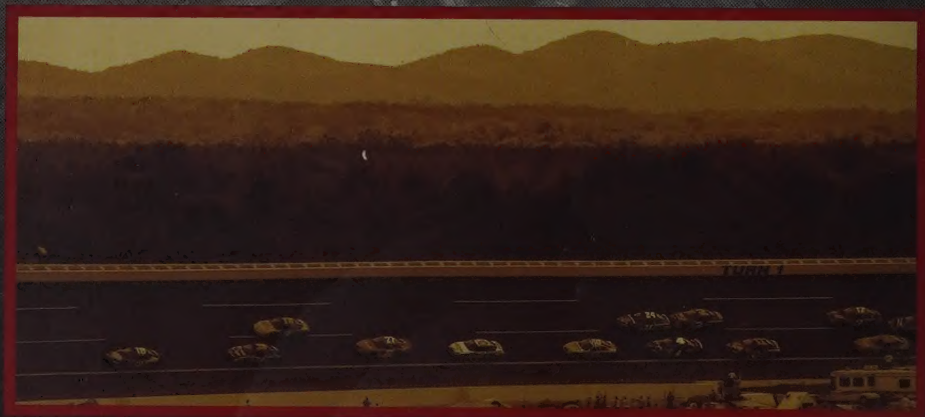
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Originally named Alabama International Motor Speedway, Talladega Superspeedway was built on the site of a World War II-era Air Force base in the heart of Alabama. NASCAR founder Bill France and his family envisioned a race track that would be faster, larger, and more exciting than any track built to date. Construction began on May 23, 1968, and was completed on September 13, 1969. The end result is the most modern speedway ever built. Often simply referred to as "Dega," the track is 2.66 miles long, its high-banked turns are nearly three stories tall, and race cars have reached speeds over 200 miles per hour. It is so popular that it is said to become one of the largest "temporary" cities in the state every race weekend.

Author Kent Whitaker tells the visual story of Talladega Superspeedway, from its origins as farmland and then a military base to it becoming the most thrilling race track in motorsports.

Part of the official NASCAR Library Collection, this nostalgic volume brings race track history to life through extraordinary vintage images. From races run on dirt and clay to the paved speedways of today, discover the historic events, colorful characters, and memorable moments from America's legendary racing venues.

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