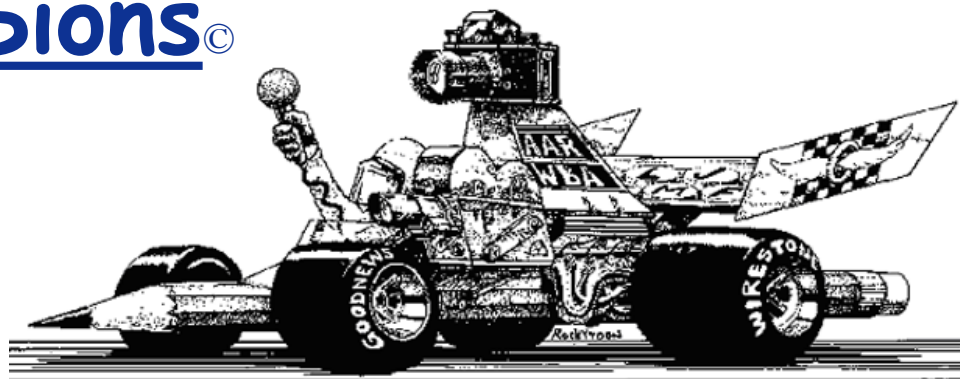


# ImpRESSIONs<sup>©</sup>

**50<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary**



The Official Newsletter Of The American Auto Racing Writers and Broadcasters Association

June 2005



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## France Family Voted Newsmaker of the Half-Century



*Original painting by AARWBA member Hector Cademartori - IMS photo by Ron McQueeney*

The France Family, whose vision and leadership turned NASCAR stock car racing from a loosely-organized Southern-based attraction into the country's second-most popular sport, was named Newsmaker of the Half-Century by the American Auto Racing Writers and Broadcasters Association during the annual AARWBA members breakfast in Indianapolis May 28.

Newsmaker of the Half-Century, determined by vote of AARWBA members, is the most important event of AARWBA's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration.

The France family received 28.5 percent of the vote among 12 nominees for the award. A record number of AARWBA members participated, according to President Dusty Brandel. The Hulman-George family, owner of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway and responsible for building the Indy 500 into the world's largest single-day sporting spectacle, finished second in the voting with 26.3 percent. The two families combined to capture almost 55 percent of the total vote.

Lesa France Kennedy, president of International Speedway Corp., was present for the announcement. She accepted a specially commissioned painting, by artist Hector Cademartori, depicting the family's 50 years of achievement from Brandel and AARWBA 50th Anniversary Celebration Chairman Michael Knight. AARWBA also will donate \$1,000 to Speediatrics at the Halifax Medical Center in Daytona Beach, Fla., in honor of the France family.

William H.G. ("Big Bill") France promoted the famous beach/road races in Daytona Beach and founded the stock car organization in 1947. He built Daytona International Speedway and Talladega Superspeedway. He died in 1992. His wife, Anne, was NASCAR's first secretary and treasurer. She also died in 1992. William C. ("Bill") France succeeded his father as NASCAR president in 1972 while another son, Jim, became president of the family-founded International Speedway Corp. Bill steadily grew NASCAR into a true nation-wide series that even came to the Indianapolis Motor Speedway starting in 1994. National TV exposure and prize money greatly increased. Bill's son, Brian, succeeded his father as NASCAR chairman in October 2003 and quickly revolutionized the series by instituting the "Chase for the Championship" format in 2004.

Bill's daughter, Lesa France Kennedy, is a member of the NASCAR Board and president of ISC, which has built and acquired several major tracks in recent years, including California Speedway, Chicagoland Speedway, Kansas Speedway, Michigan International Speedway and Phoenix International Raceway. Jim now

**...continued on next page**

## France Family Voted Newsmaker of the Half-Century

serves as vice chairman of both NASCAR and ISC and his son, J.C., is a winning driver in the Rolex Sports Car Series.

“On behalf of my entire family, I thank AARWBA and the media for this great honor,” said Lesa France Kennedy. “It is especially gratifying for us considering the others who were nominated. I know that my father, in particular, will be very happy. I’m anxious for him to see this painting as soon as possible because it will mean a lot to him and bring back a lot of memories. I also appreciate AARWBA honoring our family with a charitable donation, and we’re proud to designate that to Speediatrics at the Halifax Medical Center.

“My grandfather was a classic American success story in so many ways. He was a risk-taker in the sense he had a big vision that NASCAR and stock car racing could be a very popular sport throughout the United States, and with the support of my grandmother, worked day-after-day to make that a reality. My father worked very hard to build on that foundation and his leadership is what made NASCAR what it is today. My mother and uncle and others helped him along the way and now my brother and I have the opportunity to continue to grow the sport and the business and we are fully committed to doing exactly that.”



AARWBA President Dusty Brandel and Lesa France Kennedy

Mario Andretti was third in the voting, with 8.2 percent. Roger Penske and the late Dale Earnhardt tied for fourth, each with 6.7 percent. Also nominated were: Kenny Bernstein, John Force, A.J. Foyt, Jeff Gordon, Dan Gurney, Wally Parks and Richard Petty.

“AARWBA congratulates the France family for being chosen Newsmaker of the Half-Century,” said Brandel. “The process began with a list of 50 great American auto racing newsmakers, from which our Board of Directors selected 12 nominees, for a final vote. AARWBA members have written about, broadcast and photographed the most memorable racing people and events since 1955 and so are the best qualified to make this selection. Many members told me how difficult it was to choose from among these legendary names. It is a tribute to the Frances that they came out first from among this prestigious list.”

Knight added, “The story of the France family, and the Hulman-George family, is in many ways the American story. Their entrepreneurial spirit and bold, innovative leadership has defined the growth of American motorsports during the last 50 years. It is almost impossible to imagine what racing would be like without them. This is clear when you see that these two families, combined, earned almost 55 percent of the total vote.”

### AARWBA Journalism and Photo Contest Winners Posted Now

A total of \$10,000 in prize money was provided by the Indianapolis Motor Speedway and was distributed to the contest winners at the annual AARWBA breakfast on May 28th.

To see the complete list of winners click on this link:

<http://beta.motorsportsforum.com/ris01/aarwbawi.htm>



## All-America Team Dinner Moves to Indy on Dec. 3

AARWBA's 50th Anniversary Celebration will conclude in Indianapolis Saturday night, Dec., 3, with the 36th annual All-America Team dinner. It was announced at the pre-Indy 500 breakfast the event will move from its usual California location and January date to a more central location and in this calendar year in hopes of attracting more drivers and industry executives.

The dinner will be in the atrium of the Hyatt Regency in downtown Indianapolis. Members will soon be able to go to a link at [aarwba.org](http://aarwba.org) to make Hyatt room reservations at a discounted rate. By having the dinner in the Hyatt's atrium, we will have a festive and colorful holiday setting, and something "different" from being in another hotel ballroom.

This date is the night following the NASCAR awards ceremony in New York City. Knight consulted with NASCAR's Jim Hunter before the decision was made. Specific details to come in future newsletters. Mark your calendar now!

### Dan Boyd Wins Straight Shooter Award; Prize to Increase to \$500



Adrian Fernandez (left), Straight Shooter winner Dan R. Boyd, Anne Proffit and Tom Anderson.

Veteran photographer Dan Boyd was named winner of the Straight Shooter Award, in memory of Art Flores and Ron Hussey, at the pre-Indy 500 breakfast. Boyd was cited for his photo skills as well as willingness to help others, in the tradition of Flores and Hussey.

Fernandez Racing is sponsor of the award and team co-owners Adrian Fernandez and Tom Anderson were there to present the plaque and \$250 prize. Fernandez and Anderson were so impressed with AARWBA and the breakfast that Anderson has already informed 50th Anniversary Chairman Michael Knight they will increase the prize to \$500 next year.

### AARWBA 50 Years Tribute - Be A Part Of History

A visual recap and tribute to AARWBA's 50 years is planned for the Dec. 3 All-America Team dinner in Indianapolis — and your help is needed. Vice President **Mike Hollander** is starting to collect historical images of the people and events of AARWBA's half-century.

Any member who would like to contribute, and this can be pics of members, racing personalities, AARWBA awards presentations, etc., is asked to send directly to Mike at:

**[racing@motorsportsforum.com](mailto:racing@motorsportsforum.com)**

***The preferred picture format is 800 x 600 x 72dpi JPEGs.***

## AARWBA Founders Award Named for Bob Russo

AARWBA charter members Bill Marvel and Dick Mittman announced the new Founders Award, named to honor the late racing journalist/publicist/historian Bob Russo, May 26 in the Indianapolis Motor Speedway conference room.

The award will be presented annually to an AARWBA member who has worked diligently to further the organization in its goals to represent the media who cover racing throughout the U.S. The recipient will be cited for his/her profound interest, tireless efforts and undying dedication to auto racing exemplified by Russo throughout his life. Russo died Sept. 17, 1999, at 71.

Marvel and Mittman announced the first recipient will be Michael Knight, longtime journalist and publicist, currently serving as chairman of AARWBA's 50th Anniversary Celebration.

Russo was the initiator in organizing AARWBA. In 1955, he felt there was a definite need for such a group to help in its coverage of all forms of racing. Often at that time communication between the track promoters and the media was very limited. Russo brought together several of the leading racing writers of that era on Aug. 16, 1955, and AARWBA was formed.

A large plaque bearing Russo's likeness has been commissioned to Metal Décor of Springfield, IL. It will include plates for 50 winners in the coming years. It will be on display in the Speedway Media Center. Individual plaques will be presented yearly at the pre-Indy 500 breakfast. Knight will receive his award Dec. 3 at the All-America Team dinner in Indianapolis.

Sponsors of the Bob Russo Founders Award are Gary and Collene Campbell. They are the sister and brother-in-law of the late Mickey Thompson. "They are doing this because of Bob's efforts in racing and his work with Mickey Thompson Enterprises and Mickey would have sponsored it were he here," said Marvel, who pushed through the Bob Russo Award idea.

## Mike Harris Honored by Speed Channel's Driver of the Year

Mike Harris, one of the most prominent motorsports journalists in the United States, was honored by the Speed Channel DRIVER OF THE YEAR AWARD panel, for his lifetime of service to the award, at Indianapolis Motor Speedway on Friday, May 27th. Harris started with the Associated Press in 1969 and has been the motorsports writer since 1980 and a member of the Expert Panel for 25 years.



Barry Schmoyer, Mike Harris, Lewis Franck

Born in Wisconsin, Harris had a number of assignments including the Indiana Sports Editor of AP. When the motorsports position opened up Harris thought it would be for three years. Instead he's remained on the beat up to the present day. Harris was a large part of the coverage that took auto racing out of the curiosity phase to mainstream media.

One high point in his career came in 2001 when he won The Story of the Year and Deadline Writing APSE writing awards for his coverage of Dale Earnhardt's death at the Daytona 500. He has appeared on radio shows and television interviews too numerous to count in addition to the annual Speed Channel Driver of the Year Show.

Driver of the Year principal Barry Schmoyer considers Harris' counsel invaluable and essential to the continuation and prosperity of the 39 year-old award that honors one driver above all from all auto racing disciplines. Schmoyer said "Mike's advice and hard work are key reasons that this award has continued to be held in high regard."

Harris said "I'm very honored. The Driver of the Year Award is very special to me, and, it's an honor to be thought of in that way by the panel." As a token of esteem of the panel Harris was presented a Maurice Lacroix Swiss wristwatch and (a plaque) in pre-race activities for the 89th running of the Indianapolis 500 in the Indy Racing League.

# AARWBA At The Indy 500



AARWBA President Dusty Brandel with Meijer/Coca-Cola team owner Sam Schmidt at the May 16 Sam Schmidt Foundation fundraiser in Indianapolis. AARWBA donated four tickets to the annual breakfast for the event's auction.

The Angelo Angelopoulos Award for sportsmanship went to veteran Indy 500 driver/owner Robbie Buhl (left) for his work with children's hospitals. Dick Mittman made the presentation.



IMS owner Tony George congratulates AARWBA on our 50 year anniversary. He also noted that it was the Hulman-George 60th anniversary of owning the Speedway.



Indy 500 pole sitter Tony Kanaan joined new member and ABC / ESPN anchor Todd Harris at the podium. Kanaan, the 2004 Jerry Titus Memorial Trophy winner, resumed a tradition of the Indy pole winner attending our breakfast. Harris graciously accepted an invitation to be the breakfast MC.

Many Thanks To Our Contributing Photographers!  
**Kay Nichols**  
**Jerry Lawrence**  
**Dick Mittman**  
**Bill Yoder**  
and **Ron McQueeney**  
and his IMS photo staff



# AARWBA At The Indy 500



Bill York is the Manager of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Media Center. He and his staff are always ready to help in any way. Here he listens (painfully) to the media and his staff singing "Happy Birthday"!

Indiana State Senator Murray Clark presents Gov. Mitch Daniel's proclamation marking AARWBA's 50th anniversary to Dusty.



Tim Kelsey, Indianapolis Mayor Bart Peterson's liaison, presents the city's proclamation to Dusty.

Roger Penske, the winningest team owner in Indy 500 history, was the featured speaker at the 50th anniversary breakfast. In addition to his Toyota IRL team, Penske will enter ALMS later this year with a Porsche factory LMP2 prototype.



# AARWBA At The Indy 500



AARWBA 50th Anniversary Chairman Michael Knight



AARWBA's display in the IMS media center included the Jerry Titus Memorial Award, historic photos, and the 50th anniversary logo. Our President, Dusty Brandel is standing next to the trophy.



Longtime AARWBA members Jim Wilson (Past President) and Bill Eggert



The **Jigger Award**, for hard luck, went to Arie Luyendyk Jr. He was the only driver bumped from the field. Jigger Sirois (left) and Dick Mittman made the presentation.



AARWBA longtime member Kurt Freudenthal, 82, attended the breakfast.





# AARWBA At The Indy 500

Nancy Schilke of Motorsport.com receives her first place award from Fred Nation, IMS Executive Vice President, Communications.



IMS President Joie Chitwood, NASCAR Vice President Jim Hunter and Mike Harris at the breakfast,

## Chris Economaki Inducted Into INDY Hall of Fame

Past AARWBA President Chris Economaki at the ceremony inducting him into the Indianapolis 500 Hall of Fame. Chris is shown holding the medallion and ring that he received to commemorate the event.



Photo by Dusty Brandel



## BRUCE BARNES

AARWBA member Bruce F. Barnes, 70, a prominent sports marketing executive and agent for sports celebrities, including Bobby, Al and Al Unser Jr., along with Rick and Roger Mears, Parnelli Jones, Bobby Rahal and Johnny Rutherford, passed away May 23 following an extended illness. Barnes, a longtime Orange County resident, was president of Barnes Marketing, a company he founded in 1974. Barnes had a 10-year career with Firestone before joining his brother Chuck at Sports Headliners in 1969. It was one of the original marketing agencies for athletes, representing among others, Mario Andretti, A.J. Foyt and NFL Hall of Fame quarterback Johnny Unitas.

Additional Barnes clients included: Patrick Racing, Penske Racing, John Force and Emerson Fittipaldi. Barnes Marketing has been associated with the Pike's Peak International Hill Climb over the past 15 years, handling sponsorship marketing.

Barnes, who succumbed to colon cancer, leaves fiancée Laurie G. Firestone of Newport Beach. He is survived by one son, Thomas Barnes, and four daughters, Laurie Soucy, Gerianne Johnson, Jennifer Burrows, Julie Spiegel and eight grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers the family suggests a donation to the Virginia Barnes Memorial Fund, Hoag Hospital Foundation, P.O. Box 6100, Newport Beach, CA 92658; or the USC Catholic Center, 3207 University Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90007.

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## AARWBA Newsletters Are On-line!

AARWBA members can access our newsletters on-line just by visiting the AARWBA website! A page with all the available issues listed now appears there. Simply click on this link:

<http://beta.motorsportsforum.com/aarwb/newsletter.htm>

You will be asked to type in your user name and password (It's "aarwba" then "DUSTY") and then click on "OK". If you experience any difficulty please contact

Andy Hartwell at [ashartwell@att.net](mailto:ashartwell@att.net) and I will be happy to walk you through the steps! It's easy!

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**This month's issue of ImPRESSions is presented by**



**Paul Newman, Carl Haas, our drivers and sponsors congratulate  
AARWBA on 50 great years of motorsports coverage.**