

REMEMBERING....

Just before Christmas 1989, the Northeastern Midget Association suffered the worst loss in its 37 year history; Wen Kelley, our long-time Secretary, Treasurer, Handicapper and Chief Scorer died suddenly at home.

Wen first became involved with midget racing after the war by crewing for Bob Ochs, who ran with the Bay State Midget Racing Association, AAA, ARDC, UCOA and MARC. He was a charter member of NEMA when it was formed in 1953, and bought his own racer in 1957. His first race as an owner was in August of that year, at the old Cheshire fairgrounds in Keene, NH, with Hank Williams (Henry Surrette) at the wheel. Just two years later, he was the NEMA Non-Offy Champion owner for 1959, finishing third overall, behind the Offys of Ed Stone and Everett Rogers.



Wen (standing left), with brother Ray and driver Al Pillion after a feature win. Note the peeled-off tire cap on Al's arm. (King photo)

was one of the initial inductees into the Dick Gallagher Memorial Hall of Fame. Together with his brother Ray, he was the first recipient of the Bay State Old Timers Award for Dedication to the Preservation of New England Auto Racing.

During those years, we came to know his family as well. Wife Mary, son Sam (Wendell, Jr.) and daughter Betsey were often at the races, and we always enjoyed their company.

We'll long remember the Wen who won those awards. we'll long remember the Wen who did all that work for the club. But mostly, we'll remember the Wen who always had a cheery word and a little joke, who was always ready to help his fellow club members, who we most looked forward to seeing at NEMA shows.

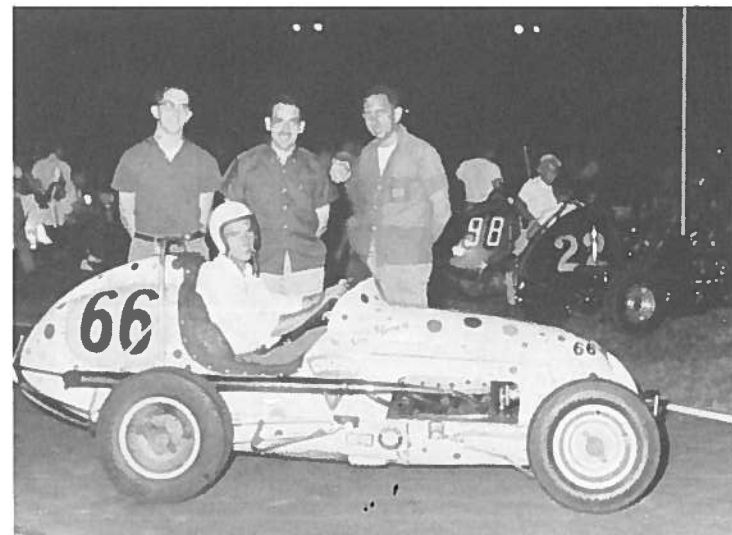


Wen tries the seat of his first car. (Kelley photo)

His drivers included two-time NEMA Champion Al Pillion, Johnny Dudevoir, Eddie Brown, Elmer Peckham, Billy Stofer and Don Keller. He gave their first midget rides to many time champion Joe Csiki and Canadian stock car great Jean Paul Cabana.

He attended 655 of the 659 events NEMA has sanctioned in its 37 seasons; he missed races only on his wedding day, the day his son was born, the day he broke an ankle and the day of a once-in-a-lifetime family gathering in Iowa. NEMA fans honored him with their Johnny Thomson Memorial Trophy for his many contributions to the sport, and he

Wen, Ray and crew with Wen's second car, driven by Ed Brown, painted like its sponsor's bread loaves. (Balsler photo)



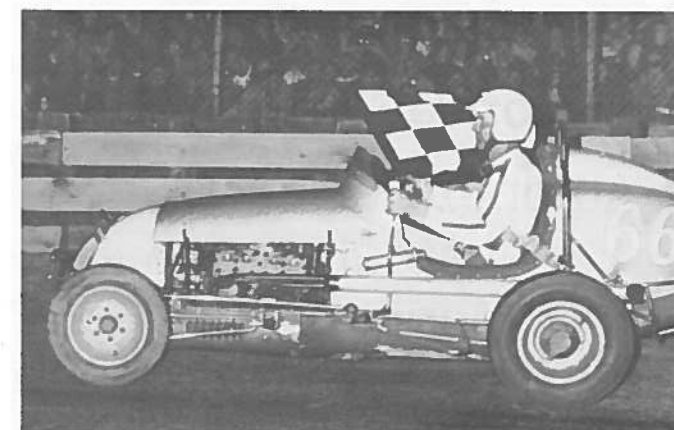
WEN KELLEY



Left: Wen's third car was the famous Yacavone roadster. (Kelley photo)



Below: Dottie Mann, Wen and Louise Roberts review a lineup. (Kelley photo)



Bill Stofer, after a feature win in Wen Kelley's V8 in 1964. (Kelley photo)

John Dudevoir in Wen Kelley's V8. (Kelley photo)

