



1970 Mustang Dick Trickle Car at Sycamore Illinois Sycamore Speedway.

The Dick Trickle #99 Mustang Tribute Car Finds a Home at Memory Lane Museum

-story and photos courtesy of Art Fehrman

It was an honor to deliver & drive the #99 Dick Trickle Mustang into the Hall of Fame room at the Memory Lane Museum in Mooresville, North Carolina.

Bill Knippenberg Sr., Art Fehrman Sr. and I proudly represented the Chicago BrushMasters, Bill's Speed Shop, Illinois Vintage Racing, Ron Jelinek, Pat Finley, & Bill "Jive" Jarvis. It is a well deserving representation of Short Track History for the fans to enjoy.



-photo by Gregg

Octoberfest 2008 Dick Trickle in #99.

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Here is the story of a project that started on a cold day in March 2007.

We were in the infield at the annual Chicagoland Memorabilia Show at Chicagoland Speedway. Bob Behounek, representing the 1st annual Brushmasters Charity Auction, had an idea to construct a well known SantaFe Speedway Short Track car from the 70's era. It would be hand lettered over three days at the World Of Wheels Show to help raise money for the Children's Hospital Ronald McDonald House. We discussed several options.

I suggested to Bob that if we constructed a Dick Trickle car then he would have a huge attraction because Trickle was nationally known. We then decided it would be the 1970 Purple Knight Fast back Ford Mustang. It was the most Famous car that Trickle drove. We approached Bill Knippenberg Sr. of Bill's Speed Shop with our idea and he agreed to build it and have it race ready & painted by the 1st week in January 2008.

During the summer months Bill found a Chassis which was just like the one Dick had used during that famous run in 1970. We had the 1st piece of the puzzle and work began on preparing the chassis for the body. It was just a matter of finding a fast back body. Bob & I spent the whole summer promoting the Charity Auction featuring the

Dick Trickle Car. As the months slipped by the chassis was completed but Bill couldn't locate the exact Fast back Mustang that we needed. We were down to crunch time!

With a mere three weeks left, Bill finally found one in Michigan. In 2 1/2 weeks, Fabricator Tom Knippenberg did an outstanding job of assembling the body. With 2 days left Bill & Tom rolled the car out completed and sent it to Collision Revision Paint Shop where Richard Craven and staff completed the paint scheme on time. It was unbelievable the car was completed and Bill had kept his word.

The 1st annual Brushmasters Charity Auction was a huge success. Money was raised for the Children's Hospital Ronald McDonald house. The 3 day event raised \$52,000.00 for a great cause and brought together many talented artists.

Our Dick Trickle Mustang was a huge hit at the booth. An enormous thank you to Bill & Tom Knippenberg of Bill's Speed shop for building this awesome replica of the famous Purple Knight. The car was progressively lettered during the 3 day event. All original sponsor logos as well as the Knights emblem were reproduced by Will "Jive" Jarvis, Pat Finley and Ron Jelinek. Ron was one of the original artists who lettered Dick Trickle's cars in the 70's. These guys were amazing. All they had to

refer to was old pictures and when it was finished, it was like looking at a ghost.

Lots of Fans, friends and well known racers, dirt and asphalt, stopped by to admire these talented artists at work as well as to share their stories and memories. One fan was emotionally moved to the point that he had tears in his eyes as he told his story of the Purple Knight. He was in attendance at the Dells Motor Speedway in the 70's to watch a 100 lapper. Dick Trickle came rolling in 5 minutes before qualifying was over. He unloaded the Purple Knight and without any practice laps he went out and turned fast time then blew them off and won the 100 lapper.

After the World of Wheels Show was over, the Purple Knight was showcased at all of our Vintage Events. Everywhere we went, we drew crowds of people admiring the car. We then realized what a smart decision we had made and how popular the legendary Dick Trickle really was.

We displayed the Purple Knight at the Guglielmucci Drivers Benefit dinner and auction at Chicagoland Speedway. It was a great night. Sal Tovella, Paul Goldsmith and Sleepy Tripp stopped by our display and gazed at the car. Midget Champion Sleepy Tripp came in from California and enjoyed himself looking at the car and reflected about how many nights he was racing in Minnesota on the same night that the Midgets split a show with the Stock Cars and he watched Trickle win.

During the summer we had a lot of fun displaying the car. At the Nascar Fanfest in downtown Joliet we had a real adventure getting the car back to the staging area due to the fact that the car had no engine or brakes. After our display at Chicagoland, Bill Knippenberg drove a Dale Earnhardt golf cart and we used a nylon strap to tow the car down a four lane highway to our parking area. I was perched on the drivers door and was leaning into the window opening steering with my right arm. For those of you that don't know, I'm a lefty. We had no brakes so we could not stop at any lights. We almost got ran over several times. Some fans did enjoy our escapade though as they honked their horns and cheered as they passed us.

It was good for my health when Bill installed a B&B Ford motor and some brakes into the Purple Knight. It was an unforgettable feeling driving the Mustang thru the pit area toward the Track. Rockford & Grundy Speedway were really special, Trickle won so many races there. As I'd



Memory Lane Museum Hall Of Fame Room with Art, Bill and Alex.

move thru the pits everyone just stopped what they were doing and just stared at the car for a moment, it took them back to the 70's. At Rockford some of the officials even bowed as I drove past them. In August the car won best appearing Vintage car.

Traveling our vintage series there were also some comical nights. We were at Grundy Co Speedway and it was preplanned that Tom Knippenberg would Pace the Feature in warm ups then pull off, as the cars circled the track one of the Gate Officials started yelling that they couldn't start the feature because that guy in the #99 didn't have a helmet on. Then later in the month we had the car on display at the Sycamore Speedway dirt track. I took the car out for the National Anthem, after it was over I couldn't help it. I dropped it into 4th gear and took it for some quick hot laps to the crowds delight. Everybody in the vintage area was taking bets on which lap I was going to back it into the wall. It still had asphalt tires on it and my track record wasn't very good. The last two times I hot lapped Vintage cars there I backed both of them into the wall, needless to say Bill & Tom were relieved when I brought it back unharmed.

During Octoberfest 2008 at Lacrosse Speedway in Wisconsin Dick Trickle himself climbed aboard the famous Mustang one more time. It was an unforgettable moment for the fans as he drove out on the Speedway for a 99 lap race named in his honor.

As I look back at the last two summers of traveling with the #99, Rockford Speedway was the most fun. In August 2008 Joe Shear's nephew Scott Lawver drove the #99 and Tom Knippenberg drove the #36 Joe Shear Tribute car at intermission. They ran side by side for many laps. If that didn't take you back to the old days you're not a vintage Stock Car fan!

In the fall of 2009 our last appearance with the Trickle car was Labor Day at the annual Night Of Features at Grundy Co. Speedway. Former Raceway Park & Grundy Competitor old friend Kyle Harvey stopped by for the night. He was returning home to Mooresville N.C. from Iowa Speedway where he was crewing the night before on a Nascar truck team. We immediately put a deal together, Kyle climbed into the Mustang and gave the command to start engines then paced the Feature event for his close friend Dick Trickle. This would be the last time the legendary Mustang would grace an Illinois race track. It was only fitting because before Dick closed out his Nascar career Kyle was his Bush Series spotter for many seasons.

October 2009 we went south to Darlington S.C. to participate & race at the 2nd annual Darlington Vintage Festival. On Sunday Afternoon just before the awards ceremony I met up with Alex Beam, owner of Memory Lane Museum out of Mooresville N.C. We had a great time talking about the Dick Trickle car and all our events that we attended honoring the Famous Purple Knight. The next thing I know the Dick Trickle car was headed to one of the biggest Stock Car Museums in the Country. It is only fitting that one of the most famous short track cars of all time has been placed in it's special display area. Its ironic Dick Trickle only lives 15 minutes from the museum. If you're ever in the Charlotte area be sure and stop by. It's just 1 mile west of I-77, Exit 36 769 River Hwy. Mooresville, North Carolina.

I would like to extend a special Thank You from Illinois Vintage Racing & Bill's Speed Shop to Bob Behounek. It was truly a fun project from start to finish and driving it into the Hall Of Fame Room at Memory Lane Museum is a day we'll never forget!