



## DAN GURNEY 1931-2018

MOTORSPORTS PREVIEW ISSUE + NASCAR + F1 + INDYCAR + BUILDING DAYTONA + ROLEX 24

# AUTOWEEK

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SINCE 1958 ◆ MADE IN DETROIT



CRAIN

## DAN GURNEY: A GREAT RACER, A BETTER MAN



BY A.J. FOYT

I've gotten to race against some of the greatest race drivers of all time. But there was only one Dan Gurney.

Dan was a really good race driver, and anything he got into he could adapt to it. He worked at it until he understood everything about it. And on top of that, he was a super nice guy.

I knew he was sick but was hoping he'd pull out of it—he had done it before. I guess it was his time.

Last year, he sent me a picture of me and him together and inscribed it, 'To my best co-driver and my buddy, AJ—Dan Gurney.' It's hanging here in my race shop, and it pretty much describes the respect we had for each other—not only as race drivers, but as men.

When I really first got to know Dan Gurney, he was driving for the Wood Brothers in NASCAR at Riverside in California. Back in those days, the regular NASCAR drivers weren't very good on road courses, and the Wood Brothers would always hire Dan to drive their car at Riverside. He would just whip the field. The other NASCAR guys couldn't get close to him.

Hell, he won five NASCAR races at Riverside in nine starts, including four in a row from 1963-66—and five out of six races including 1968. Some of those races, it wasn't even close.



For a boy that ran road courses most of his life, he could also run a hell of a race at the Indianapolis 500.

When Dan came to Indianapolis as a rookie in 1962, he was already well-known in Formula 1. He was the only American to build his own car and motor and win a Formula 1 race. And look what he did from 1968-70 at Indy with runner-up finishes to Bobby Unser in 1968 and Mario Andretti in 1969; then in '70, he was third behind winner Al Unser and Mark Donohue.

When I really got to know Dan was in 1967 when we went to Le Mans. They thought we were the rabbits and we'd burn out before the race was over. We were fast. He started the race, and I finished it. We won going away. In victory circle, you see us both with the wine bot-

tles, but he started spraying the Champagne before any of them Formula 1 boys even thought about it. He started a lot of things.

Later, when I was building my cars, he was building the Eagles. He would be eyeing my Coyotes, and I'd be checking out his Eagles, but we would talk about both of our cars. We were competitors, but we respected each other.

In recent years, we both had heart trouble, and we'd talk. Last year, when Ford honored us at Long Beach, that was a highlight of our careers to know we were the only two American drivers and American team to win Le Mans in an American car.

Like I said, Dan was a super guy. He wasn't cocky. He was smart. He didn't brag. He went out and whatever he had to do, he did. It's a shame to lose a warrior like that. We'll all miss him. ♦



A.J. FOYT spun this touching yarn over the phone to contributor Bruce Martin. We just added a few periods here and there.

FEATURE

# ON EAGLES'



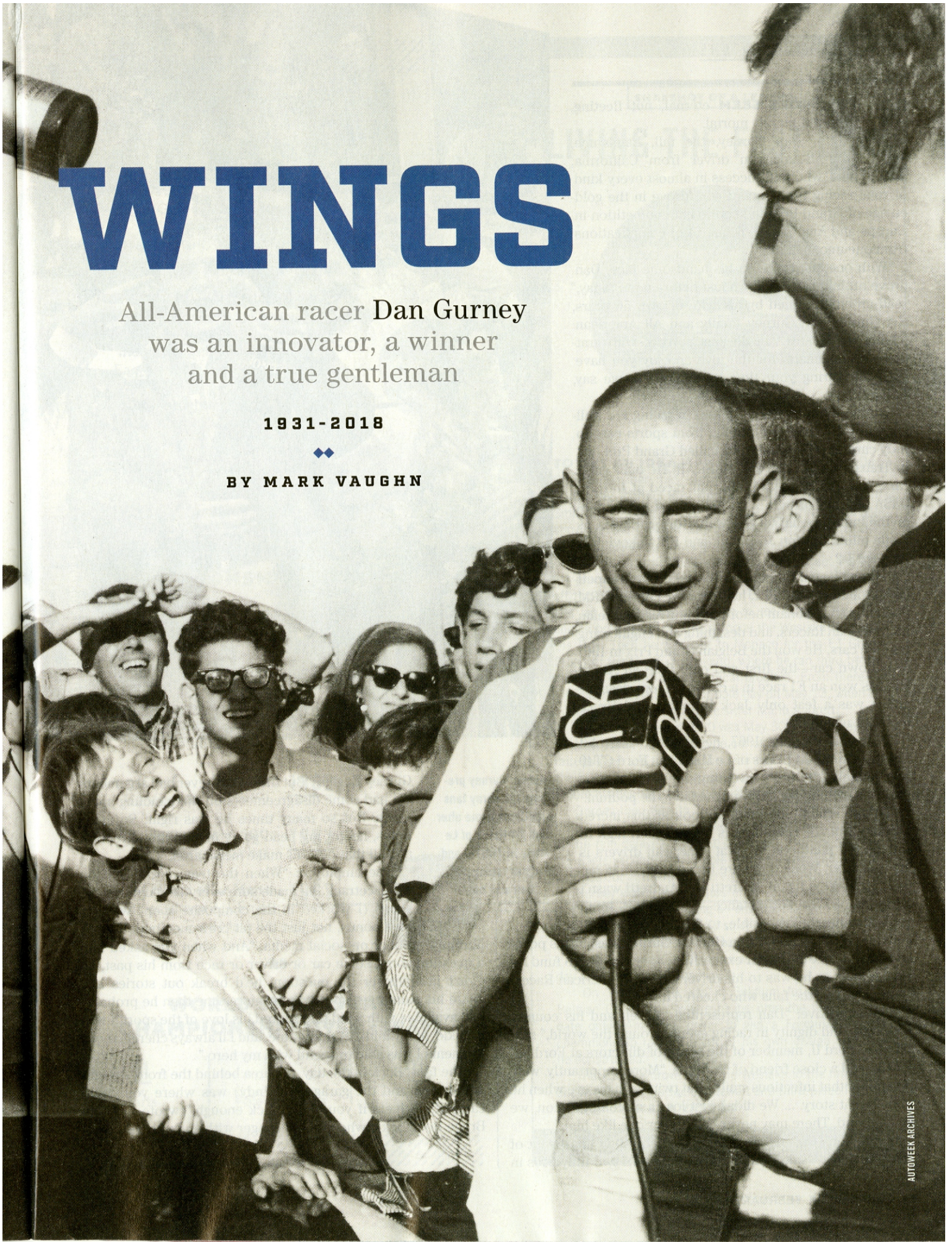
# WINGS

All-American racer Dan Gurney  
was an innovator, a winner  
and a true gentleman

1931-2018



BY MARK VAUGHN



**H**EROES SEEM eternal, not fleeting, not merely mortal.

Dan Gurney, the tall, handsome, all-American driver from California, who had success in almost every kind of road racing there is and who drove in the golden age of Grand Prix and sports car competition in Europe and America, died Jan. 14 of complications from pneumonia at 86.

“With one last smile on his handsome face, Dan drove off into the unknown just before noon today,” read an email signed by his wife of over 50 years, Evi Gurney, the Gurney family and All American Racers teammates. “In deepest sorrow, with gratitude in our hearts for the love and joy you have given us during your time on this earth, we say, ‘Godspeed.’”

Gurney’s numerous successes in racing are well-known. He won in everything, from sports cars to Indy cars, in what used to be called Grand Prix and in Trans-Am, Can-Am and NASCAR. He built great cars, too, 157 of them in all that raced at Indy, in IMSA and in Formula 1. In 1973, 19 of the 33 cars on the Indianapolis 500 grid were Gurney Eagles, as Eagle pilots Gordon Johncock and Bill Vukovich Jr. finished 1-2.

Gurney began racing in 1955 and drove competitively for 15 years. In F1, he drove for Ferrari, BRM, Porsche and Brabham before forming his own team, All American Racers, and designing and engineering his own cars. He won the Belgian Grand Prix in 1967 in his own car—the first and only time an American has won an F1 race in a car of his own design—and it was a feat only Jack Brabham and Bruce McLaren matched.

In that same year, 1967, he co-drove with A.J. Foyt to win the 24 Hours of Le Mans in a Ford GT40, immediately afterward inventing the now-common tradition of spraying Champagne from the podium.

That’s certainly one way to look at this incredible life. But the reason he is held in such high regard in the pantheon of great American drivers is his character. While there are fierce rivalries in motorsports—Foyt hated Andretti and Andretti wasn’t a big fan of Foyt, for instance—it’s difficult, some might say nearly impossible, to find someone with a bad thing to say about Dan Gurney. Gurney was just as polite and considerate to the car executive who was going to fund his next season as he was to his drivers, his All American Racers employees and the fans who cheered him.

The executive: “Dan represented himself and his country with class and dignity in racing events around the world,” said Edsel B. Ford II, member of the board of directors at Ford Motor Co. and a close friend of Gurney’s. “More importantly, we’ll remember that infectious smile, that twinkle in his eye when he told a great story. ... We didn’t just lose a motorsport icon, we lost a friend. There may never be another one like him.”

The racer: “He was very classy, and (he and) I had a lot of disagreements,” said Bobby Unser, who won two Indy 500s in



**Above: Gurney prepares to spray fans with Champagne after the 24 Hours of Le Mans in 1967—and another racing tradition was born.**

Gurney Eagles. “But they were never bad arguments. We had some disagreements on the handling sometimes. But so many times he was right. So many times, he got my head going in a certain direction, and all that did was make me smarter.”

The employee: “When the team succeeded on the racetrack, he made sure every employee in the shops (I worked in the composite shop) was given a bonus, not just the pit crew members,” wrote

Matthew Webber on social media. “And when you asked him a question about some car or driver or race from his past, he didn’t just answer the question, he’d break out stories and share his memories, spending far more time than he probably had available with a kid that shared his love of the sport. I was that kid, in my mid-20s at the time, and I’ll always cherish those moments I was able to spend with my hero.”

The fan: “Back in the day, the area behind the front straight grandstand and the garages (at Indy) was where you could catch the drivers if you were quick enough,” wrote race fan Bruce Boembeke, who was a teenager with an Instamatic cam-

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## INDY CAR WINS

**Rex Mays 300, Riverside** 1967  
Eagle/Gurney Weslake

**Mosport Park, Canada** 1968  
Eagle/Gurney Weslake (2 wins)

**Rex Mays 300, Riverside**  
Eagle/Gurney Weslake

**Indianapolis Raceway** 1969  
Eagle/Gurney Weslake

**Brainerd, Minnesota**  
Eagle/Gurney Weslake

**Sears Point** 1970  
Eagle/Gurney Weslake



## WORLD SPORTSCAR CHAMPIONSHIP CLASS WINS

**12 Hours of Sebring** 1959  
With co-drivers Phil Hill,  
Olivier Gendebien & Chuck  
Daigh; Ferrari Testarossa

**1000 km Nürburgring** 1960  
With Stirling Moss;  
Maserati Birdcage

**Daytona** 1962  
Continental (Lotus 19)

**Bridgehampton 500** 1963  
Shelby Cobra

**24 Hours of Le Mans** 1967  
With co-driver A.J. Foyt;  
Ford Mark IV



## WORLD SPORTSCAR CHAMPIONSHIP (1959 - 1969)

41  
Starts

6  
Pole Positions

10  
Wins

### SNAPSHOT OF A LEGEND

## LIVING THE FAST LIFE



**TO GET AN IDEA** of what “doing it all” meant for Dan Gurney, consider: mid-April to mid-June 1967.

Gurney started this stretch on April 16, 1967, in Smithfield, Texas, where he piloted a Mercury Cougar, above, in the Green Valley 300 Trans-Am race and won (which you can see him celebrating on our cover).

Then it was off to Indianapolis, where he set the fastest practice lap for the Indy 500 at 163.8 mph to kick off the month of May in his own Eagle. After setting the fast lap, Gurney flew to Europe to see how his new V12 engine project was coming along at the Weslake facility in the U.K. Then he was over to Monaco for the F1 Grand Prix over the May 6-7 weekend, where he ran third before dropping out with a mechanical problem. From there he returned to Indianapolis for pole day on May 13, when he qualified second behind pole sitter Mario Andretti.

The start of the Indy 500 was May 30, and Gurney was running second to the turbine car of Parnelli Jones when rain pushed the finish of the race to the next day. When the 500 went green once again, Gurney raced to the front before his engine gave out 40 laps from the finish.

Gurney then flew to Zandvoort in the Netherlands for the Dutch GP qualifying two days after the conclusion of the rain-delayed 500. At Zandvoort, Gurney qualified his Eagle second behind pole sitter Graham Hill. Gurney dropped out of the race after eight laps with engine issues.

Gurney won the 24 Hours of Le Mans over the weekend of June 10-11, sharing a Ford Mark IV with A.J. Foyt. The pair not only won but did so at record speed and while winning the fuel efficiency trophy, as well.

No time to rest, as Gurney was back in the air on Tuesday for a test day at Goodwood.

On Thursday he was in Belgium for the June 18 Belgian Grand Prix, where he became the first—and to date only—American driver to win a Formula 1 world championship race in a car of his own design and that he constructed.

That day, he drove his Eagle-Weslake to the finish line ahead of runner-up Jackie Stewart and third-place finisher Chris Amon. **MARK VAUGHN**

## FEATURE

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era at Indianapolis in 1967. “Dan comes walking by, and I ask if I can get a picture. ‘SURE!’ he says with a big smile. Then he extends his hand and asks for my camera! What? (I’m thinking, man, I’ve got pics from all day in this thing) but it’s DAN! So I hand my Instamatic over to him. Then he turns to some random passer-by and—handing the guy my camera—Dan says, “Take our picture.”

Gurney was endeared to, beloved and above all respected by just about everyone he encountered in his 86 years. That was what made him a hero. It ultimately was a shortcoming in many business and even racing ventures, his sense of fairness and honor, but it was also the thing separating him from merely being a winner.

It didn’t matter who you were, Gurney treated you with respect and wanted to hear your story as much as you wanted to hear his.

Gurney was born in Long Island, New York, on April 13, 1931. His dad was a star in the Metropolitan Opera and his grandfather was a manufacturer who invented something called the Gurney ball bearing. When Dan graduated high school, the Gurney family moved from the East Coast blue-blood enclave of New York to sunny Riverside, California, and from there the young future-Eagle took off. At that time, California was the hotbed of hot-rodding, a smoking cauldron of creativity that launched a speed and performance movement that spread across the country—and Dan Gurney was placed right in the middle of that iconic incubator.

There’s a famous photo of the teenage California Gurney waving to a camera as he worked on a car—a car parked outside in the Riverside dirt, by the way—with the words “Bonnevillie or Bust” scrawled on it. It was Gurney’s first competition car, a Model A Ford into which he’d bolted a Mercury flathead V8. Gurney and friends did, indeed, make it to Bonneville, where Dan ran 130 mph with methanol in the tank.

“We were proud of that,” Gurney once said.

The young Gurney got plenty of experience in car control by racing in and around the orange and avocado groves that carpeted Riverside then, back in the days before the racetrack was constructed. He used to meet up with a group of friends and competitors including Mickey Thompson and “Dyno” Don Nicholson, as well as San Diego’s famous Bean Bandits racers. They laid out road courses on the dirt roads that circumnavigated the groves and then they raced, sometimes all night. This was California, after all. It was always summer, and gas was cheap. A kid with a good head for horsepower could really go places.

Gurney drove his first road race in 1955 in a Triumph TR2 at the Torrey Pines course in Southern California, and from there everything just sort of took off.

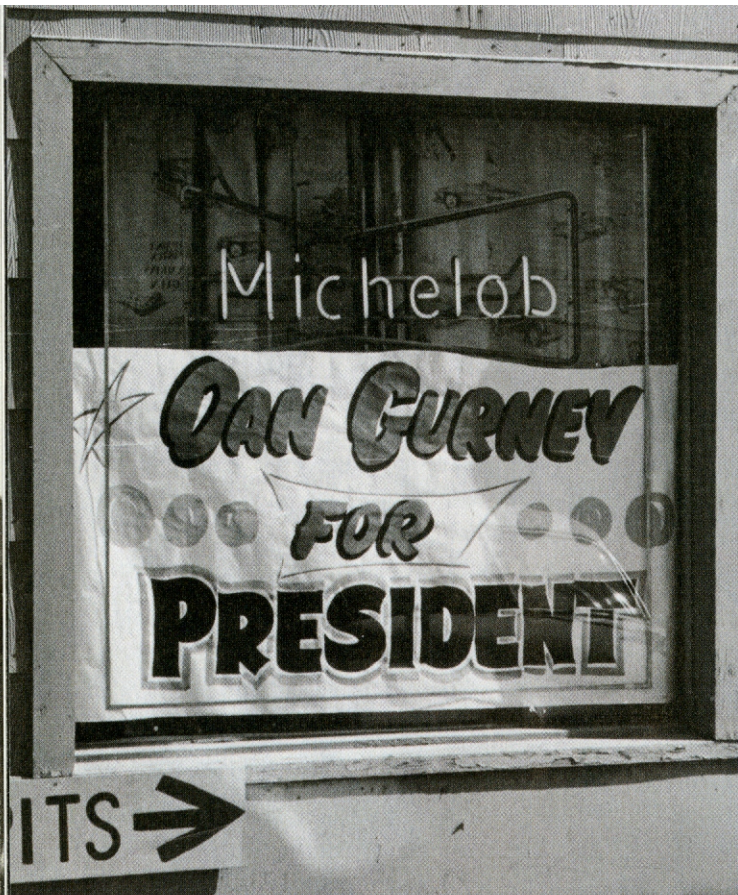
“My very first win came behind the wheel of a Porsche 1600 Speedster at a race at San Diego’s Montgomery Field in 1956,” Gurney wrote in the forward to Jesse Alexander’s book of early racing photos. “I had talked a bank into giving me a loan to buy this car to continue my career.”

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AUTOWEEK ARCHIVES

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And continue it did. Success with the Porsche led to a seat in Frank Arciero's rebuilt and notoriously evil-handling 4.9 Ferrari, in which he finished a close second and almost beat established driver Carroll Shelby.

"Dan Gurney is a potential world champion," Shelby said of the then-virtually unknown Gurney after that race.

The word potential was the active one there. Gurney spent the rest of his career winning, as a driver, constructor and team owner. In all, he won seven times in Formula 1, seven times in IndyCar, five times in NASCAR—all at Riverside—and took two second-place finishes at the Indy 500. In sports cars, he won at Nürburgring, Daytona, Sebring and, of course, Le Mans, among many other iconic tracks. His career included 42 pole positions and 58 front rows. He was the first driver to post wins in Formula 1, IndyCar, NASCAR and sports cars. Only two drivers have done that since: Mario Andretti and Juan Pablo Montoya.

And he always did it with a sense of sportsmanship and even a gentlemanly quality, again, that was sometimes to his detriment. "He was always very clean," said Foyt. "He would have won more races if he had been a little dirty, but Dan was not a dirty race car driver."

Take, for instance, the 1961 French Grand Prix at Reims, where he drove for Porsche.

"Giancarlo Baghetti and I had a battle royale during the last laps of the race, which has gone down in history as one of the most exciting Grand Prix finishes ever," Gurney recalled. "Three hundred yards from the finish, Baghetti pulled out of my car's slipstream and passed me to win by one-tenth of a second (pictured, opposite). It would have been easy to block him, but in those especially dangerous days we chose to adhere to a strict code of ethics that forbade such behavior."

Maybe another driver would have made the block. Maybe another would have taken out Baghetti all together. Not Dan Gurney.

Gurney could do it all. If he'd concentrated on one series and stayed with one team, he likely could have won championships. Indeed, soon after he left the Ferrari, BRM and Brabham Grand Prix teams, every one of them won championships. That's one thing you could criticize if you ever wanted to find a flaw on his résumé—he was all over the place, winning races, yes, but never enough races in a single series to win a championship. In Formula 1, he stands with Sir Stirling Moss as one of the greatest uncrowned champions.

"He won in stock cars, he won in Indy cars, he won in Formula 1, he won in Can-Am and sports prototypes," said Mario Andretti. "He was a complete race driver. He was truly a world champion that doesn't have the trophy because of his ability. He was complete as a driver because he was totally immersed. He was truly, truly 100 percent in the sport and he stayed in after he retired from driving and was a driving force. He contributed tremendously to the sport in so many ways."

"He is like a Stirling Moss a little bit," said three-time CART champion and 1986 Indianapolis 500 winner Bobby Rahal. "Everybody says Stirling Moss was one of the great-





AUTOWEEK ARCHIVES; LAT PHOTOGRAPHIC (4)

## FORMULA 1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP WINS

French Grand Prix (Porsche) **1962**

French Grand Prix (Brabham) **1964**

Mexican Grand Prix (Brabham)

Belgian Grand Prix (Gurney Eagle) **1967**



## NASCAR CUP STATS

### WINS

5, all at Riverside International Raceway (1963, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1968)

### POLES

3, along with eight top-five race finishes in 16 career Cup Series starts

est Formula 1 drivers, but he never won a championship. Dan never won a championship, but if you look at Dan and everything he did as a driver—as a constructor he raced in Formula 1 in the early 1960s and won Brabham’s first Formula 1 race as a manufacturer, winning Spa with the Eagle and winning so many endurance races and major Indy car races. The guy did it all.”

Take 1967, for instance.

Gurney won Le Mans that year, sharing a Ford Mark IV with Foyt and helping Ford beat Ferrari. Gurney not only won but did so at record speed and while winning the fuel efficiency trophy, as well. That triumph came just a few weeks after he qualified second in the Indianapolis 500 (he was leading in the second half of the race before engine trouble ended his day) and following a major sports car win in the Green Valley 300 in Texas, where he topped a field that included racing legends Parnelli Jones and Mark Donohue in a Mercury Cougar.

“You don’t realize how cool this guy is,” son Justin Gurney said during a celebration of his dad’s 85th birthday. “Over the course of 19 days in 1967, he set motorsports history.”

And he kept going like that until he retired from driving in 1970, having won 51 races as a driver. He remained in the sport as owner of All American Racers, having bought out co-founder Carroll Shelby. As a constructor, Gurney was even more successful, if that was even possible. His Eagle race cars won the Indy 500 three times: with Bobby Unser in 1968, Gordon Johncock in 1973 and with Bobby Unser again in 1975.

When AAR entered the IMSA GTP class with Toyota-powered Eagles in the late 1991 and the full 1992 and 1993 seasons, Gurney’s cars won 19 races, 17 of them consecutively in ‘92-93. AAR built 157 race cars total, and those cars won 78 races.

Along the way, he invented the famous Gurney flap, a right-angle extension on the upper trailing edge of the rear wing that increases downforce. It is used today on just about



every race car that has wings. He was also the first big-time driver to wear a full-face helmet, provided by Bell.

AAR is still a thriving business, now run by Gurney's sons Alex and Justin, who have had some racing success themselves. The company has branched out to a number of other engineering endeavors, including aerospace.

At that celebration of Gurney's 85th birthday, Justin Gurney pointed out that on that very day—Dan Gurney's birthday in 2015—SpaceX was scheduled to launch a heavy rocket to the space station that would have on it a number of critical AAR parts, including the big, long carbon-fiber legs the rocket was to land on when it came back to Earth.

As the younger Gurney said, you didn't realize how cool this guy was. But if you knew him at all you'd understand why he was so well-respected and so well-loved.

Autoweek's own Denise McCluggage, who herself died just three years ago, was a lifelong friend of Gurney's. In her many columns for Autoweek, she often wrote of the tall, quietly confident young American racer who was part of a community of drivers the likes of which we may never see again. When she gathered all those stories together in a book, she chose for its title part of an A.E. Housman poem that describes that time and those young men perfectly:

*With rue my heart is laden  
For golden friends I had  
For many a rose-lipped maiden  
And many a lightfoot lad  
By brooks too broad for leaping  
The lightfoot boys are laid  
The rose-lipped girls are sleeping  
In fields where roses fade*

Godspeed, Dan. ♦

**From left:** Juan Manuel Fangio, Stirling Moss, Denise McCluggage, Pedro Rodriguez, Innes Ireland and Ronnie Bucknum. Kneeling, from left: Roger Ward, Jack Flaherty and Dan Gurney at Laguna Seca in 1962.

THE GREAT INNOVATOR

# A FLAP, A BUBBLE AND CHAMPAGNE



**THEN THERE IS THE** Gurney flap: a little piece of material standing bolt upright on the trailing edge of a car's rear wing. But its brilliance lies in its simplicity. Without getting too deep into the aerodynamic specifics, the flap increases downforce substantially without dramatically increasing drag (at least when it's mounted on top of the wing; flip it upside down and it generates lift, which is why you'll find it on aircraft, too).

Like the so-called Gurney bubble, the dome installed in the roof of the low-slung Ford GT40 race car to accommodate the 6-foot-4-inch driver's helmeted frame, the Gurney flap was the product of necessity. As the story goes, Bobby Unser was testing an All American Racers-built USAC car at Phoenix International Raceway back in 1971, and it wouldn't stay put. Thinking fast, Gurney cobbled together the flap as we know it from materials found trackside.

It worked—too well, at first. An excess of downforce meant Unser wasn't moving any faster with the flap installed; modified front aero balanced things out, and it wasn't long before competitors wised up and the device became ubiquitous.

Whether it he was christening the crowd with Champagne from the winner's podium at Le Mans in 1967 (instantly establishing a motorsports tradition in the process) or improvising an aerodynamic feature that changed automotive design on- and off-track, inventiveness was a Gurney hallmark—proof positive of a brilliant mind at work. **GRAHAM KOZAK**