

TASMANIAN MOTORSPORT HALL OF FAME

GARTH WIGSTON (Inducted 2014)

Garth Wigston was recognised as a highly competent touring car (V8 Supercar) driver in the late 1970s and early 1980s and later as the chairman of the National Steward's Panel for CAMS, an Australian Formula One steward and as a V8 Supercar steward.

At an early age Garth became interested in things mechanical leading to second place as a teenager in an Australian Model aircraft control line championship.

This was followed by the construction of what was one of the first practical slot car racing tracks built anywhere in the world.

Garth's first foray into motor sport was in 1960 when he built the Piaggio, a small open wheel racing car powered by a Vespa 150cc sports motor.

His next race vehicle was a 1948 early-model Holden, in which Garth had considerable success.

These were the days in which race cars were often also used for daily transport, in this case, necessitating the change of the engine after each race meeting so his wife could drive to teach at a local high school.

Garth was offered a drive in a Ford Lotus Cortina owned by Hobart Ford dealer, Peter Cloak.

In the Lotus Cortina and its later replacement, a twin-cam Escort, Garth had numerous successes in local competition.

Whilst actively involved as a competitor, Garth also spent 13 years on the Hobart Sporting Car Club committee, including several years as club president, including during the years that Baskerville conducted national live telecasted major race meetings such as the Baskerville 10,000.

It was in another area of motorsport that Garth led the way, by designing one of the first electronic race timing systems in the world.

First used to time racecars at Baskerville, the system known as TasTime, was used by most of the leading touring car teams during the 1980s.

Whilst negotiating track sealing at Baskerville, Garth developed a close relationship with Ian Harrington, managing director of the road sealing company, Roadways.

Ian became interested in the sport and provided a current model V8 Torana for Garth to race at State level and then on a national level with the Roadways Team's Toranas and Commodores from 1977 to 1983, when Garth retired.

It was in the 1983 Bathurst 1000 event that the two-car Roadway team of Colin Bond-Alan Grice and Garth Wigston-Steve Harrington finished third and fourth respectively.

Garth was co-opted as a junior steward by his team patron, Peter Cloak, in the late 1970s and always maintained an interest and role in stewarding when he was able to do so.

After his retirement from touring car racing Garth was able to dedicate more time to his stewarding duties which included several years as chairman of the Tasmanian Stewards Panel.

His abilities were recognised nationally when Garth was appointed to the position of chairman of the National Stewards Panel.

Garth also served several terms as the series steward for the V8 Supercar Series and in that role became highly respected for the manner in which he conducted his duties.

Outside motor sport Garth was the managing director of Wigston's Lures, which manufactured fishing lures used extensively for fishing throughout Australia, with 60% of the production of Tasmanian Devil lures exported to New Zealand, USA, UK and Europe.

Many of the custom built machines used to make and paint lures have been designed and built by Garth. At the time of induction, Garth was in semi-retirement, but maintained a close interest in local motor sport as a board member of Motorsports Tasmania.

(Profile by Dennis Burgess)