

## HARRY TORGERSON

Harry Torgerson started racing in 1946, driving a midget at Riverside Amusement Park Speedway in Sioux City. He ran against future Indianapolis 500 drivers Lloyd Ruby and Myron Fohr before moving to stock cars in 1949. He ran his first stock car race at the same Riverside track driving a 1937 Ford tudor sedan. He started the hooligan race (B Feature) in 41st position, and won. During the 1950 season at Riverside he flipped his Ford coupe in his heat. Following a quick repair job of replacing the radiator, two bent wheels and wiring the driver's door shut, he started the D feature in last place, and won. He transferred to the C feature and won, and then started last in the B feature, and won. He lined up last in the A feature, and amazingly won that race as well, completing one of the more incredible sagas of early day stock car racing. He was still working for the railroad in the early 1950's and his racing adventures sometimes interfered with the timetables of the railroad. He was scheduled by the railroad to leave Sioux City at 10:30 p.m. on Sunday nights and many nights he wasn't finished racing when the train left town without him. When the races were finally over, Torgerson and brother, 'Tinsky', would drive down highway 77 to find, and run down, the train so Harry could get aboard. In 1953, the two Torgersons built one of the most successful modified stock car racers in history. The black and orange 1940 Ford coupe numbered 33 was entered in 27 events and won 25 of them. "That was one of the best cars I ever drove and we won some big races with it," Torgerson said. They ran the car at Sioux City, Cherokee, Onawa and Council Bluffs in Iowa, Yankton in South Dakota and Columbus, Nebraska. Two of the hottest stock car racers of the early 1950s were Johnny Beauchamp, who finished second in the first Daytona 500 in 1959, and Tiny Lund, who won the Daytona 500 in 1963. The two Iowa drivers ran a pair of team coupes for Dale Swanson of Omaha and usually finished one-two at the Playland Park Speedway in Council Bluffs. But the Torgersons brought the No. 33 to Playland Park for the 4th of July race in 1953 and defeated both Beauchamp and Lund. "I'll never forget that night as long as I live," Harry Torgerson said. "It was as hot as a furnace inside that car and both of those guys were running alongside me the whole race. That was really a big win" He ran Huset's for the first time in July of 1954 and finished in sixth place in the feature driving a '38 Ford coupe. In the mid 1950's, Torgerson left the railroad and moved to Sioux Falls to start a trucking business. His racing continued at both Soo and Huset's Speedways when he drove a car owned by Marshall Gardner. Torgerson then took some time off from racing to concentrate on his business interests and didn't turn a wheel for several years. But the urge, coupled with a successful business, allowed time for the return to racing. In the mid 1960s Torgerson built a supermodified car to race at tracks in Minnesota at Jackson and Fairmont. He returned to supermodified racing at Huset's, driving for Harry Pollman, and nailed his first supermodified feature win in 1969 with the Pollman No. 33. At the 1970 Sioux Empire Fair, with Governor Nils Boe in attendance and waiting to present a trophy to the winner, Torgerson performed a horrifying series of end-over-end gyrations that had the No. 33 finally coming to a rest right side up near the wide-eyed Governor. Torgerson climbed from the wreckage and said to the Governor, "I didn't think the damn thing was ever going to stop." In 1972, Torgerson and his crew built their own supermodified and engaged in some classic duels with Hall of Famers Bill Mellenberndt and Jim Matthews. Torgerson won the 1972 supermodified title and repeated the feat in both 1973 and 1975. Torgerson's last year of competition was in 1976 when he purchased the ex-Barry Kettering Maxwell sprint car and ran it that year at Jackson, Knoxville Raceway in Iowa and Hartford Speedway in South Dakota. He became a car owner only in 1977 and had drivers

Doug Wolfgang, Roger Larson, Dick Forbrook and Junior Parkinson at the wheel. Torgerson is fifth in career feature wins in supermodified / sprint features with a total of 34 victories. He is now retired and resides in Mesa, Arizona but spends his summers in Sioux Falls.