

## **GARY BOTT**

Gary Bott's career in auto racing began as a mechanic for fellow Hall of Famer Marlyn Hanten in the early 1960s. Bott first got behind the wheel of his own super-modified car in 1966, a 1930 Ford coupe powered by a Chevy V-8. With the help of his pit crew - Larry Nagel, Wayne Chase and Stan Bott - Bott was named co-Rookie-of-the-Year. From 1967 through 1972, Gary continued to own and drive his own cars - all which carried the number 16. Through this time he raced at a number of tracks in the area aided by Rob Auset, Vern Christensen, Ernie Janssen, Joe Bott and Kenny Brinker. In 1973, Bott hired an up-and-coming driver - Doug Wolfgang - to drive his car. The following year Wolfgang moved to the Rich and Hall no. 94 and Bott followed as a mechanic. Midway through the 1975 season Bott returned to driving after teaming with co-owner Ron Tysdal. The new team scored Bott another feature win late that season. The 1976 season dawned with great expectations for Bott and his team. But those hopes were shattered on opening night at Huset's Speedway. It was that Mother's Day evening when Bott died from injuries sustained while competing in the trophy dash at the age of 35. While Gary's death remains a dark memory in the history of Huset's Speedway, his loss of life was not in vain. The week following his death, Hall of Famer Pat Masur and Jeff Cronk created a new rescue crew at the track, as a direct result of the fatality the previous week. That rescue unit has evolved into one of the top crews in the country, headed by Masur's son, Jay. There is no doubt that Bott's ultimate sacrifice to the sport he loved made Huset's Speedway and other area tracks safer places to race at.