

KEVIN KJERGAARD

Kevin Kjergaard grew up in the shadows of Huset's Speedway in Rowena. He's never left. As a high school student in Sioux Falls, Kjergaard got his first job at KSFY Television at the age of 16. It wasn't long after that when Kjergaard started showing up at Huset's with a camera on his shoulder. His first job at KSFY was running a camera in the studio. Sports director Mark Ovenden needed help on the weekends, and Kjergaard took full advantage by frequenting Huset's. By the time he was 16, he'd become a familiar fixture at the local track. Promoter Fred Buckmiller paid Kjergaard to come to the Speedway every Monday to help clean the grandstands. "I had the run of the place on Sundays when I showed up with my camera," Kjergaard said. "I could go wherever I wanted. I'm kind of like furniture at that place. I'm just always there." Kjergaard went from a weekly photographer to a national racing videographer on demand in 1982, when he captured a vicious sprint car crash at the W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds. Kjergaard's video of Billy Keester violently flipping out of Turn No. 1 at the Fairgrounds got the attention of many around the country. The video of Keester's crash appeared on ABC's Wide World of Sports, and doors began to open for the Huset's regular. "That was the [video] that everybody assumed I knew everything about sprint car racing," Kjergaard said. "Everyone called me after that." He began supplying video for Motor Week Illustrated on WTBS, hosted by Dave Despain, Lyn St. James and Bob Varsha. He later went on to supply video for ESPN Speedweek with Larry Nuberg and Bob Jenkins. The 52-year old Kjergaard moved to KELO Television at the age of 28 and is now the chief photographer in the news department. During his career, he produced four retail videos called "Up and Over." "Sports was always just a hobby, and I've been lucky that they've let me do it on the weekends," he said. "I'd like to hope that I've helped sprint car racing. I wanted to share the stories the way Tom Savage (local racing historian and fellow Huset's Hall of Fame inductee) did. "He kept it alive. He taught everyone that there was a story to tell. We were lucky to have guys like Tom and Doug Wolfgang in this area."