

LOREN WOODKE

Loren Woodke achieved his dream of owning an engine-building shop shortly after his discharge from the Navy in 1946. From that small shop in Lakefield, Minnesota would eventually come some of the most powerful engines in sprint car racing. By the 1960's and into the next decades, Woodke engines powered Huset's drivers to hundreds of victories. And his powerplants not only dominated racing in the Upper Midwest, they also won at major events across the country. In 1981, Doug Wolfgang drove a Woodke-powered sprint car to a second-place finish with the World of Outlaws and recorded wins at prestigious events in Florida, Texas, Ohio and New York. A Woodke engine was also under the hood when Don Mack won the biggest sprint car race on asphalt, The Little 500, in 1978 near Indianapolis. Local sprint car drivers who utilized Woodke engines include Daryl Dawley, Roger Larson, Harry Torgerson, Bill Mellenberndt, Bill Rook, Guy Forbrook and a host of others. Woodke also owned a sprint car that was driven by a variety of drivers to numerous victories. His car won the Jackson Nationals three times - twice with Jack McCorkell - and scored clean sweeps with Victor Dicks behind the wheel at the South Dakota and Minnesota State Fairs and the Clay County (Iowa) Fair. A few of the other notable drivers who steered the Woodke sprinter include Jan Opperman, Roger Rager, Ray Lee Goodwin, Kevin Frey and Bob Geldner.