

VERN HAUGAN

Vern Haugan was a premier racing mechanic and craftsman whose Chrysler-powered cars had highly successful results on the track. Haugan teamed with his brother, Gil, first at the old Soo Speedway east of Sioux Falls in 1955. The pair won the championship in their second season and went on to win track championships and numerous features at Huset's and Jackson, Minnesota. In 1962, the brothers bought a 1961 Plymouth Late Model from Lee and Richard Petty and competed on the I.M.C.A. circuit for the next two seasons. After Gil Haugan elected to retire from racing following the 1963 season to devote more time to his growing construction business, the familiar red-and-white No. 4 modified returned to the local racing scene in 1965 with Vern turning the wrenches. The car was always one of the machines to beat at every race, with a number of notable drivers – including Daytona 500 winner Tiny Lund and Hall of Famer Roger Larson – behind the wheel. Vern then teamed with his son, Mike, as driver in 1970 and the pair began competing with the Plymouth formerly driven by Gil Haugan and later with a Plymouth 'Cuda, enjoying success in racing throughout the Tri-State area. After Mike Haugan retired from driving, Vern's final involvement in racing came in the early 1980s helping his younger son, Dave, with his street stock. In an era when few racing parts were available for purchase, Haugan's skills as a mechanic and craftsman were invaluable as he fabricated parts from bare steel or modified pieces found in junkyards.