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Remember When: Herb Buck

Easter Sunday, 1954 Herb Buck climbed into a 1937 Ford Coupe at Kane Road Speedway in Kane, PA for his first race and never stopped while he found his life's passion. A versatile driver from Bridgewater PA., Herb and his wife Elizabeth have two children, Kim and Bobbie. When he wasn't racing he got some additional seat time as a truck driver. After his retirement as a truck driver he spent some time in automotive sales.

Herb told his family that the best part of racing was the ride home after the races. Discussing the event with family, Bobbie would keep track of the finishes and how the car handled. They would talk about the evening's activities.

The toughest part was between rides. His family said he was not a very good spectator. It was very difficult when he realized that his racing career was over.

One of his most memorable moments in racing was the time when he drove Dick Swartzlander's Indy Roadster throughout the East Coast in the United Racing Club. Herb's best season was at Green Valley Speedway in 1965 with nine feature wins and a second in the point standings.

Daughter Kim explained that "dad's hobby was racing, racing, and racing...he lived, breathed, ate, drank and slept racing".

Herb never mentioned a favorite competitor that he raced against but enjoyed competing with all the drivers and got along with all of them. He compiled a very impressive list of car owners that included: Herb Buck Sr., Oliver Buck Jr., Bert Wible, Al Cubic, Al Deane, Frank Trputec, Frank Semerod, Lloyd Latch, Carl Folk Jr, Andy Raiti, Dick Schuller, Henry Avolio, Pete Casella, Tim Temple, Vic Eicher, Jim McMillin, and Frank Benic. Pit crew members included: Skip and Doug Deane, Bob, Jim, Bill, and Grandpa Semerod along with Ron Cubic.

Motorsports writer and Rappin on Racin reporter, Walt Wimer said "Herb Buck was from the old school of "helmet bag" drivers. If he ever had his own car it was early in his career, probably while I was still in Florida before 1966. It rings in my mind that at one point in the mid-60s, before full blown Sprint Cars took over, he drove the former Mickey Banas/Gus Linder Super-Modified which had been renumbered 67 after Banas sold it. Len Birmingham also drove the car in that period. Being one of the real "nice guys" on the circuit, I often talked with Herb and have photos of him with at least 8 different cars".

Herb never had much of a regular Modified ride, but often jumped into cars and did double duty at Mercer and Lernerville. Wimer stated "as for wins, Buck was a consistent front runner, but had few victories. My records show him with three at Lernerville and four at Mercer in Sprint Cars, and a pair of Modified wins at Mercer".

Tracks where Herb competed were Bedford, Blanket Hill, Butler, Canfield, Clearfield, Clinton, Debo Park, Ebensburg, Erie, Greater Pittsburgh, Green Valley, Heidelberg, Hickory, Jennerstown, Latrobe, Lernerville, Meadville Fairgrounds, Mercer, Morgantown, Motordrome, North Hills, Schmucker's, Sharon, South Park, Sportsman's Speedway, St. Clairsville, Tri-City, Williams Grove and Kane Road Speedway.

I had the opportunity to see Herb run a few races in the Pittsburgh Racing Association at Heidelberg and South Park. I agree with Walt that Buck was a consistent front runner and was well liked by his competitors. Herb was one of the early pioneers in the Tri-State racing community and we appreciate his contributions to the sport.

Herb passed away on September 18, 1995 after a thirty five year career as a race car driver. His first job as a bus driver for the Beaver County Transit Authority was a natural start for his career in racing.