

# John Morton



JOHN MORTON 1970



#46 NISSAN 240Z



JOHN MORTON 1995



#75 NISSAN 300ZX TWIN TURBO

***Over 48 years of racing and still going***

John's interest in racing was sparked as a child by attending local dirt track races with his dad at the Waukegan Speedway in his Illinois hometown. In 1949, his father took the family to the Milwaukee Fairgrounds to see the AAA race. That exposure followed by a trip to the Road America 500 in 1957 with his family convinced John that this is what he would do.

While in college John bought a 1940 Ford 2-door sedan for \$43 and began racing on a dirt track near Clemson. After having a taste of racing it was clear that higher education was not going to get him around the track any faster. In 1962 John came to California and attended Carroll Shelby's School of High Performance Driving. This was a five-day course; Peter Brock was John's instructor. John was able to land a job with Shelby American, though this job did not take place behind the wheel of a car but on the end of a broom handle. John then went on to making oil pans for Shelby.

When John turned 21 he purchased a Lotus Super 7 to begin racing; in 1963 he raced it at Dodger Stadium. After his first season racing the Lotus Super 7 he replaced it with a Lotus 23B. In 1965 John got the chance to run some races on the Cobra team; they even brought on his Lotus 23B.

John ran SCCA Club races through 1968, and then fate stepped in; Peter Brock saw him race and gave him a big break on his new BRE Datsun team. "Before Datsun came into my life in 1969, I had raced for six years". In 1963 I won lots of races in my Lotus Super 7; I even had some rides on Carroll Shelby's Cobra team. What was difficult then was club racing on a \$3.25 per hour job making racing oil pans. The BRE team turned my life around."



John Morton  
Dodger Stadium - 1963



1969 through 1972 were good years for John, Peter and Datsun. If winning was not enough, John was also named 1971 California Sports Car Club's Driver of the Year as well as Datsun Race Driver of the Year. He had driven the 2000 Roadster, the 240Z and the 510 as he captured the unofficial driver's crown in the SCCA's Two-Five Challenge series two consecutive years - 1971 and 1972. Each year, he drove the BRE Datsun 510 to six victories as the greatest contributor of points to Datsun, which took the official crown

both seasons.

After BRE John went on to race a few years in F5000, Can-Am and various IMSA races. In 1975 the movie industry found him and John found himself doing stunt work on a couple of feature films like "Gumball Rally" and several TV shows and commercials. John's racing career put him as a team driver with Pete Halsmer, driving 962 Porsches. In 1985 they won the Times GP at Riverside. In 1987 John won the last Times GP at Riverside and the West Palm Beach GP, driving for the Group 44 Jaguar team of Bob Tullius. In 1988 the Electramotive Nissan Team signed John. John and Geoff Brabham won several races that year, setting the stage for Nissan's domination of the IMSA series for several years. Other notable Nissan races for John during 1989-95 include an overall victory at Sebring and several class wins, including the Le Mans in 1994, one of nine times he has competed at Le Mans. Several races in various other classes and categories include Sprint cars, Indy cars, and Karts. In his most recent professional races, 1997-2001, John raced Porsches in both the Grand American series and ALMS. John has raced just about everything, including Top Fuel Dragsters.

With almost 50 years of racing behind him he is still racing. Most of his current competition is in vintage races driving a variety of cars, which include Datsuns, Cobra Coupes, Corvettes, Porsches, a Lotus 23 (that same one) and a Sunbeam Tiger.

At the 35th Rolex Monterey Historic Automobile Races on August 16, 2008, John won Group 4A and Group 4B at the Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca. In Group 4A he was driving a 1958 Scarab Mk3 5555cc, and Group 4B found him in a 1963 Corvette Grand Sport 6177cc. In 2009 John raced twice at the Wine Country Classic and took third in a Sunbeam Tiger and first in a Mustang. At the 2009 Monterey Historic Automobile Races John won in Group 4B (1963-1966 Production Sports Cars) driving a 1963 Corvette Grand Sport, and he also won in Group 4A (1955-1961 SR +2500cc) driving a 1958 Scarab Mk 3.

After all these years John Morton is still racing and is still an inspiration to many; but as far as John is concerned, he is just a regular guy. I was at a banquet a couple of years back with many legendary racecar drivers. One of the driver's mechanics, an expert on Gurney Eagles, pointed at John and said, "Now that is one fast driver." Not bad for being just a regular guy....

