

# The Preservationist

The Member Newsletter of the Elkhart Lake Historic Race Circuits Preservation Society

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## Lawrence H. “Larry” Whiting Jr.

“A Significant Founding Member”

A Profile from the Archives of Fred Egloff

Larry Whiting was born in 1929 into a prominent and wealthy Chicago family. His father, General Lawrence H. Whiting Sr., served as a Major on the staff of General Pershing during WWI and designed the military personnel and payroll system that included the use of “Dog Tag” identification. The story of Larry’s driven father and artistic mother Katherine was said to have served as the inspiration for characters in Edna Ferber’s Pulitzer Prize winning novel “So Big”.

Family wealth provided Larry with a private education. He attended elementary school at The Latin School of Chicago and The Arizona Desert School. His high school education was

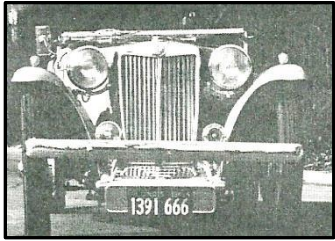


*Larry Whiting, the announcer at the 1952 Elkhart Lake races.*

at Culver Military Academy. He attended college at Northwestern University and at the University of Chicago, his father’s alma mater.

Professionally Larry was the principal owner of Larry Whiting, Inc., builder of Gran Turismo coupes based on Corvette components. He also served as Vice President of the International Trade Fair and was Editor of the Chicago Market Daily and of Marketing Magazine.

Larry had a long and extensive involvement with automobiles dating back to the age of nine when he had his own Model “T”. He was just twelve when he was first allowed to drive the family Bugatti. At the age of seventeen he owned a vintage Biddle Sport Roadster that he sold to car collector D. Cameron Peck in 1946. He



*Larry's MG-TC.*

purchased an MG-TC with the proceeds and joined in the region's early sports car activities. Fred Wacker always

said that the real first sports car races in the midwest following the WWII were not at Studebaker or Elkhart Lake. They were the friendly contests on the back roads around Lake Geneva between himself and Larry in their MG-TCs.



*The Whiting's Lake Geneva home.*

Larry's parents owned a home on Lake Geneva (previously owned by the Selfridge family of the PBS series) over the driveways and grounds of which

local sports car owners raced just for fun.

When the SCCA Chicago Region was organized in 1949, Larry Whiting was among its founding members. His father was President of Whiting & Company that owned the American Furniture Mart where the Region held its meeting and annual dinner dance.

His racing career was short, 1950 to 1954 but his wealthy background



*Larry in his Simca 8 Sport at the Studebaker Proving Grounds.*

allowed him to own and race a wide variety of cars. His first official race was in June of 1950 at Studebaker where he raced

his Simca 8 Sport finishing 1<sup>st</sup> in the 1500cc class and was the 5<sup>th</sup> fastest qualifier.

Whiting's next race was at the inaugural races in Elkhart Lake in July where he entered both his Simca and a newly acquired MG-TD. Racing the MG-TD he finished first in the under 1500cc Novice Event.



*Larry congratulated by Fred Wacker while spouse "Gigi" looks on.*

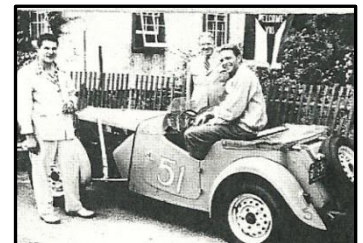
By September he had acquired a Jowett Jupiter R1 that he raced in the Queen Katherine Cup Race at Watkins Glen but failed to finish completing only three laps.



*The Jowett Jupiter at Watkins Glen.*

His final race in 1950 was at the Sam Collier Memorial six hour endurance race at Sebring where he teamed with Karl Brocken in a Morris Minor to finish 3<sup>rd</sup> in Class G (1100 S1.1) and 14<sup>th</sup> overall.

In 1951 Whiting owned a Jaguar XK120 for a short period but sold it after it got stuck in first gear in Milwaukee. Returning to his MG-TD he entered it in the Main Event for experienced drivers in the August races at Elkhart Lake where he finishing 5<sup>th</sup> in Class 6 and 17<sup>th</sup> overall.



*Larry and his TD at Elkhart Lake in 1951.*

As a member of the race committee Larry was also in charge of accommodations in Elkhart Lake in 1951. He was the recipient of the complaint from the manager of the Schwartz Hotel who thought that all the other hotels got the rich and famous people and he only had some farmer from Green Farms, Connecticut... it was Briggs Cunningham of course.

Larry worked as an official and race announcer in 1952 and was so much in demand that he had little time to participate in racing.

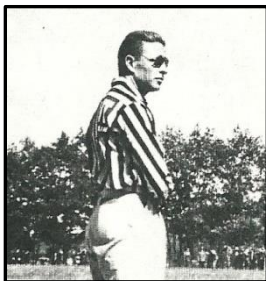


*Larry in his MG-TD at Wilmot Hills.*

He returned to racing in 1953 at Wilmot Hills in July entering the MG-TD in both the S1.5 class race where he finished 13<sup>th</sup> and

the non-championship MG race where he finished 4<sup>th</sup>.

His final race was in 1954 back at Wilmot Hills in his new MG-TF. He entered the non-championship MG race where he finished 3<sup>rd</sup>.



*Larry officiating at Road America in the inaugural 1955 races.*

Although Larry did not race after 1954, he remained active in the Chicago Region as an official and race announcer. In 1993, while in his sixties, he was recruited to fill in as the announcer for Road America after the death of Ed "Twenty-Grand" Steinbock. Larry was

also the announcer for the midwestern Vintage Sportscar Club racing events.

Larry was always fascinated by flying and was a member of the EAA (Experimental Aircraft Association) with a low double digit member number in an organization that now boast over 200,000 members. He managed a rural airport just south of the Wisconsin state line and eventually built an air strip on the grounds of his Lake Geneva home.

He also was a representative for the Canadian firm Ultraflight Lazair and he flew his own Lazair twin engined ultralight. He even developed crop dusting equipment for use in third world country's.



*Larry in his Lazair ultralight.*

Larry was also a founding member of the MG Car Club's Overseas Midwestern Center and served as an early president of the organization. Its membership encompassed the entire Midwest with headquarters at S. H. Arnolts across the street from the Furniture Mart.

In 1993 he was awarded the "Governors Cup" for his life long service to the racing community.

Larry passed away in 1998. He was survived by his wife Lois (Gigi), three children and five grandchildren. Larry was greatly missed and truly left his mark as...

**"A Significant Founding Member".**



## 2017 Spring Dinner Event

The 2017 HRC Spring Dinner Event took place at the historic Siebkens Resort on Thursday, May 18, preceding the SVRA Spring Vintage Festival at Road America.

About 110 members and guests enjoyed a social period in Siebkens' Tavern before moving to the dining room for a full-course dinner



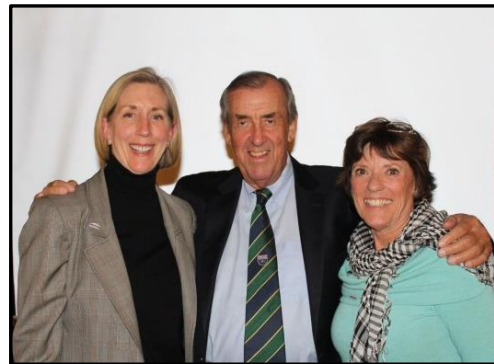
*HRC members Fred Stratton and Peter Cunningham enjoy the event social in the Siebkens historic tavern.  
Photo courtesy of Ron Nelson*

Chairman, John Calhoun, opened the evening's program by explaining the mission of HRC for the benefit of persons attending an HRC event for the first time, and welcomed new Lifetime Member Joe Golichnik. HRC members Mark Bouljon, Kent Koenig, Howie Wold and HRC Director Carl Jensen, all of whom passed over the winter months, were remembered.

John also provided an update on the Sheboygan County Highway Department's plans for resurfacing CTH P, JP and J that make up a substantial portion of the Historic Circuits (*see the following article*).

Diane Fitzgerald, President of the RPM Foundation made a short presentation explaining RPM's mission of funding education to build pathways to careers in automotive restoration and preservation.

The main event was a dialogue between pioneering road and Indy racer Lyn St. James and noted international racer David Hobbs, the anchor of NBC's Formula 1 coverage.



*Left to right, Diane Fitzgerald, David Hobbs and Lyn St. James. Photo courtesy of Ron Nelson*

With David acting as interviewer, Lyn recalled with candor and humor, events from her racing career and her struggles as a woman climbing the ladder to the top levels of motorsports. The program received rave reviews from those in attendance.

Lyn appeared as an ambassador of the RPM Foundation. Both Lyn and David traveled considerable distances to be with us and HRC sincerely thanks Lyn, David and RPM.

## Resurfacing Plan for the Historic Circuits

HRC continues to work closely with the Sheboygan County Highway Department regarding their plans to resurface a substantial portion of the Historic Circuits. For those not in attendance at the Spring Dinner Event, you should know that the



*Portion of  
Historic Circuits  
to be resurfaced.*

plans include CTH P from Kimberly's Korner to the Marsh Turn, CTH J from the Marsh Turn to the 1951-52 Start-Finish line and CTH JP that connects the two from Ted's Turn to the Hard Right.

The plans call for grinding and resurfacing of the roads and the re-graveling of the shoulders. It appears that the Highway Department is acting responsibly within the provisions of the Resource Management Plan established in April of 2010. In meetings with Sheboygan County Transportation Director, Greg Schnell, HRC has been assured that the road width, grade, and geometry and the gravel shoulder width will be maintained as provided in the Plan. Work on the project is expected to begin sometime in July.