

AN AMAZING MAN TAKES HIS LEAVE

The more I got to know Charles A. Lyford III, 'Chuck' to most folks, the more I admired his knowledge, abilities and the way he pursued his life. Chuck began his racing career as a kid on Lake Washington and competed in most of the outboard classes. He started racing 'inboards' at the tender age of fifteen! In his twenty-first year he won all the races he entered, which capped his hydroplane racing career.

A transition to aviation started at Mount San Antonio College in Walnut, California, from whence he learned to fly and from thence he attended San Jose State, obtaining a degree in Airline Management. Most of us may have had some old jalopy to take us to college but Chuck splashed out on a surplus North American P51 Mustang, which took him on his sojourns between college and his home in Seattle (There were many more U.S.A.F. surplus ones around in those days!). Chuck then got into air racing. In those days, Merlin motors were affordable and eventually the P51D-25 'Bardahl Special' emerged in which he flew in both pylon and transcontinental races. In 1964, Chuck came second in the Harold's Club Transcontinental Air Race. He was leading yet nursing a sick engine and was refused permission to land at Reno Municipal Airport (The race was scheduled to end in Reno.) but he was told to land at nearby Sky Ranch ten minutes away. This call by the contest committee cost him the race, a great disappointment after a brave flight through the very stormy outskirts of hurricane Dora over the Gulf of Mexico!

Though I met Chuck through Vintage Motor Racing it was our mutual interest in the development of flight post the Second World War that enthralled me; his knowledge on the subject was prodigious. This was a great help in research for my hobby of accurately modeling aircraft of that era. His stories were infectious and his pronouncements accurate.

So after many other flying adventures after that 1964 air race, Chuck took up Vintage car racing with the same gusto he applied to his previous hobbies. To the Lyfords, Vintage Racing is a family affair. All race cars are prepared at 'T Zero Racing', one of the family businesses run by Charles Lyford, Chuck's son, who with his wife Laurie are also racing a full season every year. And now a third generation is racing in the person of Mary Wheaton (nee Lyford), who is successfully competing in her Formula Vee.

Chuck and his wife Pam have shared many adventures together, including winning the 2013 Vintage Cape Horn Rally in their 1938 Chevrolet Fangio Coupe, skillfully prepared by 'T Zero' as well as the 2016 Inca Rally in their Chevy 'Fang' as well. The Inca Rally is a grueling 6,500 mile event with multiple passes above 15,000 ft. and much more difficult terrain and navigation for Pam, but the Lyford team did it again making it two for two! They have been avid supporters of many great philanthropic endeavors, like the SOVREN Pacific North West Historics benefiting Seattle Children's Hospital. Sadly Chuck had a fatal accident in his Elva Mk 7 at a Spokane race track last weekend. He will be sorely missed but he made his sign off line a living belief; it was his infectious edict . . . *"Every Day Counts!"* . . . and to him it did!

Mike Tate VRCBC White Rock B.C. Canada. Monday June 5th 2017