

### **2004 Huset's Speedway Hall of Fame Inductees:**

- *George Boom*
  - *Bill Krueger*
  - *Rick Middlen*
  - *Elmer Stiefel*
  - *John Underberg*
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## **2004 HUSET'S SPEEDWAY HALL OF FAME**

### **GEORGE BOOM**

When the newly formed Sioux Falls Stock Car Association purchased Huset's Speedway from Til Huset in 1958, many things needed to be obtained before its first race was held. One of those items was the need for an ambulance service.

Newly named track promoter Fred Buckmiller approached Sioux Falls funeral home director and local ambulance service provider George Boom, requesting Boom's aid in providing ambulance service at the track. Boom, who had previously supplied assistance to nearby Soo Speedway, happily obliged. Beginning that day and continuing for the next 17 years, George Boom provided his ambulance service free of charge to the speedway.

While never receiving any monetary compensation for his service, George felt he received much in return from the track.

"I enjoyed the racing," he said, "but more important, I enjoyed getting to know all the guys who were involved - particularly the pit crews - they are the ones that make the races happen. Like in any type of competition, it's much more interesting when you know the ones who are competing."

Buckmiller showed his gratitude for George's assistance by erecting a "George Boom Funeral Home" billboard. While most signage at the track lined the backstretch, Buckmiller placed this billboard apart from the others in the fourth turn, claiming that not only did he want the fans to see it, but that he wanted the drivers to see it as well.

Compared to today's rescue teams, George brought little assistance of his own and depended on volunteers at the track. He's especially grateful for the Sioux Falls Township Volunteer Fire Department and others, who aided him when needed. Just as himself, the fire department and other volunteers were comprised of men desiring to help.

George Boom is a great friend of auto racing at Huset's Speedway. He devoted much of his time and resources to help the track become what it is today.

George is now semi-retired and lives with his wife, Faye, in rural Sioux Falls.

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## **BILL KRUEGER**

One of the most successful car owners in the history of Huset's Speedway was Bill Krueger.

First teaming with his brother George on a car in the late 1950s, Bill eventually took over the racing operation himself. Those who drove for him include Hall of Fame member Bob Lukes, Bud Slendy, Lowell Behrens, Don Jones and Bill's nephews, Jim and Paul Krueger.

Bill experienced most of his racing success as a car owner in the six cylinder modified class in the late 1970s and early 1980s with his nephews behind the wheel. His "racing sons" - Jim and Paul - each collected a pair of track championships and accumulated 40 feature wins at Huset's in their uncle's cars.

Bill owned and operated Westgate Mobil until 1975 when he started Westgate Towing service. Besides always fielding one or two cars at the track, his tow trucks were a constant fixture at Huset's, providing the towing service at the speedway for a number of years.

Bill Krueger's life and racing career ended in March 1983 when he passed away at the age of 54 due to heart failure.

## **RICK MIDDLEN**

Rick Middlen began his racing career in 1971 in the super modified class at Huset's, earning rookie-of-the-year honors at the track.

After two years of driving his own cars, Rick spent two seasons behind the wheel of Hall of Fame member Harold Krull's machine before continuing his racing career with Dennis Mathison.

A highlight of Rick's was a racing battle with Iowan Dick Morris, one of the midwest's top drivers. The pair raced side-by-side for 10 laps before Rick pulled out the feature win.

While he was racing, Rick started a new business, Corbett-Middlen, a performance automotive and service store. Later, he also started Exhaust Pros, a successful line of automotive exhaust shops. As his businesses grew, Rick was forced from auto racing following the 1978 season due to insurance reasons and at the urging of his banker. However,

he remained active in the sport selling speed parts and services to area racers.

After ending his driving career, Rick transferred his appetite for speed to airplanes. He owned and piloted a high-powered plane that set speed records.

In 1993, Rick was critically injured when his plane crashed near his hometown of Larchwood, Iowa. Through countless hours of therapy and with the aid and support of his wife, Mary, he was able to recover from some of his injuries.

Ironically, Rick was raised on adjacent farms with fellow inductee John Underberg near Larchwood. As children, the pair would do anything possible to go to the races at Huset's and each had dreams of someday racing there.

Rick is now retired. He and Mary reside in Queen Creek, Arizona.

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## **ELMER STIEFEL**

Elmer's first taste of racing involved two wheels instead of four when he raced motorcycles as a youth in California, a competition that was quickly halted by his father after Elmer was injured in a racing accident.

After moving to South Dakota, Elmer and Hall of Fame member Al Fiedler became partners in a car that raced at area tracks in the 1950s. Elmer was a pit man, but also did some driving.

In 1958, Fred Buckmiller invited Elmer to be a charter member of the new team that would run Huset's. It was then that Elmer began a career of more than 25 years as an official at the track.

In 1960, Elmer was put in charge of the back gate where he served as sergeant-at-arms of the operation over the next three decades. Once the races started, he would assume other duties in the control tower.

For years he worked the midnight-to-8 a.m. shift at Minnegasco. Many times, he would head straight to the track after getting off work and do general maintenance at the speedway until 6 p.m. Elmer also served on the Huset's Speedway board of directors.

The darkest day in the track's history – June 26, 1987 – saw Elmer involved in a tragic crash.

That evening a sprint car driven by Bill Rook flipped over the back stretch wall and struck Stiefel and fellow track official Dennis Grave. Rook and Grave both perished in the accident. Elmer initially appeared to be critically injured, as rescue workers were unable to find a pulse on his body. But resuscitation efforts on him were successful and, miraculously, he was

released from the hospital the following day.

Elmer later worked for his long-time racing associate and fellow Hall of Fame member, Bill Leesch, at Red Devil Speedway near Hartford.

Elmer Stiefel passed away on Dec. 25, 1998 at the age of 74. He is survived by his wife, Glenna.

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## **JOHN UNDERBERG**

John Underberg's racing career began at Huset's Speedway began in 1967 at the age of 19 in a car he co-owned with his brother-in-law, George VanDenHul. Underberg was always a top contender at the track, consistently finishing in the top 10. John also drove for Don and Lin Larsen, Bob French, Paul and Marge McCarty and his brother-in-law and sister-in-law Joe and Carol Skiles. John also co-owned a car with his brother Joe, who as a pit man never missed a race from 1967 to 1985.

One of John's most memorable moments occurred when Hall of Fame member Harry Torgerson was on a torrid winning streak at Huset's. A \$500 bounty was placed for anyone who could defeat Torgerson. John claimed the bounty after beating Harry on the final turn of the last lap of the race.

After leaving racing in 1979 to pursue a business venture, John returned to the track three years later in the 360 sprint car class and enjoyed even more success.

In 1982, he won track championships at both Huset's and Lake County, earning a special bonus for his achievement. The following year, he was the track champion at Rapid Speedway in Rock Rapids, Iowa. John also received Most Improved Driver and Sportsmanship awards at Huset's and Rapid.

Another business venture again took precedence over racing for John in 1984 and he left the competition once again. He did return to the track as a driver one more time. After being asked to test drive someone else's car in 1985, John promptly won the feature, the final race of his career.

John is employed by McGuire Tank, Inc. and lives with his wife, Nancy, in Tea.