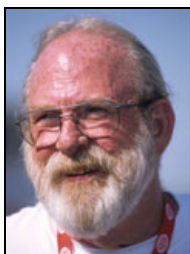




Famed Funny Car racer, chassis builder, restorer Foster dies

by Phil Burgess, NHRA.com
3/26/2008



Legendary Funny Car racer, fabricator, and race car restoration guru Pat Foster died March 27 after a short illness. A former national event winner and record holder, Foster was known as one of the best fuel coupe drivers in history with a long résumé of famous rides in a driving career that spanned 15 years. He was 68.

Foster had a reputation for being able to drive anything on wheels, and, as a renowned "test pilot" for wary owners, claimed to have driven more than 50 race cars from 1964 through his retirement from racing in 1979. His career was saluted when he was named an honoree at the NHRA California Hot Rod Reunion in 2001, the same year he was voted No. 68 on the list of NHRA's top drivers of its first 50 years.

Foster's greatest acclaim came during a two-year stint, 1971-73, behind the wheel of the Vega Funny Cars of North Carolina clothing manufacturer Barry Setzer.

Foster won the tough 1971 Manufacturers Meet and was runner-up at the NHRA Springnationals. He had the quickest time of the 1972 season, a dazzling 6.29 at 235.60 recorded during a runner-up showing at the NHRA Supernationals in Ontario, Calif. His best year on the NHRA tour was 1973, when he reeled off three consecutive final-round appearances, winning the Gatornationals and notching runner-ups at the Springnationals and Summernationals.

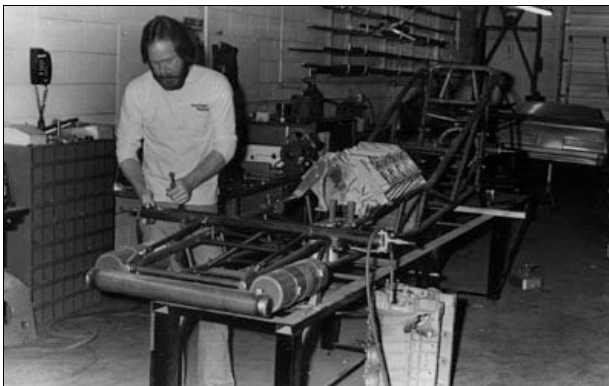
While wheeling a variety of cars, including such notable and memorable rides as Rocky Childs' Addict Top Fueler, the Beach City Corvette, Roland Leong's Hawaiian, "Big John" Mazmanian's Barracuda, Larry Huff's Soapy Sales Demon, the Chicago Patrol Mustang II, and Joe Pisano's Firebird, Foster was building chassis.

Foster began working as a chassis builder for Woody Gilmore, John Buttera, and Mickey Thompson. He built two revolutionary Mach 1 Mustangs that featured narrowed framerrails, a dragster-like roll cage, and zoomie headers. He drove one, and teammate Danny Ongais drove the other.

Foster later teamed with Jim Hume from H&H Race Cars, which built some of the sport's fastest cars, including the last Funny Car he drove in competition, the Super Shops Arrow that on April 8, 1979, he piloted to the class' third five-second clocking in Fremont, Calif.



Top Fuel and Funny Car racer, test pilot, chassis builder, race-car restorer -- there wasn't much Pat Foster couldn't do.



[Driving Force](#)

Catch Up with John Force & His Family. Videos & More at A&E®.
www.AETV.com

[Drag Racing Videos](#)

10 Racing Videos That Will Flat Out Shock You. Watch Free!
InstantEyeCandy.com

[Race Car Trailers](#)

Over 100 Trailers in Stock or Design Your Own Trailer On-Line
milltrailers.com

[Cobra and GT40 Replicas](#)

Largest Selection of Shelby & Superperformance Vehicles Nationwide
www.waylandgandy.com



After stints with a Can-Am team, as a chassis builder for Raymond Beadle, and with Nissan's IMSA GTP race teams, Foster joined with race car body builder Tom Hanna and in 1992 moved from his Southern California roots to Wichita, Kan., to work on building the world's fastest street-drivable sports car.

Foster later formed Foster Pro-Fab Inc. and set about restoring and re-creating vintage dragsters, such as those of Creitz & Donovan, Steve Carbone, Beebe & Mulligan, Benny Osborn, and Candies & Wales, the Jade Grenade, and an array of vintage Funny Cars such as Tom McEwen's Corvette and, most recently, the Fiat coupe of "Flamin' Frank" Pedregon. He moved to Moscow, Idaho, in mid-2006, where he set up shop. His most recent restoration was a Top Fuel car for Billy Lynch, and he had five new projects waiting in the wings.



Foster was an honoree at the 2001 NHRA California Hot Rod Reunion. Cindy Arias congratulated Foster and presented him with one of her original drawings.

Foster's attention to detail and meticulous reconstructions made the cars virtual twins to the original entries and brought smiles to the faces of those who saw them compete in their original incarnations.

He is survived by his sons, Cole, Dan, and Justin; sisters, Linda and Kay; brother, Burch; and grandchildren, Savannah and Ellah.

[Pat Foster tribute on WeDidItForLove.com](#)



[E-mail this article](#)



[Print this article](#)

[Return to 2008 News Archive](#)
[Return to the Home Page](#)

[Driving Force](#)

Racing Fans, Start Your Engines! Check out Driving Force at A&E®.

[Drag Racing Videos](#)

10 Racing Videos That Will Flat Out Shock You. Watch Free!

[Privacy policy.](#)

© Copyright 1995-2008. NHRA. All logos and images are reserved. | [Media Center](#) | [NHRA Video Services](#)