

Friends, Rivals Remember Legend

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By Scott Kindberg and Cody Crandall, Post-Journal

The black jacket with interlocking checkered flags - they are sandwiched between the words "Stateline" and "Eriez" - hang on a wall at the Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame on West Third Street in Jamestown.

Just to its left is a white shirt with "Champion Garage Racing Team" emblazoned on the back.

And directly in front of the dirt-track racing apparel, and sitting on a glass cabinet, are three large, bronze championship trophies - from 1960, 1969 and 1971 - commemorating just a few of the driving accomplishments of one Robert E. Schnars.



At right, Bob Schnars is pictured at far right with Dick Barton's No. 28 car. Barton is pictured at left.

P-J file photo

If only the hardware and the clothing could talk, because the man who wore them - "Busti Bobby" - sure had stories to tell about a lifetime love affair with racing that, for more than 20 years, dominated area tracks like no one else.

Schnars will be laid to rest today, after dying peacefully Saturday at his home on Busti-Stillwater Road in Jamestown. He was 78.

Nearly 40 years have passed since Schnars' last competitive race, but the memories of the men who shared left turns with the legend on Saturday and Sunday evenings at the dirt ovals in Busti and Hammett, Pennsylvania remain strong and clear.

Here is a sampling:

SAMMY LAMANCUSO

"He was one of the best I ever raced against. He was always clean. He never raced dirty, because he

didn't have to, and you never got an argument out of him. ... I think he put a lot more into it than a lot of us did, and he had a lot of very good people working for him. ... I beat him once, on the Fourth of July, but just barely.

"His death was a complete shock to me. He was at my film (premiere at the end of April) and I asked him how he was feeling, and he said, 'Great.'"

DICK BARTON

"I idolized him as I was growing up. I was fortunate enough that my racing career somewhat overlapped Bob just for a couple years. He was truly a master behind the wheel and he was very innovative. He understood and recognized what was needed back in his day.

"In those days, you didn't travel quite like you do today, but, even back then, if you did choose to go to other race tracks, he was a serious threat to win. He was a genuine talent, even away from the Stateline and Eriez circuit.

"In his era, he was absolutely the one to beat. Much like me, he surrounded himself with good people.

"We never actually talked about the (Stateline win) records, but we did have a gathering here at Shawbucks when we did acquire the record and, sure enough, he came and he was very gracious. He was just good all-around guy. If you ever needed anything, he was always there to help.

"He was the King of Stateline.

SKIP FURLOW

"I have a lot of admiration and respect for him. ... He had a lot of talent."

"I think his talent (made him special). That was one thing he probably felt he could excel in and he enjoyed it. He made a living out of it. More than anyone else around here has in racing.

"He raised a nice family through (racing). He made a lot of self-achievements. It's really hard to say. Bob was just a very super guy. I don't know of any enemies that Bob had.

RON BLACKMER

"Bobby was always my hero. Always. He's the only one I'd let in my car. I got hurt one time and he drove the car three times and he won twice.

"Bob was kind of quiet. He kept most to himself. ... (But) we had a lot of fun.

"We never went to other tracks very often. He was No. 1 here. I'll tell you that. To this day I would say.