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A Night With Kyle Petty
A Walk Down Memory Lane
Oldest Living NASCAR Driver To Appear December 11

Lloyd Moore, NASCAR's oldest living driver, is expected to attend the Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame's "A Night with Kyle Petty Dinner and Racing Collectibles Auction" on Monday, Dec. 11 at the Lakewood Rod and Gun Club. Moore, now 94 years old and still residing near his hometown of Frewsburg, will be the guest of Hall of Fame director, Dr. Chuck Sinatra.

Moore, who had 49 starts in his NASCAR career, drove his first Grand National race in 1949, the first year of existence for Bill France's Daytona Beach based sanctioning body. Lloyd, who was 37 years old at the time, drove a '49 Ford for Findley Lake car dealer Julian Buesink in a 200-lap race at the half-mile Heidelberg Speedway located near Pittsburgh. He finished in sixth place, 14 laps behind race winner Lee Petty, earning \$150.

The story behind Moore's first NASCAR race illustrates how far the sport has advanced since 1949. When Lloyd got to Heidelberg Speedway, he soon realized his car had the wrong gear ratio for that track. So he called back to Findley Lake and told Julian's mechanics to take the rear end out of another car that was for sale on Buesink's car lot. Moore drove his race car back to Findley Lake, swapped rear ends, and then drove his racer back to Pittsburgh.

Finishing one position ahead of Moore that day was lady racer Sara Christian, who scored a career-best fifth-place result. Lloyd quipped, "I got beat on the track by a lady and when I got back home, Julian beat me up again."

The following year, Moore entered 16 of the 19 scheduled NASCAR events. He recorded seven top-five finishes and 10 top-10 results, finishing fourth in the final point championship tally, earning \$5,580. Lloyd's highlight of the 1950 season was his first and only NASCAR win, a victory in a 200-lap race at Funk's Speedway, a half-mile oiled dirt track in Winchester, Ind. He wheeled a '50 Mercury from the Buesink stables to the \$1,000 first prize money.

Moore was part of a three-car team fielded by Julian Buesink in 1950. Bill Rexford of Conewango Valley entered 17 races and George Hartley of Erie, Pa., competed in eight events. Buesink believed that it took a different kind of car to be successful at the wide variety of race-tracks that NASCAR visited and as such he campaigned Fords, Mercurys, Oldsmobiles and Lincolns.

Many NASCAR fans might think that the youngest driver to win the national championship in NASCAR's top division was Jeff Gordon, who was 24 when he won the Winston Cup title in 1995. However, the original "Wonder Boy" was Lloyd Moore's teammate, Bill Rexford, who was just 23 years old when he captured the NASCAR Grand National Championship in 1950.

Rexford competed in 17 of the scheduled 19 events in the 1950 season, winning at Canfield, Ohio, in a '50 Olds 88, and recording 11 top 10 finishes to edge Glenn "Fireball" Roberts for the title. Roberts, who was just 21 years old, only entered 9 races, but earned enough points to finish second, one position ahead of Lee Petty. Actually, Petty may have been able to win the championship had he not been stripped of all his NASCAR points in July for competing in an "unsanctioned" race.

Another driver who fell victim to the iron hand of "Big Bill" France and his NASCAR rulebook was Red Byron from Atlanta. Byron, the defending 1949 NASCAR GN champ, accrued enough points to land in fourth place in the 1950 championship chase, but he, too, had all his points taken away for racing in an "outlaw" event. Officially earning the fourth position in the final 1950 NASCAR GN point-listing, therefore, was Lloyd Moore.

The next year, 1951, was Moore's most ambitious NASCAR season as he entered 21 races, scoring four top fives and seven top 10's. He finished 11th in points, earning \$2,235. Meanwhile, the defending champion, Rexford, filled the seat in Buesink's cars just 11 times in 1951. Allegedly, there were hard feelings between Buesink and Rexford over the ownership of the 1950 Nash Rambler that was awarded by NASCAR to its 1950 champion.

Moore competed in only a handful of NASCAR races over the next few seasons, finally hanging up his helmet for good in 1955 when he decided he had been away from his family too much. "It was an experience, sometimes good, sometimes bad, but I loved every minute of it," he said. "There were lots of tough guys on the circuit then, pioneers of sorts. Most were short on money and equipment, but tough as all get out when they got behind the wheel of a car.:"

One of the toughest guys Moore raced against was Lee Petty, father of NASCAR icon Richard Petty, and grandfather to current NASCAR racer Kyle Petty. Lloyd related, "Lee and I were bitter enemies out on the track, but best of buddies when we got off. I first met him at Dayton, Ohio. It was my first trip to that track and I didn't like the looks of it. Lee came over and said, 'You ain't been around here, have you?' I told him I hadn't. We were just getting set up. He said, 'Do you want to take my car?' He offered it to me to drive around the track to see what it was like. Lee was a good guy."

Moore recalled another incident with Lee Petty that occurred at the one-mile Michigan Fairgrounds track in Detroit. "We were going into the third turn and Lee came up and banged into the back of my car. When the race was over, I went and chewed him out about it and asked him what was going on. He said, "Oh, nothing. It was just an accident on purpose.' After that everything was fine."

Dr. Chuck Sinatra said, "I am inviting Lloyd to be my guest at the Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame event because I think Kyle Petty will get a big kick out of meeting someone who knew his grandfather so well. I also want the attendees of the dinner/auction to meet one of the true pioneers of NASCAR."