

Jim McRae (*left*) and Fellow GVMPS Pioneer Dave Ogilvy at Westwood, 1974 (*SCCBC archives*)

JIM MCRAE

Pioneer - Sports Car and Road Racing

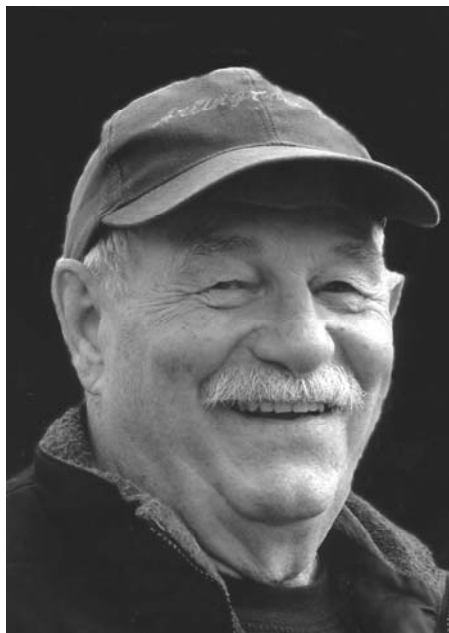
By Tom Johnston

Although Jim was born in the railway town of Fort McLeod, his railway worker father and school teacher mother soon came to the Lower Mainland area of British Columbia and Jim has been here ever since.

Like most youngsters of Jim's era, he became acquainted with motor sport by reading the various magazines on the subject. His first actual contact came in the early 1950s when he and a friend entered the legendary Van-Man-Van rally; in fact they did so at least twice. The rally organizers, the Sports Car Club of British Columbia (SCCBC) also were organizing road races at the Abbotsford airport in those days and before long, young Jim joined SCCBC and was volunteering at the races doing crowd control and other duties.

Jim and his pal GVMPS inductee Ron Curties were heavily involved in constructing the new Westwood Racing Circuit in 1958 and '59, often camping at the site over the weekends, cutting bush, building things and drinking the odd beer as was required.

After Westwood was completed, Jim worked at the track from the first day until it closed in 1990, filling roles such as starter, race chairman and track safety officer.



Jim McRae (John Randall collection)

When the Vancouver Molson Indy came to town, Jim was instrumental in setting up the facility and providing crowd control and safety services.

After Westwood and the Indy, there came the road racing circuit at the British Columbia Custom Car Association's Mission Raceway Park. Jim was there and is still there to this day, a life member of the SCCBC.

I asked Jim if he ever raced and he told me of his perfect racing record; while he was starter at Westwood, racing star, GVMPS inductee and later to be Canadian champion Bob McLean offered his MGA to Jim so he could have a race. Jim drove the car, won the race and returned to his starter job. A victory in his only race - a perfect record.

Jim McRae did more than just help out, he is a true pioneer of motorsport.



Westwood Starter Jim McRae gives the Checker to Fellow GVMPS Inductee John Randall (John Randall collection)