

# RON CURTIES

## Pioneer - Sports Car and Road Racing - Inducted 2009



By Ken Finnigan, 2009, Edited by Tom Johnston

Ron Curties was born in Vancouver in 1930. His involvement with motor vehicles began while a student at Lord Byng High involving his father's 1937 Buick. The maiden drive lasted only two blocks until the teenaged Ron managed to ditch it.

Ron's early cars were mostly domestic including a Model T Ford and a 1941 Ford. It all changed in the 1950s when he bought what is believed to be the first Austin Healey in Canada (well maybe BC). One of the first uses the Healey was put to was acting as a honeymoon car when he married his sweetheart Margaret (Tommie) Thom.

Ron soon joined the fledgling Sports Car Club of British Columbia (SCCBC) and got involved in racing at the Abbotsford airport circuit at the drop of the next flag.

Ron's road racing career was set aside when there was a desperate need for a starter/flag marshal.

Who should step up to the start/finish line? Ron Curties that's who. We all know the attitude of a strong "pit boss", well Ron was the "track boss" and all needed to pay a lot of attention. Drivers quickly became aware of this articulate starter as his demands for safety and awareness were crucial to the safe operation of the racing circuit. Ron continued in his role as starter when the Westwood racing circuit opened in 1959.

Tomie Curties also played an important role in the operation of the SCCBC and the Westwood Racing Circuit where she was the central controller of the track communication system.

Ron was a life-long employee of the local telephone company and as such was the coordinator of the Westwood Communications Group doing an excellent job for many years. He also persuaded the phone company to donate some critical equipment.

Curties served two terms as president of the SCCBC and Tomie served as president of the Ladies division.

Ron's circuit racing career may have been cut short by his other

organizational roles but he (and Tomie) became an expert ralliist competing successfully in the major rallies of the early days such as the SCCBC Van-Man-Van and the Cariboo rallies and others such as the UBC Sports Car Club Thunderbird, winning the SCCBC Rally Shield in 1954.

Today, Ron is a life member of the SCCBC and serves as the club historian.

### City Couple Fight Snow to Win Rally

A Vancouver man-and-wife team drove 400 miles through swirling snowstorms and across treacherous roads to win the Pacific Northwest sports car rally Sunday.

Mr. and Mrs. Ron Curties, 3761 West Tenth, lost only 15 points in the Pacific Northwest's biggest motor rally.

More than 100 cars left Broadway and Rupert Saturday for the Van-Man-Van course, sponsored by the Sports Car Club of B.C.

#### VALLEY ROUTE

The route was to Manning Park and back through the Fraser Valley.

Curties was driving a German-made car. His wife, Tomie, was navigator.

Said Curties: "It was the most rugged car rally I have

ever been in. The roads were treacherous and often dangerous."

Of the 114 cars entered, only 103 completed the course.

#### GIVES CREDIT TO WIFE

Curties said he wouldn't have completed the course had it not been for his wife.

Twice when the car was bogged down in snow-drifts she staggered a mile to a check point.

She said: "At times I thought I would never make it. But the race depended on reaching the check points."

Mike Procter, of the UBC Sports Car Club, came second. Gordon Moore, of Vancouver, was third.

Joan Goodridge of Vancouver topped the women's section.

Below: Ron Curties Today (Tom Johnston photo)

