

RICHARD JOHNSTON

Pioneer - Drag Racing - Inducted 2009



Richard and his SSNA 1956 Chevrolet (all photos Dee Sinker collection)

By Keith Warren, 2009

Richard Johnston started helping his brother Jim, in 1963 with his 1955 Chev racecar and they raced it at Mission Raceway in 1965. Over the years Richard progressed to one of the most proficient Division 6, Stock & Super Stock racers, and record holders from the Greater Vancouver Area.

He ran a 1968 Nova in D/SA, and later a 1985 Oldsmobile in SS/GTIA...

He was best known for his SS/NA 1956 Chev Sedan that was a multiple record holder in the 70s and 80s.

Rick was always the thinker and innovator, and began experimenting with a de-stroked 265 ci Chev engine running very close to the NHRA national records. He took a year off of work, and toured most of the US racing and qualifying #1 at most of the NHRA National events he attended.

He had an idea to use a high stall converter with a transmission brake, for launching a heavy car with a high horsepower, low torque engine so he contacted Mar Ripes of A-1 Transmissions in California to help develop it. Rick did the majority of the testing, and the converters are in widespread use today.

After having problems getting his car to launch consistently, Rick conceived and worked with Dennis

Reid from California to develop and build a delay box.

He then went on to patent Rick's idea, which is now known as the Dedenbear Delay Box.

His last race car was a very innovative Comp Eliminator Dragster with a frame built by Alf Weibe, a four cylinder Pontiac engine laid over at 45 degrees, bored and sleeved, and adapted to a splayed valve, Chev small block cylinder head, a sheet metal Tunnel Ram Intake Manifold, with two Dominator carbs using only the primaries.

Rick was an accomplished self-taught machinist who built many high performance race engines for both Drag Racing and Stock Car competitors.

He was always respected as an innovator and leader in advancing the performance levels of his cars. Dave Hall, Rick McKinney and John Heida were his friends, and mentors. They spent many hours together developing ideas, strategies, and traveling to races all over the country.

He was also instrumental in starting The Northwest Stock & Super Stock Association in BC which brought many racers together to advance the sport of Super Stock &

Stock racing.

The ten national records that he set were a tremendous accomplishment that he was unflinchingly modest about, and he was always willing to share his knowledge and help other racers and competitors.

Rick was diagnosed with brain cancer in 2000 and after multiple operations he succumbed to the disease in January 2009.



Richard Johnston