

TERRY NILSSON

Pioneer - Sports Car and Road Racing - Inducted - 2009



By Vince Howlett, 2008

Born at Rainy River, Ontario in 1936, Terry Nilsson moved west to Duncan, BC with his family when he was five, and, ten years later, to Vancouver. At Langford Speedway, shortly after the end of the war, he attended races on the half-mile oval as a spectator and then also at Digney Speedway in Burnaby

After graduating from high school, Terry got a job, bought...and pranged... a new Austin-Healey. He then decided to give racing a try in 1958, and competed at Abbotsford, Deer Park (Spokane), and Shelton, Washington. He came out second-last in his first race.

In 1959, Terry appeared at the newly-opened Westwood road circuit and at several other tracks, first in the Healey and later in a Twin-Cam MG.

In 1961, he met Joe Terek, owner and chief mechanic of Westwood Circuit Motors and a Porsche specialist. Terek had just rebuilt a Porsche 1600 and Terry agreed to drive it. In his first race in the Porsche, Terry took the checkered flag as a winner. By the end of the season, he had won the Conference Class F championship and racked up a total of almost 700 points to take the overall crown. He drove to 16 overall wins, nine seconds, and six thirds. He also won the Westwood Championship Trophy donated by the Sports Car Club of British Columbia. Terry was one of few Porsche drivers who could give the noted Mike Eyerly a run for his money.

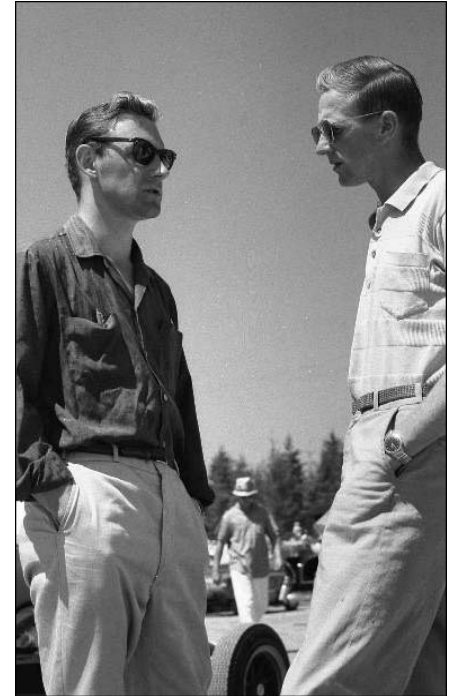
In 1962, Terry acquired a Lola Mark 3 Formula Junior, which had been a factory team car in 1961. Racing this car against strong competition, Terry posted six wins, one second, and three thirds in races at Pacific Raceways, Portland, and, of course, Westwood. He also ran a few races in Porsches, with his usual success.

However, in March of 1963, Joe Terek's Westwood Circuit Motors went up in flames. Terek was unable to save five cars, including Nilsson's Lola. Apparently, the remains of the Lola then went to Lyle Forsgren to use

in one of his Forsgrini cars. Terry then raced Dr. Claire Wilson's Lotus 17. At the 1963 Player's Pacific at Westwood, he qualified fifth overall and second in under 1600 at 1:19.4 (in 1960, F1 star and LeMans winner Olivier Gendebien had lapped the car at 1:21.6 after six laps). Terry finished seventh overall and third in under 1600. He also did some races in a specially prepared Porsche-powered Volkswagen.

In subsequent years, Nilsson's final races were in a Honda S600.

Despite his success, Terry has always been quiet and unassuming. He has retired from his job as lighting technician at the Queen Elizabeth Playhouse, and has recently taken up racing radio-controlled cars. He lives in Richmond.



Above: Nilsson left with GVMP Pioneer and Canadian Driving champion Bob Mclean
Below: Nilsson and Joe Terek with the Lola (all photos Ted Langton-Adams)

