

It's All About the NUMBERS.....

By Judy Badgley

George Hurst

Hurst Performance was incorporated 50 years ago, in 1959. Those that were impacted by this beginning are celebrating this milestone. That includes the members of the Hurst/Olds Club of America.

Doc Watson and Linda Vaughn are icons of Hurst Performance. These devoted people are sharing their stories of the Hurst history everywhere they are appearing this year. They will both be at our Indy show and sharing their stories with us.

George Hurst was the man that started it all. George was discharged from the U.S. Navy in 1954. He had been trained as a machinist and aircraft mechanic. The lessons he learned there stayed with him his entire life and he shared those lessons with all of us. In addition to the gratitude for what he learned in his mechanical training, he also respected the armed services that had taught him. He was very generous with his support of the people that served the USA.

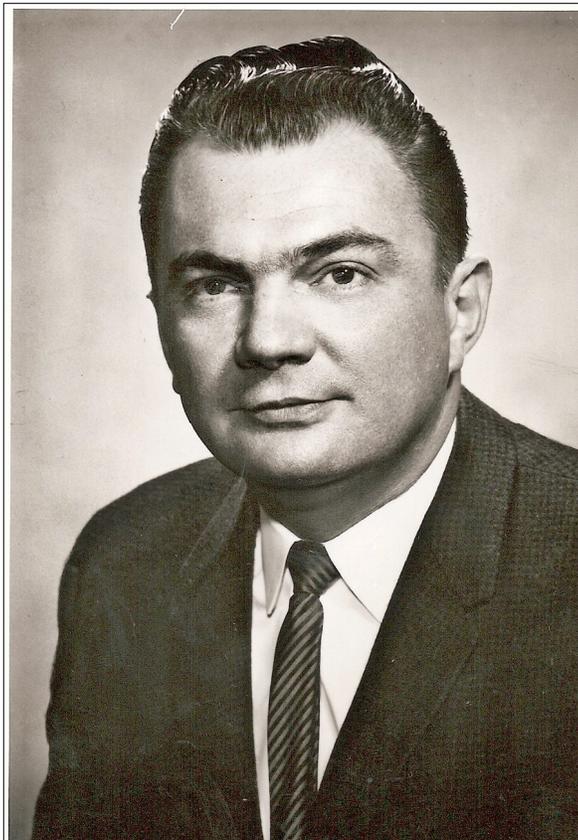
When George was discharged he started in business doing general auto repair in Philadelphia. He soon was doing engine conversions and developing his own motor mounts for the conversions. During this same time period, he created a floor shifter for his own car. This developed into the product that made him famous.

In 1958, George headed to Detroit to check out some new markets for his mounts and shifter. The mounts were not well received but the shifters were. In fact he found there was a huge market across the

country for the shifters. He returned to Philadelphia and borrowed money for tooling to make the shifters. In 1959 the corporation was named Hurst Performance and the rest is

HURSTORY.

The H/OCA was founded in 1983. Only 1 year later, we knew it would be a success. There was a lot of interest in the Hurst/Olds and a lot of enthusiastic owners. During the second year of the H/OCA we decided to contact the people that had contributed to making our cars so desirable. Those we contacted first were George Hurst, Doc Watson and Linda Vaughn. I thought you might enjoy reading the articles that we printed from these special people in the early years of the



Hurst/Olds Club of America.

HAND-WRITTEN LETTER FROM GEORGE HURST, TRANSCRIBED AND PUBLISHED IN THE THUNDER & LIGHTNING MAY, 1985:

It is common knowledge around Detroit and Lansing that our first OEM customer was the Pontiac. We started with Pontiac in about 1961-much of this took place because of the efforts and enterprise of Tim Wangers "Mr. Pontiac" in those days.

We had a very close relationship with the Pontiac Division in those days because of people like Bunky Knudsen, Pete Estes and John DeLorean. During those days this team took Pontiac from a very remote position in the market place to #3- I still remember Pete pinning a #3 pin on my lapel at the Detroit Athletic Club. I believe the occasion was the "Car of the Year" award for the GTO, with which I was very much involved along with Jim Wangers of course.

As the roaring 60's started to draw to a close, that team at Pontiac broke up and some how things just seemed to settle down at the "wide track circle".

Coincidentally a high-flying team was grouping together in Lansing which included Johnny Beltz, John Flemming, Bill Buxton, Ted Louckes and Bob Dorshimer. They had set out to change the Olds image to attract a younger market. The timing could not have been better. Our "Shifty Dr. Watson" made the presentation and it was no holds barred from there on.

It was a fantastic relationship from day 1. The 90-mile trips from our shops in Madison Heights to Lansing on a daily basis were long, but exciting and well worth all the effort. It was a can-do attitude by the top folks at Olds,

which just propagated through their organization and ours.

We always got the feeling we were on a great team which seemed further from the corporate structure (GM) than the mere 90 miles which separated them from our place on W. Grand Blvd.

It was a delightful experience, which I shall always treasure. I am sure that the General Motors Corp. missed Mr. Johnny Beltz as much as I do.

The best always in all ways,



Linda Vaughn

TYPED LETTER FROM LINDA VAUGHN, TRANSCRIBED AND PUBLISHED IN THE THUNDER & LIGHTNING DECEMBER, 1985:

Hi y'all, I'm Linda Vaughn. I was named Miss Hurst in 1966. I was working with Pure Oil, as their representative, down south at the stock car races when I met George Hurst. He told me I should enter his contest for "Miss Hurst Golden Shifter". Later, at my home in Dalton, Georgia, I saw a full-page newspaper advertisement for the Hurst contest. It read, "we are seeking a new "Miss Hurst Golden Shifter. She must be outgoing, friendly, love racing and have sound teeth". Well, I called George Hurst up and asked him if he was looking for a model or a racehorse. At the time, I worked for a dentist as a hygienist.

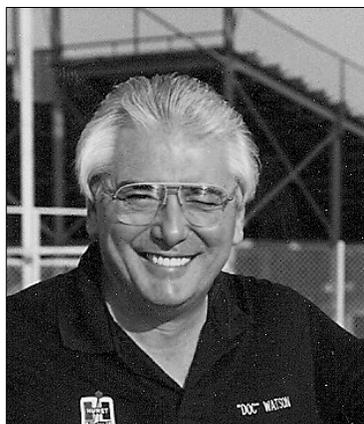
I entered the Hurst contest along with 200 other girls from all over the United States. Regional contests were held in six major marketing areas; I represented Georgia and qualified for the finals in Los Angeles. I went to LA and I won "Miss Hurst Golden Shifter". The next day, I went to George with a 1-year contract; if we get along okay, we could renew it. Well, that was 19 years ago and renew it I did. After 5 years, I went to work for Hurst as a company employee. Let me tell ya: if someone were to offer me ten million dollars for the last ten years of my life, I'd turn them down. My life in the fast lane with Hurst has been the most wonderful experience of my life.

I feel the Good Lord put me here to do exactly what I do in motorsports and racing. God bless George Hurst for giving me the opportunity for really letting me be me. And Jack Duffy, my public relations director, who helped me, trained me and worked with me and became like a father to me; and still is today.

That's how I became Miss Hurst. Sometimes it's been a rough road; women weren't allowed in the pits at the races back then. All the Daytona 500's and Indy 500's, all the U. S. Nationals, and all the millions of miles of travel have taken their toll. Sometimes I have neglected my health because I can't stand not showing up at a racetrack. But I still show up and I always will.

The most precious part of being Miss Hurst has been making millions of friends and I love every one of you.

Love ya,Linda Vaughn



Jack "Doc" Watson

HAND-WRITTEN LETTER FROM DOC WATSON, TRANSCRIBED AND PUBLISHED IN THE THUNDER & LIGHTNING FEBRUARY, 1988:

Thank you for your invitation to share the "originals" of the Hurst/Olds with the Hurst/Olds Club members.

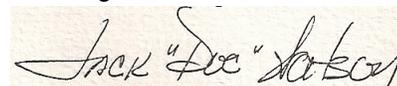
In 1968 I was president of Hurst Performance Research and Director of the Parent Corporation. All advance planning, proposals and decisions regarding the direction of the company went through my office.

Hurst had an ongoing relationship with Oldsmobile and several other automakers. This relationship provided us with a variety of cars to "experiment" with. Early in the year we took one of the engineering 442's and built the proposal car and submitted it to Oldsmobile for approval.

John Beltz, Bob Stemple, and Ted Louckes at Olds were instrumental in approving the car. They were interested in getting more involved in the performance market. They approached John Demmer to provide a facility for the transformation.

I have recently re-affiliated with the Hurst Company and would like to assure your members that they can look for some mighty "outrageously exciting" projects in the future.

Best regards,



I hope you enjoyed this reprint of the **HURSTORY**, as told by George, Linda and Doc. They have made a tremendous impact on our lives. We are all celebrating the 50th anniversary of Hurst Performance every time we grab the shifter in our Hurst/Olds. Hopefully you will be able to attend Indy and listen to..... the rest of the story.