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Legendary hydroplane owner Ole Bardahl inducted into Motorsports Hall of Fame

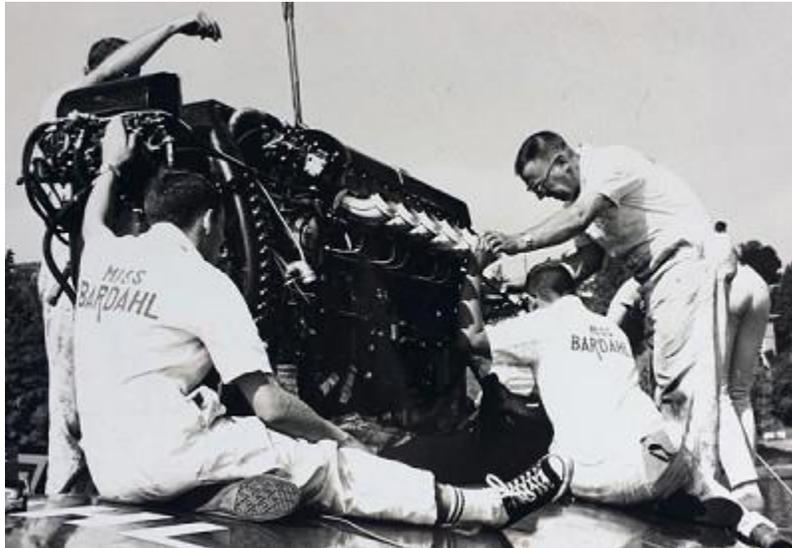
Rusty Wallace, Arie Luyendyk join 2014 class

[Courier Sports Staff](#)

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Ole Bardahl, one of the most successful owners in Unlimited hydroplane history, was inducted into the Motorsports Hall of Fame in Detroit on Wednesday.

Bardahl, who died in 1989 at the age of 87, joined six others in being inducted into the prestigious institution, headlined by NASCAR great Rusty Wallace.



HALL OF FAMER: Former Unlimited hydroplane owner Ole Bardahl was inducted into the Motorsports Hall of Fame in Detroit on Wednesday. Ron Musson, himself a Hall-of-Famer, steers the Miss Bardahl to victory in the 1964 APBA Gold Cup in Detroit (below). Ole Bardahl (above, in glasses) helps his team change an engine. Bardahl's teams won a then-record 27 races between 1958 and 1968 and his company's oil additives are still a staple in all motorsports today. (Courier file photos)

Bardahl immigrated from Norway in 1922 and moved to Seattle where he found work as a building contractor. In 1939 he purchased a small chemical company which eventually became Bardahl Manufacturing, one of the top producers of oil additives in the world.

After hydroplane racing boomed in the Seattle area in the early 1950s, Bardahl jumped on board and founded his own team which became the predominate power in the sport. Between 1958 and 1968, the Miss Bardahl won 27 races, six National High Points Championships and five APBA Gold Cups. Some of the sport's best drivers, including Ron Musson, Mira Slovak and Billy Schumacher, drove for Bardahl.

Musson's death at Washington, D.C. in 1966 shook Bardahl. After initially saying he was done, Bardahl returned to the sport and won national championships in 1967 and 1968 before calling it quits for good. His 27 wins were the most sport's history at the time and still stands fourth behind Bernie Little (134), Bill Muncey (29) and Erick Ellstrom (28).

Bardahl is the 11th Unlimited hydroplane driver or owner to be honored by the Motorsports Hall of Fame. The other 10 are: Bill Cantrell (1992), Dean Chenoweth (1991), Tom D'Eath (2000), Danny Foster (2005),

Chip Hanauer (1995), Ted Jones (2003), Bernie Little (1994), Bill Muncey (1989), Ron Musson (1993) and Mira Slovak (2001).

Legendary hydroplane radio personality Jim Hendrick introduced Bardahl at the ceremony.



Rusty Wallace finished his career with 55 wins - 37 with owner Roger Penske - and was inducted into the NASCAR Hall of Fame in 2013. Five of those victories came at Michigan International Speedway, once owned by Penske.

"I think my years in NASCAR were some of the best years NASCAR ever had," Wallace said. "Places were mobbed out and sold out and I was winning a lot of races. People say, 'You drove at a time when NASCAR was at its peak.'"

Wallace made his debut on the top circuit in 1980 in a Penske-owned car and joined the series full-time in 1984. His first victories came in 1986 with Raymond Beadle's Blue Max Racing team and he won the 1989 Sprint Cup championship after holding off Dale Earnhardt.

Wallace moved to Penske's team in 1991 and ran the final 15 years of his career for the car owner, who presented him for induction Wednesday.

"He's been an incredible mentor," Wallace said. "I never had any car dealerships and I ran it by him for some advice and now I have seven of them."

Arie Luyendyk, who began racing on the IndyCar circuit in 1985 and won the Indianapolis 500 in 1990 and '97, also was inducted. The Dutch-born driver's winning average speed of 187.433 in his first Indy victory - at a time when Penske entries dominated at Indy - stood as a race record until 2013.

Drag racer and car owner Raymond Beadle had a heart attack last month in Texas. His son, Ryan, accepted the honor on his behalf.

The remaining members of the class - IMSA founder John Bishop; three-time American Motorcyclist Association grand national champion Ricky Graham; and NASCAR pioneer Marshall Teague - are dead.

- Information for this story was also gathered by The Associated Press