

Lyn St James seals spot in motorsports history

Seven-time Indy 500 racer Lyn St James set 21 national and international speed records during her career as a professional race car driver and is one of nine women who qualified for the Indianapolis 500.

Talladega has been known as an icon for record-setting speed since it opened in 1969 and became the stage for not one, but two speed records set by Lyn St James.

In 1985, Lyn St James became the first woman to break the 200 mph barrier on an oval, at Talladega Motor Speedway, when she drove a Ford Mustang Probe GT Prototype race car to an average speed of 204.223 mph. In October 1988, Lyn returned to Talladega and set a women's closed-course world record of 212.577 mph driving a Ford Thunderbird built by Bill Elliott Racing.

Her speed records were celebrated during the October 13-14, 2018 NASCAR Monster Energy Cup Race and Camping World Truck Series weekend, where her record-setting Thunderbird was showcased in a Ford consumer display.

"I think those laps at Talladega, first in the Ford Probe and then in the Ford Thunderbird, helped me to learn and like high-speed ovals. I have so much to be thankful for and grateful for the opportunities,"



said St James. "The Thunderbird speed record effort was an ambitious one with multiple agendas. Ford had the car built, Goodyear provided the tires, and with the

expertise of Bill Elliott Racing, those speed records were set. The irony of this whole story is that my goal of convincing Ford that I could race stock cars didn't happen."



Lyn St James later went on to race in the Indianapolis 500 seven times and became the first woman to win the Indianapolis 500 Rookie of the Year award in 1992. In 1995 during Indy 500 qualifying, she established a world record for women



on closed-course, reaching 225.722 mph.

Named one of the "Top 100 Female Athletes of the Century" by *Sports Illustrated*, St James raced in 15 Indy car races in her career. She is an accomplished road racer and has earned numerous laurels at the wheel of a variety of race cars.

She is a two-time competitor in the 24 Hours of Le Mans (1989 and '91).

She raced in 62 IMSA GT events, amassing a record of six wins, 17 top-five and 37 top-ten finishes.

Her 1985 GT victory at Watkins Glen remains the only time a woman has scored a win in that series driving solo.

Lyn raced in the 12 Hours of Sebring nine times, winning the GTO class in 1990, and was a two-time winner in the GTO Class at the 24 Hours of Daytona.

She raced in 53 SCCA Trans Am races with seven top-five finishes.

She is a member of the Florida Sports Hall of Fame and the SCCA Hall of Fame and is the author of three books.

St James founded the "Women in the Winner's Circle Foundation," which recently combined resources with the Women's Sports Foundation to establish the Podium Project Scholarship, which she leads.

Lyn is busy as a keynote speaker, is active on numerous Boards, and is an Ambassador for the RPM Foundation. She enjoys Vintage Racing, when she finds the time.

Find out more about Lyn's career and the foundations she supports online at www.lynstjames.com. ■

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