

RIP, BOB BONDURANT

Bob Bondurant's story is well known all around the world. His list of accomplishments is filled with victories, punctuated by many an exciting tale. Bob raced Corvettes in the mid-1950s, winning the West Coast SCCA B Production National Championship in 1959 with a remarkable 18 out of 20 wins. During SCCA competition from 1960 to 1963, he won 30 of its 32 races. During the 1965 FIA World Championship season, Bondurant won seven of his 10 races to score the win for Shelby American over previously dominant Ferrari. His is still the only American team to do ever so. After capturing the title, Ferrari invited Bondurant to be one of their Formula 1 drivers. Bob also served as a stunt driver for the 1966 film *Grand Prix*.

Bondurant's racing career ended in 1967 after a steering arm snapped at the Watkins Glen track. While in the hospital, he sketched his vision for a racing school and began building that dream after he recovered. He created the only purpose-built

facility of its kind in the world, where he and his team trained nearly 500,000 people. Professional racers, executives, law enforcement officers, military specialists, performance enthusiasts and teen drivers have learned to be safer and more proficient on the track, street and highway.

And he made countless friends along the way.

In a prior life, your publisher was on the organizing committee for, and did the marketing and advertising for, the Steamboat Vintage Auto Race & Concours d'Élegance, in Steamboat Springs, Colorado. We met Bob when Ford was title sponsor, and they invited him to participate as a VIP racer. We became fast friends, as Bob did with all he met.

Bob has influenced the course of many people's lives, and we have our own story.

He invited us out to Sears Point Raceway (now Sonoma Raceway), in Northern California, the prior location of his Bob Bondurant School of High

Performance Driving. We of course took him up on that and flew out. Our visit included many highlights, including our first right-seat hot laps with a world champion, and memorable they were!

Bob told us then that he was planning to move the whole Bondurant School operation to Phoenix. He told us that we should move there, too, so we could work together all the time.

A few years later, we did pack up and make the move. Thus, with a few lane changes along the way, Bob Bondurant led directly to the magazine you hold in your hands today.

The Bob Bondurant School of High Performance Driving was sold last year, with the existing facility and its programs and gear transformed into the Radford Racing School. Radford, however, did not keep the Bondurant name as part of the sale. The Bondurant family and team have stated, including at Bob's comprehensive and well-attended funeral, that the Bondurant School will return, better than ever. Stay tuned. ■

