



Automotive Industry Veteran to Teach at ISU

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TERRE HAUTE, Ind. - An automotive industry veteran and motorsports enthusiast has joined the faculty of Indiana State University, further fueling the University's motorsports program.

Charlie Henry, currently president of Challenger Consulting in Farmington Hills, Mich., will teach "A Survey of Motorsports" and

"The Automotive Industry: the First 100 Years." The courses are part of the electronics, computer and mechanical engineering department and the university's motorsports management minor.

"I grew up in a family whose antique car interest was, to put it mildly, intense," Henry said. "My father was an authority on early cars and wrote several books about them. As the curator of transportation exhibits at the Henry Ford Museum, he was constantly giving lectures, writing articles and attending car meets. A lot of his interests and knowledge rubbed off on me."

Henry discovered his own niche in motorsports. "The muscle cars of the mid-1960s seduced me and I've been married to motorsports ever since," he said.

Henry first learned about Indiana State at last year's Specialty Equipment Market Association (SEMA) and Performance Racing Industry (PRI) trade shows, learning about the motorsports program and meeting the students involved with Team Sycamore Racing.

"I was very impressed with Indiana State's efforts and how professional and knowledgeable the students were at such high-profile events," he said. From that impression, Henry's relationship with Indiana State developed.

"We are very pleased to have Charlie on board," said Randy Peters, assistant professor of automotive technology management program and motorsports coordinator for College of Technology. "His unique perspectives on auto history and motorsports will enrich our program and stimulate our students' interest in motorsports."

In addition to teaching, Henry will still operate Challenger Consulting, providing event organizing, program facilitation and technical, promotional and Website writing.

Henry sees this as a way to share his experience and love of motorsports with those who will shape the industry's future. "This is a great opportunity to relate my experiences to a new generation," he said. The expertise demanded by the motorsports industry is grown in the classroom, nurtured by racing experience."

It was that mix of classroom and real-world experience that drew him to Indiana State.

"Indiana State is doing exactly what the industry needs," Henry said. "They are giving students a solid knowledge base and allowing them to apply that knowledge and theory in racing situations through Team Sycamore Racing."

Henry has deep roots in the automotive industry.

While in college, he worked for Ford Motor Co. as a laboratory/research technician. After graduating from Western Michigan University, he taught auto mechanics at John Glenn High School and Wayne County High School before making the leap back into the business world. His greatest success was with DaimlerChrysler's Mopar Parts Division, where he worked in the performance parts and motorports groups.

While at Mopar, he coordinated engineering, supplier and marketing activities, primarily with the Viper, PT Cruiser, Prowler and Neon product lines. He was also in charge of special events, which included trade shows, sponsorships associated with two National Hot Rod Association Races as well as an air aerobatics program.

Located near one of the meccas for United States auto racing, Indiana State prepares students for careers in all aspects of racing through its motorsports management minor.

Developed with the assistance of ISU alumni and professionals currently working in this ever-changing field, three ISU colleges (business, nursing, health and human services, and technology) collaborated to deliver the multidisciplinary 21-hour minor. Central to the minor, which debuted in April 2006, is Indiana State's four-year automotive technology management program, which provides the theory, laboratory, and practical experiences needed for careers in automotive and related industries. Rounding out their motorsports studies are courses in insurance and risk management, finance, management and sports marketing.

Students also receive hands-on experience in motorsports through participation in Team Sycamore Racing, a student-run racing team. Team Sycamore allows students to take what they learn in the classroom and put it to use on the racetrack.

Team Sycamore Racing began in 2007 at Indiana State. Students, together with guidance from faculty members, devised and implemented a plan to operate a drag racing business to compete in the NHRA Super Comp Division 3 Lucas Oil Series. Students are active in all areas of the team including engineering components, acquiring sponsorships, creating graphics, event planning, marketing and driving. In their first year, the team picked up two Wallys in their first National event appearance, the Summit Nationals in Norwalk, Ohio -- one for Best Appearing Crew and the other for Best Engineered Car. These two awards are rarely given to the same team at the same time. According to the NHRA, the last time it happened was at the race in Phoenix, 1992. They also qualified for the US Mac Tools Nationals, making it to the second round of eliminations.

Indiana State's motorsports management minor, as well as membership in Team Sycamore Racing, is open to all students, regardless of major.

Source: Indiana State University