

Calvin "Mousey" Kempster

A good friend and fellow racecar driver, Calvin E. Kempster was born and raised in Mount Sinai, Long Island. As a young boy, Calvin always had a love for bulldozers and heavy equipment. He also liked auto racing and at a very young age, he started driving stock cars at Islip Stadium around 1948. To fund his hobby he was employed as a heavy equipment operator most of his life.

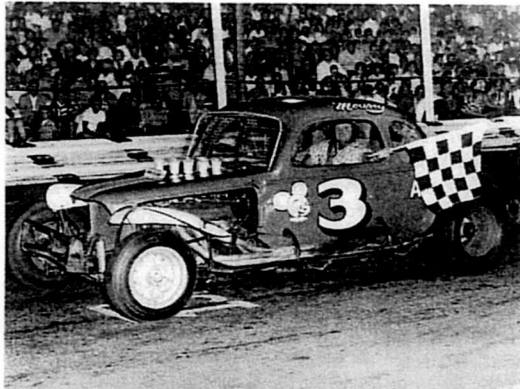
When Calvin was very young, for some unknown reason, he was given the nickname "Mousey" by his sister and the name stuck with him all through his career. One of the first tracks "Mousey" raced at was the Kingsbridge Armory, an indoor, fifth of a mile concrete track in the Bronx. Mousey also liked to race on dirt tracks, so when Riverhead Raceway opened up with a dirt track, Mousey was there. Mousey used to say that racing on dirt took much more skill. In the early fifties, Mousey headed south to Florida where he met and became a good friend with the legendary Alabama Gang, which consisted of Bobby and Donnie Allison and "Red" Farmer. Mousey also raced with top NASCAR drivers Ned Jarrett, father of current NASCAR Nextel Cup driver and champion, Dale Jarrett, and he raced with the famous Curtis Turner.



"Cromwell Helmet" Mousey Kempster, early in his career at Riverhead Raceway

He was one of the first drivers on Long Island to race with what was known as a cut-down coupe. Later that type of car took on the nickname of the "Bug." Mousey also tried a few tricks as they were called in the trade. One of his ideas

was to install a plexi-glass window in the fire wall on the right side of the car so he could keep an eye on the tire wear of the right front wheel. Another idea he tried, but was not very safe, was to build a lightweight roll cage using aluminum tubing instead of steel. He got caught with that idea when an inspector at the old Bridge Speedway in New



Calvin (Mousey) Kempster, Islip Speedway

Jersey during an inspection tapped his wedding ring on the tubing and it had an unfamiliar ring to it.

On a better note, while in Florida, Mousey met a young lady named Dorothy whom he later married and together, they raised a son named Donovan. After returning from Florida, Mousey continued racing at Islip Speedway, Riverhead Raceway and he also won the very first race ever held at the half-mile Westhampton Speedway. One night at a local speedway, Mousey secured a ride for his wife "Dot" in a 1937 Ford sedan. During the race she spun the car in the air and landed on a fence. Needless to say "Dot" never again raced.

One of the cars Mousey raced was known as the "10 Cents, The Juke Box Special," a 1932 Ford Coupe powered with a 312-cubic inch Thunderbird engine. But his favorite car was his 1935



This car has been located in Virginia and has been completely restored back to its original racing condition

Chevrolet sedan painted bright red, #3K, with a picture of a mouse head smoking a cigar on both sides of the car.

Mousey Kempster, during his thirty years as a driver not only built cars for himself, but for other drivers, too. In fact, I bought a Kempster Koupe which carried #X50 and I raced it with much success at Islip Speedway. Mousey was also a dealer for Frankland Quick Change Rear-ends that were used in most racecars. When you pulled up in front of Mousey's house you would see his mailbox mounted on top of a Quick Change Rear-end.



Mousey won many races during his career at many different tracks. He was a member of NASCAR for many years and also a member of the All-Star Racing League, a traveling auto racing show in the Northeast made up of the top drivers from all the tracks.

Upon entering Mousey's home in Middle Island where he lived in later years with his wife Dorothy and son Donnie, who also was a NASCAR racecar driver, you would see many mouse-related items such as a cereal box on a counter top that read "Mice Krispies" and many Mickey Mouse souvenirs from his many racing fans such as ceramic and porcelain statues and even a mouse phone. Mousey and Dorothy moved to Phoenix, Arizona, where he passed away in 1997. Mousey Kempster memorabilia, such as his Quick Change Rear-end mailbox, helmet, uniform, jackets, scrapbook and photos can be seen at museum. ●

Marty Himes is the owner-curator of the nationally recognized Himes Museum of Motor Racing Nostalgia in Bay Shore

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