



DON SIEWERT
Calgary, Alberta

2009 Inductee



This year's inductee, **DON SIEWERT**, truly epitomizes the adage "Follow your dreams".

Not only has this credo guided his life, but he has helped a great many other people follow their dreams as well. He has used his expertise and experience in the automotive world and hot rodding to encourage, educate and influence generations both in his home town of Calgary Alberta and beyond the borders of Canada.

His reputation and influence is known and respected by hot rodders and racers throughout the automotive world.

The **Don Siewert** story is a long one and goes back to 1935 in the small farming community of Morrin, Alberta.

Life on the family farm was not a part of don's dream.

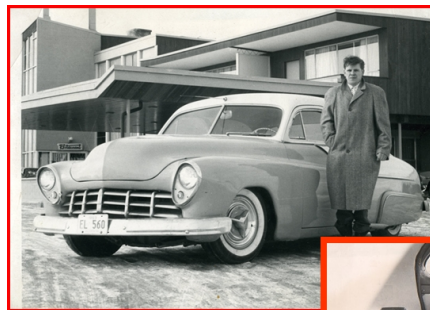
After graduation from high school he enrolled in what was then called the 'farm construction program' which resulted in Don obtaining his journeyman ticket as a licensed mechanic.

In his early 20's, he moved to Calgary and immediately found work at the Currie Barracks using his skill and knowledge repairing all types of vehicles and heavy equipment.

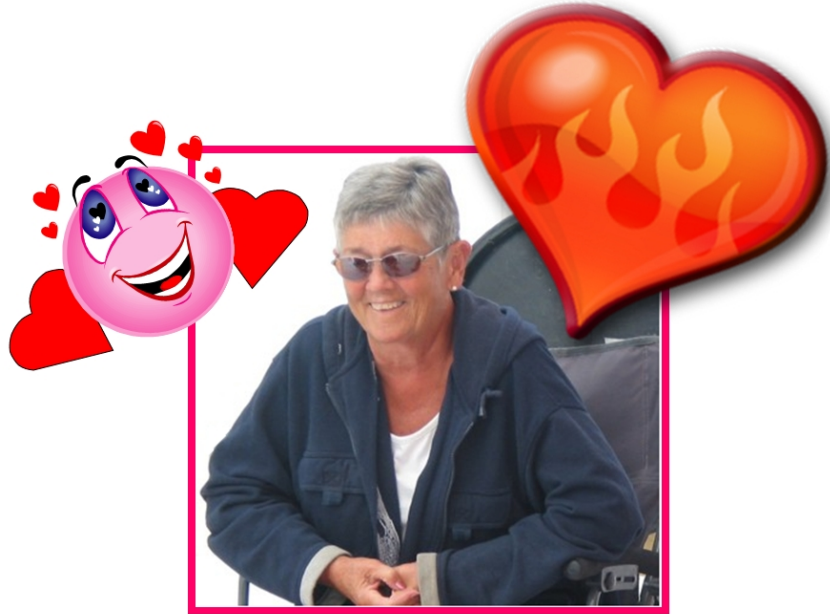
At this time he started playing with cars, a '33Cchev coupe was quickly followed by a '35 Ford pick-up. That truck was also his indoctrination into the world of hot rodding as he swapped the stock v-8 60 for a more powerful 255 cubic inch Mercury flathead.

Always looking to improve and to do more, he moved from mechanical repairs to autobody work and eventually received his license in that field as well.

During this time Don dabbled in drag racing. But in 1957 he went the low and slow route showed of his body work skills and built a full custom Mercury. The car turned heads everywhere he cruised. He drove it year round, and we all know what Calgary winters can be like!



Don's head was turned too when he met Marilyn, they married in 1960.



Several of the hot rod magazines of the day covered sports cars and they caught Don's imagination so he switched from his 'lead sled' Merc to a brand new 1960 MGA coupe.



The little sports car didn't last too long as son Mike came along in 1961, followed by Robert and Barbara.

Throughout the 60's don became involved in restoring cars and trucks. His main car was a 1919 Ford Model T runabout, and he was a member of the Alberta pioneer auto club for 10 years and served a term as president as well as tour chairman.



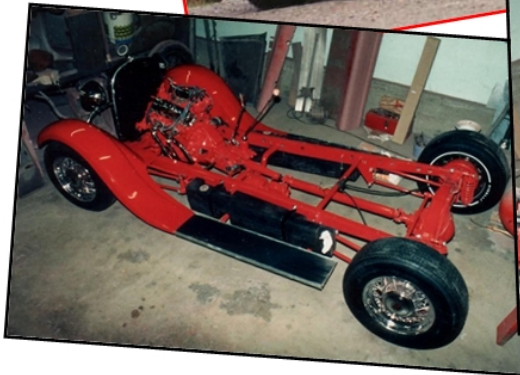
During those years he rescued a couple of project cars, a 1930 Ford roadster and a 1928 AR Phaeton. Both of these cars were put into storage as Don was focused on career, home life and raising a family.

His car hobby was limited to family oriented vehicles that he rebuilt in his back yard garage for his own use or for friends in the ever expanding car community.

In the 80's Don got immersed in street rodding. Son Mike had just returned from California with the urge to build and drive something 'fun' like a mini – truck or hot VW.

At Don's suggestion that 'fun' vehicle just had to be a street rod. So together they found a basket case '28 Ford roadster and went to work building Mike's dream.

Over the next 4 years, father and son built the car from the ground up. Don likes to have his signature on the cars in the parts that he designs and builds. He has a passion for problem solving and handcrafting that adds to the looks, drivability and performance.



Shortly after the roadster was completed son Mike relocated to Mississauga, Ontario. When Don and Marilyn visited in 1987 they borrowed the street rod for a trip to Ottawa. That drive hooked Don on building and driving his own street rod.

Once back in calgary, he pulled the '30 ford roadster out of 20 years of storage and went to work on the next dream.



10 years later he hit the streets in his own street rod.



Now this may seem like a long build but during that time he also rebuilt about a dozen early Mustangs, did bodywork on the side to fund his projects and at the same time took care of a busy family life.

The roadster is driven. It is equipped with a bored and stroked Ford flattie, rolls on 16" wire wheels and sports a home designed and cast Duval style windshield. This is a real neat retro ride!

The summer of 1998 saw Don, driving the topless roadster, son Mike in his roadster and a small group of fellow members of the Foothills Street Rod Association making the drive to Bonneville.



Once on the salt, Don became obsessed with the atmosphere, the back yard engineering and the ingenuity of the builders. As the group roamed the pits over the next few days, Don could most often be heard saying, 'we can do this, we can do this.'

So began another dream, to race at Bonneville, the fastest place on earth.

Back in Calgary, Don got a 1928 ford roadster pick-up and started right in on the project. In 1999 noted engine builder, KEN GILMOUR, came on board and serious progress was made.



The big break however came in 2001 when Don took Ted Allan to the salt. Between the experience of Bonneville and Don's enthusiasm, Ted caught 'salt fever'.

Allan, a skilled race car fabricator and proprietor of 'Allan Rod And Custom' became a partner. A host of others got on board to lend their expertise, time and money to the shared dream. These included Gary Savage, Dave Ness, John Radermacher, Bryan Long and others along with several family members.



The combined efforts of this group culminated in 2002 when the roadster pick-up called 'North of 49' hit the salt at Bonneville speed weeks. No doubt, Don was the catalyst of the project, the prime promoter and driving force of the group.







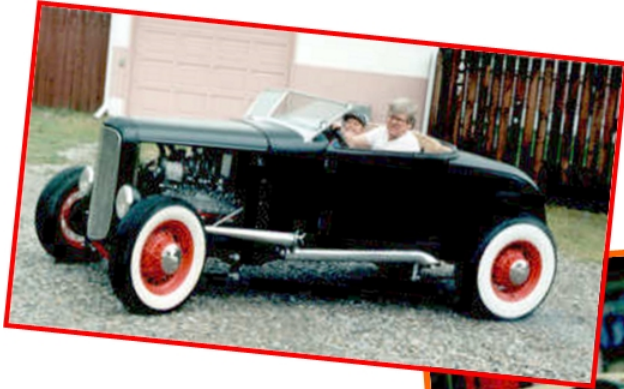
At Bonneville they proudly fly the Canadian flag and welcome everyone to their pit to experience the salt. “North of 49” is well known group and truly respected for their hospitality, the atmosphere they create and the friendships they foster.

Don shares owner/driver privileges with Ted Allan and they are surrounded by a large crew who have all been infected with don’s enthusiasm.

While ted focuses on setting a B/STR (B Street Roadster) record with the truck, Don is focused on having fun and providing a racing experience for the crew members, fellow street rodders and his high school students.

With his retirement in 2000, Don became an auto shop teaching assistant, first in autobody and then in auto mechanics. He continues in this role today, encouraging, educating and influencing the next generation of street rodders.

Incidentally, both of mike’s children, Don’s grandchildren, Robert and Annette, attended Central Memorial High School in Calgary where Don works. They thought that was pretty neat having their street rodding grandfather working at their school. particularly on those days that he drove one of the roadsters.



In 2007 don, at the age of 72, ran the truck to its best ever speed of 210 mph. The high from that pass kept his spirits up as the following month he began the fight for his life against Non Hodgkins Lymphoma. Later that year Don returned to work with his kids at the high school. Seven rounds of chemotherapy had put his cancer into remission.

During his battle with the disease, Don kept at his automotive interests, continuing to plan North of 49's future and working on his latest street rod project, a hemi powered, track nosed, T roadster pick-up. With luck the T has a good chance of seeing the streets next summer.

The past two seasons have not been kind to north of 49 racing endeavors.

In 2008, one week before Speedweek, they took the crankshaft out of their new motor while dyno testing in Calgary. as a result there was no racing that year.

Earlier this year Mike accompanied the famous Calgary Stampede Show Band on a tour of Europe. Don and Marilyn joined them for a well deserved vacation. That meant they would not be able to attend Bonneville. This gave Ted Allan full access to the race car for Speedweek. with a fresh engine in place. He was able to complete two runs before destroying another engine.

As a result don's 210.5 mph exit speed he set in 2007 is still the fastest recorded speed for the team.

Don Siewert has a lot of support in all his endeavors through countless friends and a tremendous family lead by his wife Marilyn, sons Mike and Rob, their wives Susan and Loreli, grand children Rob, Annette, Gina, Kaley and Morgan - and they're all here tonight.

Around Calgary, Don is affectionately known by his nickname - F.O.F.I.T. F.O.F.I.T. is an acronym for "*FASTEST OLD FART IN TOWN*" and it's actually the licence plate on his daily driver!.

The quest to go faster and quicker truly bridges the generation gap. Don is shown along with Miss Ashley Bart who may be the fastest young girl in Canada as she pilots her top alcohol dragster to over 263 mph in 5.3 seconds. The need for speed and to constantly improve, overcomes the boundaries of background, gender and age.

Don Siewert, "Fastest Old Fart in Town", Calgary
210.5 mph, B/STR, Bonneville, 2007



Ashley Bart, Calgary
Top Alcohol Dragster
5.391 - 263.41 mph, Seattle,
Washington, 2009

Please join me in welcoming **MR. DON SIEWERT** into the Canadian Street Rodding Hall of Fame. It is a much deserved honour.

Congratulations Don. Please come forward and receive the award from our chairman Jim Cowan.



Don Siewert
Canadian Street Rodding Hall of Fame
2009

