

WALT MORDENTI -

Thank You for all Your Effort and

Walt's (left below)
1934 Terraplane



Walt was also involved with auto racing. He earned a reputation in the 30s, 40s, and 50s as a master with Hudson blocks, and built them into high performance engines for tracks throughout New England, PA, NJ, and NY. In February 1956, he set the fastest time in Daytona Beach in a Ford V8-60 midget (118.421 mph). In 1958, he won the Ford championship with ARDC.

Walter was born on July 26, 1921 in MA. His family moved to Waterbury, CT where his father Ettore was an automotive mechanic at the Moody-Wilcox Hudson Motor Car Company. The service manager, Ray Hayden, fixed cars at night in his backyard; in 1934, he offered 13-year-old Walt an opportunity to work with him after school. In 1937, Walt quit school and began working fulltime at Moody's to help support his family.

Walt worked at Moody's until he was drafted into the Army Air Forces in 1942. He was stationed in England and served in the 8th Airforce Air Corps. Walt was a Master Mechanic and Aircraft Carburetion and Ignition Expert. When Walt was discharged from the Army, he returned home and married Margaret on September 15, 1945. They had 3 children: Stephen, Joyce, and Margaret, who died at 3 months.

Walt had many automotive roles that included specialization with Hudsons. He opened his first gas station in Waterbury, CT., servicing all cars and trucks, but he was always a Hudson-man at heart. He built a 4-stall repair garage with a lift and a pit in Waterbury, Mordenti's Auto Sales and General Repairing, where he repaired Hudsons, AMC, and Brand-X.

He sold the midget in 1964 to send his son to college, but in 1968 he was back into racing—only this time behind the wheel! He was owner, mechanic, pit crew, and driver, and he raced every Saturday night on the 1/2-mile dirt track in Lebanon Valley, NY. In 1969, he was Rookie of the year; in 1970, he was recognized as the most improved driver. In 1978, he retired from racing and moved to Winter Haven, FL, but he didn't retire from automotive repairs! He worked for Lee Ragatz, Jr. at his dealership until 1994, when he and Margaret moved to San Francisco to live near Joyce.

Walt and Margaret were dedicated Hudson folks. In 1987, Joyce bought a '53 Hornet Sedan for Walt to restore as a pre-retirement project. When he finished her car, he drove it from San Francisco to the Hudson National in Waterbury, CT via Florida!



Fearing that her father might not return her car, Joyce bought Walt a '53 Hornet Coupe from Bill Albright to keep him occupied. Walt's Masterpiece, his 1953 Hornet Coupe, needed everything. Walt rebuilt everything: he added A/C, power steering (rack and pinion, custom brackets...no cutting the frame which Walt calls "power steering by Walt"), 2.73 ring and pinion in the stock Dana 44, and numerous other goodies to

provide for better cooling, oil filtering, enhanced fuel delivery, hotter reliable spark with AMC distributor and electronic ignition, a heavy duty Ford 12v starter especially machined to fit the Hudson bell housing, massive sway bar, cruise control, enhanced gauges and tachometer, working clock, under front end