

PHOTO TRIVIA ANSWER from the Spring, 2022 Issue



Photo by J. Lauren

Here's a photo of a winner, on and off the track. This track was NJ's Wall Stadium on October 19, 1991. Do you know who the winner in this photo was and the division in which he won many more races than this?

This driver is the late Ray Gastelu, photographed in Wall Stadium's Victory Lane on October 19, 1991 after a Modern Stock division win.

Gastelu was highly regarded as one of the finest - not only at Wall, but also throughout the Northeast, and not only for his on-track achievements.

Gastelu earned six driver titles at Wall and 49 victories in its former Modern/Pro Stock division - one shy of the all-time track record. He also raced on the asphalt at New Egypt Speedway, winning championships in 1981 and 1985.

Those accomplishments alone would have earned Ray the honor of being called a Grand Champion, which he most certainly was. Sadly, in 2001 he was stricken by a heart attack at Wall Stadium in a race car after pre-race warmups.

He was inducted into the Garden State Vintage Stock Car Club Hall of Fame in 2011.

Ray Gastelu was a champion and Hall of Famer in another way: he was always the first to help a fellow racer and give information and a veteran's guidance to a new driver and team. Among those he mentored in the early 1990s was young driver Chas Okerson, who went on to become a six-time Pro Stock champion before taking four titles in the Modified division. He was well-known and very popular at Wall Stadium, where his trailer was always a hotbed of activity, even hours after the races concluded. He was every racer's friend and participated in charity events and autograph signings.

While Ray willingly shared his hard-earned knowledge with racers, he placed his greatest emphasis on his love for his wife Debbie, his family and friends - friends that were like family.

Ray Gastelu was dedicated to making the world - that of his racing life and for everyone he came in contact with - a much better place.