

For Immediate Release

INAUGURAL NASCAR HALL OF FAME CLASS ANNOUNCED

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (Oct. 14, 2009) – The National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing (NASCAR) announced the inaugural class of the NASCAR Hall of Fame today that includes: Dale Earnhardt, Bill France Sr., Bill France Jr., Junior Johnson and Richard Petty.

The NASCAR Hall of Fame Voting Panel, consisting of members of the Nominating Committee along with 29 others representing NASCAR, the NASCAR Hall of Fame, major race track ownership groups, retired drivers, owners and crew chiefs along with motorsports media representatives, met in a closed session in Charlotte, N.C. to vote on the induction class of 2010.

The class was determined by the 51 votes cast by the panel and the nationwide fan vote conducted through NASCAR.COM. The accounting firm of Ernst & Young presided over the tabulation of the votes.

The Class of 2010 will be officially inducted in a ceremony on May 23, 2010 at the NASCAR Hall of Fame in Charlotte.

The results of the voting for the final five chosen in this inaugural class proved competitive. Also receiving votes were David Pearson, Cale Yarborough and Bobby Allison.

As part of the inclusive voting process, more than 670,000 NASCAR fans submitted votes online at NASCAR.COM as part of the fan voting process. This remarkable fan feedback once again demonstrates fans' passion and knowledge of the sport and its heritage. The fans voted Petty, Earnhardt, Bill France Sr., Cale Yarborough and Bobby Allison as their top five.

The nominees included many of the sport's legendary names:

Bobby Allison, Buck Baker, Red Byron, Richard Childress, Dale Earnhardt, Richie Evans, Tim Flock, Bill France Jr., Bill France Sr., Rick Hendrick, Ned Jarrett, Junior Johnson, Bud Moore, Raymond Parks, Benny Parsons, David Pearson, Lee Petty, Richard Petty, Fireball Roberts, Herb Thomas, Curtis Turner, Darrell Waltrip, Joe Weatherly, Glen Wood and Cale Yarborough.

The NASCAR Hall of Fame broke ground in Charlotte on Jan. 25, 2007 and will open May 11, 2010. The facility honors the history and heritage of NASCAR and the many who have contributed to the success of NASCAR.

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Highlighting the Class of 2010:

Dale Earnhardt

Earnhardt co-holds the record for most NASCAR Sprint Cup Series championships (seven) with Richard Petty. In only his second full season, 1980, Earnhardt nabbed his first championship. He won consecutive titles on three separate occasions (1986-87, '90-91 and '93-94). Earnhardt's 76 victories rank seventh all-time.

He is the all-time leader in race victories at Daytona International Speedway with 34, though the most prominent of them was a while in the making.

In 1998, Earnhardt won his most coveted race – the Daytona 500. The scene was a memorable one, forever etched in the minds of race fans. As Earnhardt's black No. 3 rolled down pit road, a Daytona 500 winner at last, every crew member from every team lined up to congratulate one of the greatest drivers in NASCAR history.

Bill France Sr.

Called "Big Bill," only partly because of his 6-foot-5 stature, France spearheaded NASCAR from its beginning and directed it to its present status as the world's largest stock-car racing organization. In 1936, he helped lay out the first beach/road course in Daytona Beach; in the first race on the course he finished fifth. Starting in 1938, he helped promote races on the sands of Daytona Beach. In 1947, France became the driving force behind the establishment of the National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing. NASCAR, it was called, resulting from a famous meeting at the Streamline Hotel on State Road A1A in Daytona Beach – a structure that stands to this day, as a racing landmark. "Big Bill" France passed away in June 1992. He left behind a lasting legacy.

Bill France Jr.

William Clifton France is remembered – and revered – as the man who followed his visionary father at NASCAR's helm, in the process becoming a visionary himself, as he guided NASCAR to unprecedented levels of popularity.

France became NASCAR's president in January 1972, replacing his father and becoming only the second president of the world's largest auto racing sanctioning body. His emergence coincided with the sport's emergence, and its eventual ascent to become America's No. 1 form of motorsports and the nation's second-most popular sport overall.

France, often referred to as "Bill Jr.," remained president until November 2000. At that time, France announced the formation of a NASCAR Board of Directors on which he served as chairman and CEO until October 2003 when he was replaced by his son, Brian Z. France. After that, he continued to serve the sport for the remainder of his life as NASCAR Vice Chairman.

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Junior Johnson

Robert Glenn “Junior” Johnson is unique in NASCAR history, with tremendous success both as a driver and a car owner.

Johnson won the second annual Daytona 500 in 1960 and in the process, became credited with the discovery of “drafting” on the massive superspeedways. He won 50 races in the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series then surprised many people by retiring from driving to become an owner. As an owner, Johnson never missed a beat; through the years, his drivers won 132 races. There also were six series championships produced with Cale Yarborough (1976-78) and Darrell Waltrip (1981-82, '85).

Named one of NASCAR’s “50 Greatest Drivers” in 1998, Johnson resides in Wilkesboro, N.C., and remains one of the sport’s most enduring – and endearing – personalities, at the age of 78.

Richard Petty

Known as “the King”, Richard Petty’s NASCAR Sprint Cup Series records are staggering: Most wins (200), most poles (123), tied for most championships (seven), most wins in a season (27), most Daytona 500 wins (seven), most consecutive wins (10) and most starts (1,185).

Petty’s success continued even after his retirement from driving in 1992. He would still hold the top spot in the family business – Petty Enterprises, and now, Richard Petty Motorsports. In all, Petty Enterprises totaled 268 victories before merging with Gillett Evernham Motorsports for the 2009 season to become Richard Petty Motorsports.

For more information, contact:

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