



Archives Celebrating BOWANI Racing

November 6, 2015

Starting Tuesday, the Camden Archives and Museum and the city of Camden will celebrate the unique and impressive accomplishments of a group of area residents who became known as BOWANI Inc.

Maynard Bond "Bondy" Long II of Camden put BOWANI Inc. together as a National Association for Stock Car Racing (NASCAR) team in 1963. The team, named for Long and his brothers Walter and Nicki, while only in existence for six years, enjoyed a meteoric rise to the top of the NASCAR circuit.

The role Camden played in the history of NASCAR is the subject of a unique exhibit opening Tuesday at the Camden Archives and Museum, Camden Archives and Museum Executive Director Katherine Richardson said. Richardson said BOWANI set up in Boykin.



Bondy Long (far left, holding cup) and his BOWANI team await their driver at the Darlington race track, circa 1965. Don Hunter/Smyle Media

“From that shop, Long, his drivers, and his crew began a speed-fueled race to the top of NASCAR’s Grand National circuit,” she said.

From 1963 to 1968, Long’s Camden-based team ran 208 races with 31 wins, 115 Top Fives and 27 Poles. Along the way, Long and driver Ned Jarrett won the 1965 Grand National Championship. Although Long left the NASCAR circuit in 1968, BOWANI cars, drivers and pit crews remain a part of NASCAR’s history, Richardson said.



*Ned Jarrett (second from left) and Bondy Long (far right) after winning the Southern 500 race in Darlington in 1965.
Provided by Camden Archives and Museum*

Tuesday’s opening includes some special activities and guests, including the original No. 11 Ford driven during the 1964 Grand National Circuit by Ned Jarrett cruising from Camden City Hall on Lyttleton Street to the archives and museum on Broad Street. Jarrett, who will drive the car, and fellow NASCAR Hall of Famers Bobby and Donnie Allison and Cale Yarborough are expected to attend opening day, Richardson said.

The exhibit will trace the history of BOWANI Racing through photographs, artifacts and the words of the people who worked long and hard to field the very best cars and teams in the country. Artifacts on loan from Bondy Long and Ned Jarrett will be on display, Richardson said.

“NASCAR’s history began on the narrow dirt roads in the South when local boys pitted themselves and their cars against the forces of the law -- running moonshine,” Richardson said.

Even after the repeal of Prohibition, she said, moonshine was popular in the South and the delivery drivers still had to outrun law enforcement.

"After a hard day's work, drivers would naturally pit their cars and themselves against each other on dirt tracks in small towns and big cities," Richardson said. "During the 1930s and 1940s, stock car racing became both popular and profitable."

By the late 1940s, Bill France Sr. and a group of racers, owners and promoters decided they needed to organize the sport with rules, a firm racing schedule, and a national championship, giving birth to NASCAR in 1948. Today, stock car racing is one of the most popular sports in the United States with tracks in 39 states and Canada. The drivers, owners, and crew chiefs are household names.

The Bondy Long NASCAR exhibit runs through the end of January 2016. Admission to the Camden Archives and Museum, 1314 Broad St. in Camden is free. For more information, call 425-6050.

(Information provided by the Camden Archives and Museum.)

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