

## PHOTO TRIVIA

from the Winter, 2022 issue

*Hmmm...this is a tough one for clues. Pretty much any hint will give it away. Okay, the only clue you can have is "Flemington Speedway".*



Photo by Ace Lane, Jr.

Yes, this is a photo taken in Flemington Speedway's Victory Lane. The happy driver is none other than Gloria Katona, who won on Flemington's asphalt on July 27, 1991. Also pictured here are (L-R): crewman Joe Gorski; dad Les Katona; Gloria; Street Stock, Sportsman and Modified driver Carmen Scarpati; and we believe David, Les' stepson.

But there's more to the story. Not only was Gloria adept at racing The Square on asphalt, she was skilled on dirt as well, as this photo from August 11 of the previous season proves:



Photo by Ace Lane, Jr.

Gloria began racing in the Rookie division at Flemington in 1978. She competed in Flemington's tough Sportsman division from the late 1980s into the 1990s. Not only was she one of few female racers at Flemington, she was one of few Sportsman drivers to win on dirt *and* asphalt surfaces. She never let her male competitors push her around and yet was well-respected in the pit area. She was always happy to greet fans, especially children who were thrilled to sit in her race car and ask for her autograph after the races. She also raced for several seasons at East Windsor (NJ) Speedway and qualified for the Nazareth (PA) National Motor Speedway Sportsman race.

"Not just a pretty face", Gloria is a Summa Cum Laude graduate from The College of New Jersey with a Bachelor of Science degree and the holder of a Masters Degree in Business Administration from Harvard University. She began her career working on Wall Street in 1984. Later, she was profiled by the late Harry Blaze in the cover story of *Stock Car Racing's* October, 1987 issue - "Racing Lady Stock Broker: From Wall Street to Dirt Tracks."

Gloria Katona Scarpati joined racers Serenity Sutherland and Jessica Zemken as a co-recipient of Gater Racing News' "Outstanding Woman in Racing" award during the 2009 Northeast Modified Hall of Fame ceremonies. Clearly, the lady's got skills.

Arguably, Gloria's biggest fan was her father, Les Katona. We don't have enough space here to cover Les' story. The abbreviated version: Les enjoyed 30+ years in dirt racing – not only as a competitor, but also through Trenton NJ's Lawrence Engineering, his auto racing fabrication and parts sales business. He was a well-liked and well-respected figure in New Jersey dirt racing. He was a 2011 inductee to the GSVSCC Hall of Fame. In 2020, he was presented with the "Tas Award" as one of the Flemington Speedway Historical Association's Most Influential Persons.

Sadly, Les Katona passed away just recently, on March 24, 2022, after succumbing to complications from three battles with Covid. Racing has lost another hero.

Hero status notwithstanding, he was a dad who was proud of his daughter Gloria, as you can see in these photos.



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