

As I began to put this tribute together, it's been just over 24 hours since I heard the news no one ever wants to hear; the news that a friend has passed away. In this case, the news was all the more shocking as it was J.R. Parsley that had passed away. J.R. was 46.

J.R. was the definition of a racer; hard-nosed, driven, had a passion for racing (especially open wheel sprint cars and midgets), competitive, devoted, and driven to do the best he could with whatever he had on a given race day. J.R. also had one of the best "racing wives" a racer could ask for in Tina. They were a perfect match for one another. J.R. was a life-long racer. J.R. raced quarter midgets as a young boy. J.R. was also a jockey posting a very impressive resume in horse racing. J.R. also competed in USAC midgets in his early adult life. Racing was in his blood.

There are numerous stories that can be shared about J.R., but there is one specific story I would like to share that will forever resonate with me, personally. The story revolves around J.R.'s dedication toward supporting/promoting quarter scale racing. While at MPR for an event a few years back, J.R. had an old tire that had seen better days. Somehow, he and Ruedi, my son, were interacting and J.R. asked Ruedi if he would like his old tire. Ruedi excitedly stated that he would like the tire. J.R. signed the tire "To Ruedi" and added "From J.R." and "#55". That tire still sits in the shop in our basement. Sharing the news of J.R.'s passing with Ruedi this evening was very challenging as Ruedi always enjoyed seeing J.R. (and Tina) when they were at MPR, or we were all together at a QSAC national level event. This made a lasting impression on both Ruedi and me.

One other aspect I think of when I think of J.R. is his level of commitment and dedication to WCM. J.R. flew and upheld the WCM banner more so than any other racer I know. Even during a period where WCM was not actively building a sprint car, J.R. never wavered in his commitment to running the old tube framed WCM. J.R. won an NCS event at Ingalls piloting his trusty tube framed WCM. I had sent him a message of congratulations after that win stating "Congrats on the NCS win! You are now, officially, the TUBE FRAME TERROR!!! (Like Jimmy the Newport Nightmare Owens)". J.R.'s humble response was simply "Thanks, brother". We did not always see eye-to-eye, but J.R. was always himself. I have a lot of respect for him for being that way. Rest in Peace, J.R.

I asked for people to share stories and images of J.R. for this tribute. The following are excerpts from those that reached out.

Scott Rance – "One story about JR that shows how big his heart was at MPR last year when Doug's wheelchair broke and he went around to all the racers and collected money for another one. JR could be an asshole sometimes but his heart was pure gold."

Matt Graves - "I'm in shock over JR's passing. I've known JR for years from racing slot cars with him. Unfortunately, I only got to race 1/4 for one season with him. You would be hard pressed to find a more competitive and committed racer than JR. He would eat, sleep, and breathe quarter scale. JR and Tina are longstanding members of IQSR. I will deeply miss his presence and our conversations. Last season after the last leg of the Tri-state series at Kil-kare, he called me on the phone and asks if he could run my

car at the last Ingalls point's race. He sold his Sportsman car at Kil-kare before he realized that he was sitting second in points with one race remaining. JR was already looking to get into sprint cars again. He knew that I had points all but locked up in Limited and if he TQ'D he would have a chance at winning the championship. Without hesitation...I told him "yes, run the wheels off it". He gave it a go, but unfortunately the car wasn't on TQ pace that day. I just thought I would share that little story with you. I thought it was funny that he sold his car without knowing that he was in contention for a track championship. R.I.P brother and Godspeed #55."

Tony Wachter – Tony shared with me some of J.R.'s impressive horse racing stats.

"James Parsley

BEST RACING CLASS ACHIEVED

Multiple Stakes Winning Jockey

CAREER STATISTICS

Starts 1,774

Firsts 154

Seconds 162

Thirds 177"

If not mistaken, these stats are over the course of a five year period from 1990-1994. If my math is correct, that is almost 30% podium finishes over that timeframe.

"Dad and I loved hearing him talk about his time as a jockey. We even have one of his hero cards."

Gregg Grahn – "Joe, I don't really have any particular story about J.R. As you know I'm at no shortage of friends to give me sh*t, but J.R. was the best at it. And I am going to definitely miss that!"

Tim Barth – "When he saw me buy a sprint car at Kil-Kare, J.R. came up to me and asked 'Does this mean we are running sprints the next Ingalls race?' He was super excited. I wish I would have gotten to know him more. After one of Matt Graves and I many battles, he would always come up to us and congratulate us. J.R. always was excited to see Matt and I put on a good show."

Todd Holloway - "My most memorable story about J.R. that I can repeat? Well that sure changes things.

It would have to be at an NCS race in Algona, Iowa in 2015. If you've not been there, it is a really nice facility in a park setting. The bathrooms are very nice, but a little bit away from the track, inside the park's clubhouse. Just happens that J.R. and I were on the same 'schedule'. I'm in the stall and J.R. is washing his hands at the sink. I hear the main door open and in walked someone. This person was a visitor to the park and a non-racer. Before J.R. could leave, I hear 'Todd, you ok?' I reply 'I think so. Why?' J.R. says 'Well you might notice a little blood, but that always happens the first time, it'll get better...' Out the door he goes. Damn, now I'm stuck, ready to leave, but thinking should I wait till this other person does. Finally coast is clear and I take off only to see J.R. waving at me from the trailer....Thanks J.R. for the memories."

Rest in Peace, #55; you are and will continue to be missed.