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Shawna Robinson

November 30, 1964 -
Nationality: American
Raced: 1984 – 2005

Background: Shawna Robinson grew up in Des Moines, Iowa with her parents, Lois and Richard “Lefty” Robinson and her four older siblings. She became involved in racing at an early age, competing for fun against her family. After graduating from high school she decided to spend a year tagging along with her father who had formed a truck-racing circuit that was traveling throughout the Midwest. Her interest in motor sports grew during this time and in 1984 she officially began her racing career in the Great American Truck Racing (GATR) Series. Robinson was successful, becoming the first woman to win a GATR major super speedway points race at the Milwaukee Mile Bobtail 100 and winning the Rookie of the Year honor for the series that year. She continued racing trucks throughout the 1980s, but by the spring of 1988 she advanced to stock cars. She made history that year when she won the AC Delco 100 NASCAR Dash Series race in Asheville, North Carolina. It was the first time a woman had ever won a major NASCAR Touring event. By 1991 she moved to the Grand National Division and began competing in Busch Series races. Qualifying for the Busch Light 300 race in Atlanta in 1994 with a track record lap speed, she became the first woman to win a pole position in a Grand National NASCAR event. In the race two days later, an incident with another driver led to damage to her vehicle and she was unable to complete the competition. Robinson retired from racing in 1995, eager to start a family. She gave birth to her son Tanner in 1996, and her daughter Samantha was born in 1997. In 1999 she returned to racing in the ARCA RE/MAX Series and by 2001 she was back into NASCAR. Getting sponsors has always been a challenge for her and Robinson has spent much of the last few years focusing on her children, though her love of racing continues.

Early Influences: Robinson has always been intrigued by motor sports. Her father, “Lefty” Robinson, was an amateur racer and a sponsor of diesel truck races and his love of the sport inspired her. As children, she and her siblings drove everything they could, including snowmobiles, mini-bikes, and motorcycles. “Lefty” taught them to set their sights high and encouraged them to pursue motor racing. As Robinson grew up, she began to admire drivers like A.J. Foyt, Steve Kinser, and Sammy Swindell and she looked up to Janet Guthrie as well. She became more involved in racing while traveling with her dad and his truck-racing circuit in the early 1980s. When he dared her to get behind the wheel of one of his 14,000 lb. diesel truck cabs she did and was instantly hooked. He helped teach her how to race them and Robinson’s career in motor sports continued to climb from there.

Racing Accomplishments:

- Won the Milwaukee Mile Bobtail 100 in 1984, becoming the first woman to ever win a major super speedway points race.
- Finished in 2nd place in the Grand Prix of Trucks in Mexico City in 1986.
- Won the GATR Big Rig 100 at Flemington Speedway in New Jersey in 1987.
- Finished in 3rd place in her stock car racing debut in the Charlotte/Daytona Dash Series Florida 200 at Daytona International Speedway in 1988.
- Won the AC Delco 100 NASCAR Dash Series race in Ashville, N.C. in June 1988, becoming the first woman to win a major NASCAR Touring event.
- Finished 3rd in overall Dash point standings in 1988.
- Became the first woman to win a NASCAR Touring pole position in a Dash race at I-95 Speedway in Florence, S.C. in 1989.
- She set a new track record, won the pole, and earned a victory at the Myrtle Beach Speedway in 1989.
- Won the pole for the Busch Light 300 at Atlanta Motor Speedway in 1994, becoming the first woman to win a pole position in a Grand National NASCAR race.
 - She set a new track-speed record at 174.330 mph.
- Finished in 2nd place in the Daytona ARCA 200 race (Automobile Racing Club of America) in 1999.
- Finished in 4th place in the ARCA Bondo/Mar-Hyde Series race at Lowe's Motor Speedway in Charlotte, N.C. in 1999.
- Finished in 6th place in points in the 2000 ARCA Series, becoming the first woman to finish in the top ten in points in any national oval-track motor sports series.
- Won the Talladega Pole Award at the ARCA Bondo/Mar-Hyde Series event at Michigan Speedway in June 2000.
 - She broke the track-speed record with speed of 184.606 mph.
- Became the first woman to start a NASCAR Winston Cup Series race since Patty Moise in 1989, when she competed at Brooklyn, MI in 2001.
 - She finished this race, becoming the first woman to complete a NASCAR Winston Cup Series event since Janet Guthrie in 1980.
- Participated in the Daytona 500 in February 2002, becoming the second woman to have competed in the race. The first was Janet Guthrie in 1977 and 1980.

Awards and Recognition:

- Voted Great American Truck Racing (GATR) Rookie of the Year in 1984.
- Named the NASCAR Dash Series Rookie of the Year in 1988.
- Named the Most Popular Driver in the Dash Series in 1988 and 1989.
- Nominated for Sportswoman of the Year by the Women's Sports Foundation in 1989.
- She was runner-up in the Busch Series Rookie-of-the-Year standings in 1992.
- Won the STP-Prestone Highest Finishing Rookie honor in 1999.
- Won the Prestone Highest Finishing Rookie Award at Talladega, AL in 2000.

Life off the Track: While Shawna Robinson has always had a passion for racing, her family continues to be of utmost importance to her. She spends much of her time with her children and has become very involved in their academic and athletic activities. She is a motivational speaker for several women’s associations and business groups. Robinson has also taken a deep interest in interior decorating over the years and many of her clients have been involved with NASCAR.

Sources Consulted

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