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## Anna Chatten

1979 – Present

Nationality: American

Involved in racing since 1998

**Origins:** Anna Chatten was born in Peoria, Illinois in 1979. Growing up, she spent lots of her time around race tracks and developed an early interest in motorsports that simply continued to grow over the years. Chatten even competed in go-karts herself from ages eight through eighteen. After graduating from Metamora High School in 1998, she realized that rather than going to college, she wanted to become a mechanic and she set off for California eager to pursue her goals. Her dad, Bob, did not immediately fall in love with the idea, wishing that she would chose a different career path, but Chatten knew what she wanted and was determined to succeed. With the support of her mom, Phyllis, and later her dad as well, she advanced through the ranks, fulfilling her dreams and making it all the way to the Indianapolis 500.

**Early Influences:** Chatten's involvement in motorsports began thanks to her father, Bob, who raced motorcycles throughout much of her early life. Anna would go watch him compete and quickly developed an interest in the sport. This interest grew after he bought a go-kart for himself when Anna was approximately eight years old and she realized she wanted to try racing one too. Bob eventually purchased one for her and it did not take long for Anna to become hooked. She raced throughout her childhood and continued after entering high school. The competitions deepened her love for the sport, but it was witnessing the Indy 500 that cemented this love. Her dad took her to the 1992 race and though she was still very young, the grandeur of the experience was not lost on her. Chatten was inspired to become part of the racing world and after turning eighteen and graduating from high school, she left to train as a mechanic.

**Education:** To accomplish her goals, Chatten enrolled in the Jim Russell Racing School in Sonoma, California, the world's first training facility for racers. She was the only woman in her class, but she did not let this affect her. Chatten spent a year in the Mechanics Training program there, learning the ins and outs of race cars and how to properly work on them.

**Career Path:** After finishing at the Jim Russell Racing School, Chatten went on to work in the Panoz GT developmental series in Georgia in the early 2000s, an all-female racing series. Eager to build on her experience and advance her career, she began working for the Skip Barber Racing School. She then served as a gearbox technician in the Champ Car series for seven years, spending her time with Rocketsports Racing and Walker Racing/Team Australia. She joined the Dreyer & Reinbold Racing team as a gearbox technician and airjack operator in 2009, becoming one of the few women who have worked "over the wall" during pit stops in the Indianapolis 500. She joined KV Racing Technology, based in Indianapolis, in 2010.

**Major Responsibilities:** Chatten's main responsibilities include working on the gearbox of race cars and serving as her team's airjack operator. She is responsible for building and setting up the gearbox every time a car runs. Additionally, it is her work with the airjack that helps lift cars so that tire changes can go as quickly as possible during pit stops. Her talents in the garage have taken her far in her career and she has had the opportunity to work at the Indianapolis 500 for two straight years. In 2009, Chatten worked on driver Milka Duno's Dreyer & Reinbold car for the race and in 2010 she helped with driver Mario Moraes' KV Racing Technology car.

**Becoming Established in the Field:** Chatten has had to work hard throughout her career in order to earn respect from her peers and those watching from the sidelines. During her first few years in the field, many refused to accept that she was capable enough to do the work that needed to be done for her teams to be successful. There were even times when she was refused entry to parking lots and tracks because security guards doubted that she was part of the crew. Chatten pushed onward and did not let any of these obstacles stop her. Although she still comes across some people who continue to question her abilities because of her gender, many have come to view her as another one of the guys, judging her on her skill alone.

**Advice to Others:** For other girls who wish to become involved in the motorsports world, Chatten's advice for them is to just go out and give it their all. She admits that it is not easy to become established in the field and that you have to have a thick skin if you are going to succeed, but encourages those interested to continue to pursue their dreams despite the challenges they may face. She hopes that the future will bring more women into the racing arena, working in the garages and at the tracks.

**Life off the Track:** Much of Chatten's life is spent working on or around cars. Even after ten years in the field, she still loves what she does and cannot imagine having a different career. Her involvement in sports stretches beyond the garages though. Chatten spent years racing go-karts in her youth and it is something she still enjoys doing. She is also an avid runner and likes participating in 5Ks and other races whenever she can find the time.

**Interesting Fact:** Chatten is often recognized at the track and in the garages by her pigtails. Her helmet was so big when she first started working on cars that she began putting her hair in pigtails so that it would fit on her head more securely.

**Awards and Achievements:**

- Finished in 11th place in the District Junior 4-Cycle of the Rock Island Grand Prix in 1995.
- Finished in 16th place in the 4-Cycle Stock Light of the Rock Island Grand Prix in 1996.
- Finished 66th out of 168 racers in the Twilight Cross Country Series 5K run in Noblesville, IN on July 15, 2008.
- Became the second woman to work over-the-wall at the Indy 500 when she worked for Dreyer & Reinbold on Milka Duno's race car at the 2009 race.
- She followed this achievement up the following year when she returned to the Indy 500 to work for KV Racing Technology on Mario Moraes' race car. She was the only woman to work with a pit crew during the race.