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**Henry
Ford**®



Diane Holl

May 6, 1964 - Present

Nationality: British

Involved in racing since 1986

Website: <http://www.michaelwaltrip.com>

Origins: When she was nine years old, Diane Holl's father took her and her older brother to her first Formula One race close to Diane's hometown of Guildford, England. While Holl's father Tony thought she would enjoy the experience, Diane found it boring! Even though she was more interested in ballet than motorsports, her father tried to focus Holl's attention, telling her to pick one driver and root for him throughout the race. After taking his advice and finding a car to follow, Diane changed her opinion on racing and quickly became a fan of the sport.

Early Influences: Growing up in a household with her engineer father and brother and her mother working as a nurse, Diane was surrounded by science, but wanted to become a ballerina when she grew up. She eventually realized her future was not in dance and saw a science-related career as a practical choice that could combine her newfound love of racing with technology.

Education: Although Holl showed an early interest in science and decided she wanted to work in motorsports by the time she was 16, she was dissuaded from taking engineering classes in secondary school simply because she was a girl. It wasn't until she enrolled at the University of South West in Plymouth, England that she started to seriously pursue mechanical engineering. Even though she was the only female out of the school's 65 engineering students, Holl excelled in the program, proving herself a quick study and great communicator on projects. When it came time to choose an internship, Holl applied to every auto team in England, hoping to be given a chance to prove herself in the male-dominated field. The small manufacturer Reynard Formula One team hired her for 6 months, allowing Diane to gain experience in fabrication and machining while still in school. Her industrial placements also led to close relationships with Adrian Reynard, owner of the Reynard team, and Adrian Newey, Red Bull Racing's chief technical officer, two men who would continue to mentor Holl

throughout her career. All of her hard work earned her the Institute of Mechanical Engineers' award for best student and Holl graduated in 1987 with honors.

Career Path: After graduation, Ferrari hired Holl as a designer working on chassis at the company's English headquarters. Although the job was based in the United Kingdom, it also required frequent visits to Ferrari headquarters in Italy. This unique position gave Holl the opportunity to finally break into Formula One while also working with racing legend Enzo Ferrari and experiencing the rich winning tradition associated with the team. In 1994, Holl moved to America to take the position of head of research and development engineer for Reynard Racing Cars, a company that was about to enter the CART Championship with a new car. There she acted as a liaison engineer, answering questions and helping American companies that raced Reynard cars. Holl wanted to try something new, trading in her Formula One development job for the faster pace of a track-side job and less serious atmosphere found in Champ-cars. In 1996 Diane came to Tasman Motorsports as a racing engineer, working on Adrian Fernandez's car and helping the driver to his first victory. Fernandez's Molson Indy Toronto win made Holl the first woman to oversee a winning CART team. Tasman Motorsports became McDonald's Championship Racing in 1998 and Holl continued to work with the team as the engineering manager, leading Tony Kanaan to become the CART FedEx Championship Series Rookie of the Year. Della Penna Motorsports hired Diane in 2000 as chief engineer of Norberto Fontana's 2000 CART FedEx Championship season. During the season she oversaw the #10 car's set-up, making sure the suspension geometry, gear ratios, shock, springs, and aerodynamic specifications allowed Fontana to have a successful season. After only a few months with Della Penna, Holl went to work for Chip Ganassi Racing, spending a year and a half as the head of the team's research and design department. In 2002 Holl decided to move back to England and work with McLaren Formula One Racing Team as Principle Engineer. In late 2007, Michael Waltrip approached Holl, asking her if she would be interested in moving back to the United States and joining his racing team as it transitioned to a modern NASCAR team with a stronger engineering focus. Looking for a new challenge and wanting to work for a smaller organization, Holl decided to take the Director of Vehicle Design position with Michael Waltrip Racing. The new job, described by Holl as "a dream come true," offered her a break from the constant travel associated with many motorsports engineering positions and allowed her to raise her young son in the United States while pursuing American citizenship.

Major Responsibilities: Any part made by Waltrip Racing must go through Diane Holl's hands. Her job requires that she collaborate and communicate with the three main departments of Waltrip Racing: simulation, the team responsible for design ideas; test team, the group who offers feedback after testing a component; and the racing crew that attends events and is responsible for shock support and basic car needs. As a designer, she oversees the large application department and machine shop, offering her input on how a car's components, chassis, and suspension should be crafted. She also oversees wind tunnel testing and the quality and inspection group, working directly with Waltrip's test team to interpret simulation results and modify parts.

Advice to Others: Holl's best piece of advice for aspiring motorsports engineers was passed down from her parents who fully supported her engineering ambitions from the beginning. They told Diane if people had a problem with her becoming an engineer, that it was their issue and there was nothing she could do that would negate their views so she shouldn't be upset by what they may think or say! Although there are advantages and disadvantages to a woman entering the male-dominated world of racing, Holl insists if an engineer or driver does a good job, their gender should not matter and is thankful for the team managers and mentors who took a risk by working with her. She also was surprised by how open team owners and drivers have been to giving her a chance to prove herself even though women engineers are still not the norm in racing.

Life off the Track: Holl now lives with her son, 2 dogs, and cat in Charlotte, NC. Before becoming a mother, her life was completely devoted to racing and trying to keep fit. Now most of Holl's time is dedicated to carting her son to his t-ball games, soccer practices, and swimming lessons. On weekends they enjoy taking part in active pastimes they can do together, like playing tennis and golfing. Diane's son has already informed her that he plans to follow her path into racing, hoping to one day become a driver for Waltrip Racing's #00 car (or a fighter pilot).

Interesting Fact: Holl loves weekends since the break from the deadlines at work offers her time to enjoy all of her favorite things. Her typical Sunday includes catching-up with her son, long walks with the family dogs, a traditional English lunch of Yorkshire pudding, and relaxing while watching televised NASCAR races from the comforts of her living room.