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Melanie Troxel

August 31, 1972 – Present

Nationality: American

Raced: 1997 – Present

Background: Melanie Troxel was born in Littleton, Colorado in 1972. She became involved in motor sports at an early age, spending her childhood at the race tracks with her dad, Mike Troxel, a veteran dragster and 1988 Top Alcohol Dragster World Champion. Melanie began her own drag racing career while she was in high school. Her first race came at age sixteen, when she drove a car with an engine she built herself for a school project. She received her first drag racing license in Super Comp, but it was just a starting point for the young driver. Troxel attended Frank Hawley's Drag Racing School in Florida, and in 1997 she earned licenses in Funny Cars and in Dragsters, becoming the first woman licensed to drive in both classes. After competing in Federal-Mogul Dragsters for a few years, she made the switch to Top Fuel in 2000, driving for Don Schumacher Racing. In December 2003, she married Funny Car racer Tommy Johnson, Jr. Lack of sponsorship forced her out competition in the latter half of the 2003 season and in 2004, but in 2005 she was back racing. Her first full season in Top Fuel came in 2006 and it was a breakthrough year for Troxel. She earned two victories and won a number of awards for her performances throughout the season. Following two more wins in 2007, she joined the R2B2 Racing Team and began competing in the NHRA Funny Car competition the following year. With her victory at Bristol, Tennessee in May 2008, she became just the fourteenth racer to score wins in both the NHRA Top Fuel and Funny Car classes. In 2009 she began competing in the Pro Modified Division for Roger Burgess. Although she is determined to return to Funny Cars, she is excited for the opportunity to gain more experience behind the wheel.

Early Influences: Troxel's love for motor sports was inherited from her parents. She grew up with racing in her blood and was always out watching her dad compete. Her mom's skills as an airplane mechanic helped as she and Mike taught Melanie all about the inner workings of cars. By the time Troxel was a teenager, she was assembling them herself. She was eager to learn everything she could about the people and equipment of the motor sports world. After a family friend presented her with the opportunity to drive a Super Comp car in high school, her racing career began to blossom. Her persistence and deep passion for the sport have paid off, as Troxel continues to find success today.

Racing Accomplishments:

- Earned NHRA national event victories at Seattle and Topeka in 1999 while racing Top Alcohol dragsters
- She was the Top Fuel runner-up at the NHRA O'Reilly Fall Nationals in Dallas in 2000
- Finished 12th in point standings after competing in only 10 races in 2002
- Became the quickest and fastest female driver in NHRA history after clocking a 4.458 second time and 330.31 mph speed in Dallas in 2005
- Posted the runner-up finish at Pomona 2 in 2005
- Won at Pomona 1 in 2006, making her just the eighth female to win a pro category in NHRA history and the sixth to win a Top Fuel event
- Won at Las Vegas Motor Speedway in 2006
- Set the Top Fuel record for the most consecutive final round appearances to open a season (5) in 2006
- Led the Top Fuel point standings throughout the first 12 races of the 23-event NHRA POWERade Drag Racing Series in 2006
 - Posted her first career Top 10 points finish for the series, coming in 4th place
- Won at the O'Reilly Midwest Nationals at Gateway International Speedway in St. Louis in May 2007
- Won at the O'Reilly Mid-South Nationals at Memphis Motorsports Park in September 2007
- Earned her first win in a Funny Car at the O'Reilly NHRA Thunder Nationals in Bristol, TN in May 2008, just two races after Ashley Force became the first woman in NHRA history to do so
 - With the win, she became the 14th person and the first woman to score victories in both NHRA Top Fuel and Funny Car categories
- Finished in 3rd place in the Mac Tools U.S. Nationals in Indianapolis in September 2008
- Won the provisional No. 1 qualifying spot of the Get Screened America Pro Mod Challenge at the NHRA Las Vegas Nationals in October 2009
 - Her 5.974 second run set a new track ET record at Las Vegas Motor Speedway

Awards and Recognition:

- Won the Automobile Club of Southern California Road to the Future Award in 2000
- Named a finalist for Rookie of the Year in 2000
- Named the first quarter winner of the 2006 Driver of the Year Award
 - She was the first woman to receive the award in its forty-year history
- Won the USAC Kara Hendrick Spirit Award in 2006
- Won the Women Sports Foundation's Sportswoman of the Year Award in 2006
- Nominated for 2 ESPN ESPY awards for "Female Athlete of the Year" and "Driver of the Year"

Life off the Track: Like many other competitors in her field, Troxel cannot imagine doing anything else besides racing. In the past, she has announced for ESPN-2. She is an avid trainer and her hobbies include snowboarding and golf. Troxel also owns a specialty automotive tool shop that supplies tools to race teams and machine shops. She currently lives in Avon, IN.

Interesting Fact: She and her husband Tommy Johnson, Jr. competed against each other for the first time in May 2008. The two actually met in the 1980s, but did not begin dating until 2000. They have two miniature Yorkies named Peanut and Rottie.

Personal Website:

<http://www.melanietroxel.com/>

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