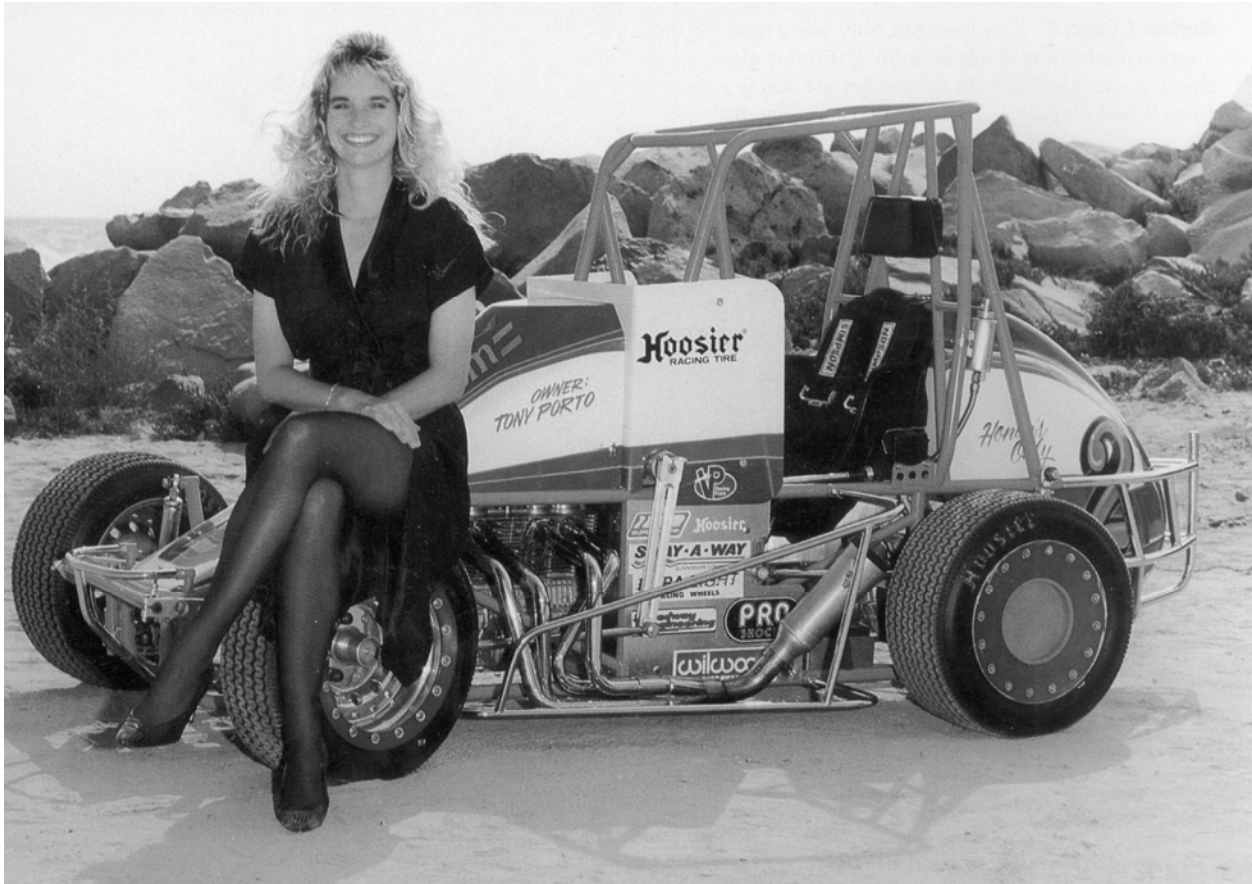




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## Kara Hendrick

Sept. 10, 1969 – Oct. 5, 1991

Nationality: American

Raced between 1979 and 1991

**Origins and Early Influences:** Hendrick and her twin brother Kenny were born and raised in Chino, CA. Their father Art had raced stockcars during the 1960s, so it could be said that speed was in their blood. As Kara grew up, she became increasingly competitive with her brothers. When Kenny and her other brother Danny started racing, Kara was not about to sit on the sidelines and simply cheer her brothers on, she wanted to be on the track too. Although her father was initially apprehensive about letting his nine year old daughter take part in such a dangerous hobby, Kara was able to secure a sponsor and dove into Quarter Midget racing. She met with immediate success at tracks around Southern California, stressing that she wanted to be seen as a racer, not as a *female* racer.

### Racing Accomplishments:

- Won numerous titles and a National Grand Championship while racing Quarter Midgets.
- In 1987, Hendrick followed her brother Kenny into Three Quarter Midgets racing. A year later she was offered a chance to drive for Tony Porto and began racing her signature pink and white #7 Three Quarter Midget car.
- Became third woman to ever win a USAC midget race when she won two Three-Quarter main events in 1989.
- Placed 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 1989 Western States Three Quarter Midget point race, becoming the highest-ranked woman driver in USAC history.

- Placed 10<sup>th</sup> in the 1990 Western States Three-Quarter Midget series after three second-place and three third-place finishes.
- Set Cajon Speedway track record with a 15.75 second Midget run on Oct.5, 1991.

#### **Interesting Fact:**

- Hendrick legally emancipated herself from her parents a few weeks before her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday to compete in a Three Quarter Midget race, unable to wait until her birthday to move up to the next level of Midget racing.

**Life off the Track:** Kara Hendrick was determined to be the best racer she could be and had the goal of becoming the first woman driver to win the Daytona 500. She worked not only to improve her racing skills through graduating from numerous driving schools, but also travelled across the country to be near potential sponsors, took Toastmaster courses to improve her public speaking, and was working on her college degree. Health problems couldn't even keep her from the track for long. Although she was diagnosed with kidney disease at the age 22 and had to undergo surgery to remove part of her right kidney, Kara returned to racing in a little over three months.

Tragically, Kara's life was cut short on the night of Oct. 5, 1991 when her Midget flipped on a turn and crashed into the El Cajon Speedway outer wall. This came just hours after she set the speedway's record. She is remembered by all who knew her as a loving person with a wonderful sense of humor and a true passion for racing. Her legacy lives on not only in the numerous awards and scholarships started in her honor, but also in her selfless gifts as an organ donor.

#### **Awards and Recognition:**

- The United States Auto Club (USAC) established the Kara Hendrick Spirit Award in 2003, and is granted annually granted at the Women in the Winner's Circle Foundation Awards Celebration to a young female racer who shows the same determination, driving ability, and character Hendrick displayed during her racing career. Past honorees include Erin Crocker (2004), Melanie Troxel (2006), and Stephanie Mockler (2007).
- The Women in the Winner's Circle Driving Development Academy awards the Kara Hendrick Memorial Scholarship to a deserving young woman driver who demonstrates the same potential for success because of their commitment and passion for racing.
- The Quarter Midget Club of America honors Hendrick each October with a Kara Hendrick Memorial Race.
- The Kara Hendrick Memorial Foundation, started by her parents Art and Renee in 1993, continues to help young racers.

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