



2012 Inductee

RALPH LEE BRINKLEY, SR.

During his remarkable reign of modified racing at Winston-Salem's venerable Bowman Gray Stadium, nobody, but nobody, was as dominant as Welcome's Ralph Brinkley.

By the time he left the track for keeps in 1998, Brinkley had chalked up 64 victories (a record that lasted seven years) and won eight modified championships until that record was broken this year by Tim Brown (a record that lasted 13 years).

Brinkley still holds the record for most victories in a season with 13, which he set in 1974. He also holds records for most double race wins in a season with four; most double race wins with five, and most consecutives with five, set in 1973.

He also won six poles in both 1987 and in 1988. In all, he won nearly half of his races at Bowman Gray Stadium in a modified Corvair.

And the fans noticed. He was voted most popular driver 11 times in his career.

Brinkley also raced at other tracks in other divisions, but he was never more popular or successful than he was at Bowman Gray Stadium.

Brinkley owns his own business, Ralph Brinkley & Sons Automotive, a highly regarded automotive machine shop that he began in 1972. Interestingly enough, he has built many racing engines for his competitors. This year marks his 40th year at his location on Grimes Boulevard.



Brinkley also has interests in scuba diving and has a private pilot's license. He and his wife, Evelyn Tate, also built an airplane from a kit, an RV-7 that can cruise at 200 miles per hour.

The couple has three adult children, Ralph Lee Brinkley, Jr, 50; Rickey Lee Brinkley, 46; and Laura Leigh Brinkley Lilly, 42.