



In the Saleen Mustang.



Right: Kees in the winner's circle.

Left: Kees Nierop's Porsche 959.

KEES NIEROP

Pioneer - Sports Car and Road Racing - Inducted 2016

By Brian Pratt

Nominated by Tom Johnston

While Kees Nierop has travelled and raced world-wide, there has been a consistent thread linking him back to British Columbia and the Greater Vancouver area for the past 40 years.

He came to Canada (Kelowna) with his family in the 1970s and got his driver's license at age 16 rather than 18, as would have occurred in his former home of Holland. By the age of 18, in 1976, he had his Canadian National Road Racing license and was named B.C. Ice Racing Rookie of the Year.

The next two years Kees made his mark at both the Knox Mountain Hill Climb (winning, and setting a record in his class in 1977) and Westwood (winning the Canadian national title in GT-1). He also got his Sports Car Club of America (SCCA) license.

With that license, Kees ran some of the North American endurance races (Daytona's 24 Hours, Sebring's 12 Hours) along with some Formula Atlantic races (Westwood and Montreal) from 1979 to 1980. He won the 7 Hour Endurance race at Westwood in 1980.

1981 and 1982 had Nierop in the U.K. racing in the very competitive Formula 3 series along with future F1 and Indycar drivers like Martin Brundle, Raul Boesel and Roberto Moreno.

1983 started on a very high note. Kees was part of the winning Porsche 934 Turbo team that not only won its class, but surprised everyone by taking first overall at the 12 Hours of Sebring. That finish was followed up with another class win at Riverside later in the year.

Kees was quoted in a Florida newspaper at the time as needing the win very badly. He had had to borrow money from friends to take the "\$99 special from Vancouver" to get to the race.

For the next two years, Kees continued with endurance races and Porsche. In 1986 Kees won both the Rothman's Porsche and Canadian Porsche championships. 1988 was a repeat of the Canadian Porsche championship.

During the 1990s and into the 21st Century he raced closer to home, winning the 1991 Indy Sedan race at the Molson Indy in Vancouver. He also had Formula Ford wins at Mission and set a

Formula Ford class record at what might be considered his home track, the Knox Mountain Hill Climb, in 2001. Kees reset that Formula Ford record the next year.

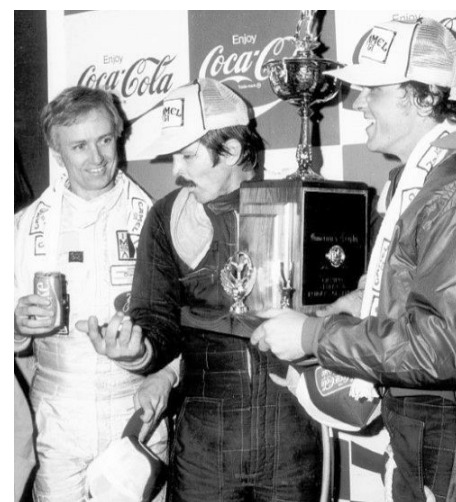
Kees Nierop became a driving instructor for both Morrisport and Porsche Cars North America beginning in 2003. He raced at Mission during the 2009 and 2010 seasons and was voted the 2010 Sports Car Club of B.C. Pro-Driver of the Year, repeating the same feat he had garnered in 1979 and 1983.

From 2010 to the present he has continued a long association with Porsche Cars of Canada as an instructor. In a 2010 article, Kees was quoted as saying, "I'm pretty proud to be called Mr. Porsche of Canada."

Kees Nierop has travelled around the racing world, from the frozen lakes of B.C. to Le Mans. He has won some major races and has long been recognized as a top-notch driver. His international successes that grew out of, and still remain rooted in, his racing at Kelowna, Westwood, Vancouver and Mission all make Kees Nierop a Greater Vancouver Motorsport Pioneer.



Kees Nierop, now a Porsche instructor.



1983 win at the 12 Hours of Sebring, Kees on the right.



Kees Nierop in a Porsche 997 Turbo.