



Bernie Fedderly **(Special Projects Manager)** Hall of Fame Crew Chief

Although he is one of only four crew chiefs to have won NHRA Championships in both the Top Fuel and Funny Car divisions, Bernie Fedderly's real value lies in the organizational skills he now is applying to special projects at John Force Racing, Inc.

After 30 years on the road, the last 18 as co-crew chief on John Force's Castrol GTX High Mileage Funny Car, the Canadian Motorsports Hall of Famer this year is operating on a reduced schedule that gives him more time at home with his wife, Mary, with whom he shares a passion for antiquing.

"Bernie's family," Force said. "He's been a big part of our success, especially with the multi-car team. He's not going to travel as much this year and he won't have day-to-day responsibilities with the race car, but he'll contribute just like he always has. He's teaching Dan Hood the business side of the sport and he'll still be a part of the brain trust (composed of all the JFR crew chiefs)."

In addition to his responsibilities with the Castrol GTX team, Fedderly also served as the team's personnel director and quartermaster charged with oversight of parts' inventories for the team's Funny Cars and A/Fuel dragsters.

Nevertheless, it was solely for his mechanical aptitude that he originally was hired to assist Austin Coil in a collaboration that, through 2009, yielded 109 victories.

"It was obvious early-on that I had an aptitude for racing," Fedderly recalled. "Most of my friends wanted to drive. I just wanted to make cars run fast. So I had a lot of opportunities to gain experience."

That experience served him well. After bursting onto the national stage in 1980 with U.S. Nationals winner Terry Capp, he signed on two years later with Larry Minor, ultimately directing Gary Beck to the 1983 Top Fuel championship and Ed "the Ace" McCulloch to a couple of near misses including a 43-point loss to Force in 1990.

Through the 2009 season, Fedderly had won 129 NHRA tour events with five different drivers including Beck, McCulloch and Cruz Pedregon, with whom he started the 1992 season.

Born in Edmonton, Alberta, Fedderly took automotive classes at St. Joseph's High School and spent his weekends with other members of the Capitol City Hot Rod Association. Upon graduation, he enrolled at Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, ultimately earning a degree as an engine technician.

Not that Fedderly was immediately able to parlay that education into a racing career. In fact, his first job was as a fleet mechanic for a Canadian dairy firm "just keeping the milk trucks running."



At about the same time, he and Capp were beginning to make a name for themselves as racers. Beginning with gas coupes and dragsters, the two moved up to Top Fuel in the '60s with partner Wes Van Dusen. Racing primarily in Western Canada with an occasional foray into the States, Capp and Fedderly leapt to prominence with their 1980 Indy win which led to a commitment to run the entire NHRA series in 1981.

With a runner-up finish at Baton Rouge, LA, Capp earned enough points to finish seventh in the driver standings but, a year later, with no sponsor to deliver the funding necessary to race for the championship, Capp opted out and Fedderly went to work for Larry Minor Racing as Beck's crew chief.

Over the next three seasons, he directed Beck to seven wins and five runner-up finishes in 30 starts and the team became the first to break the 5.50 and 5.40 second barriers. That performance earned Fedderly, Beck and car owner Minor the 1983 Car Craft Magazine Person(s) of the Year Award.

Moving over to Minor's Funny Car operation in 1985, Fedderly and McCulloch won 12 times before both of them were unceremoniously dumped by the team owner.

A crew chief with Fedderly's credentials was not long without work. In April, 1992, he was hired by Force to work with Coil. The two developed an immediate – and unexpected – rapport, one that transformed a very good John Force Racing team into a high speed dynasty.

"My philosophy about racing is similar to John's and Austin's," Fedderly has said. "Never be satisfied – and always keep your mind open to change."

