

March 2021

PRESTON *life*

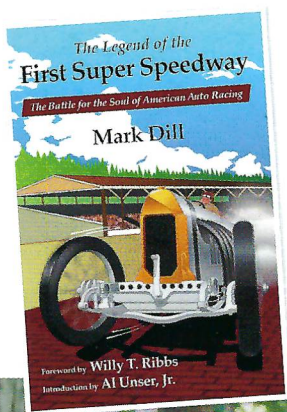
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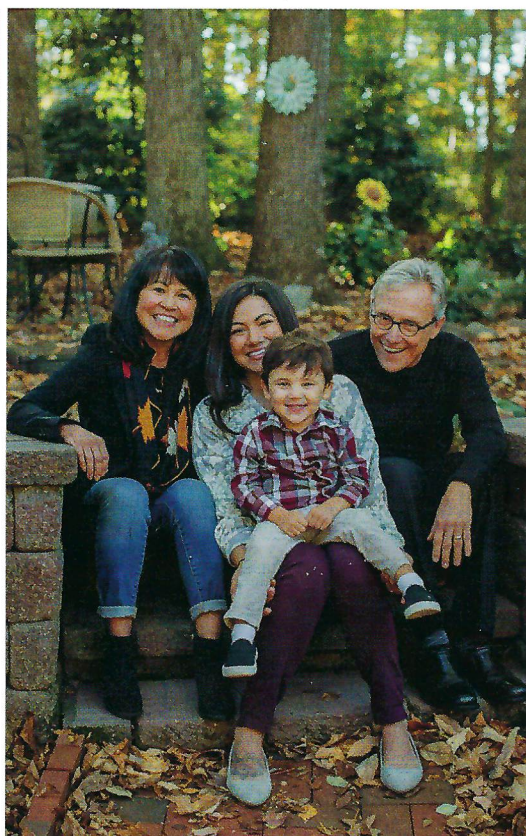
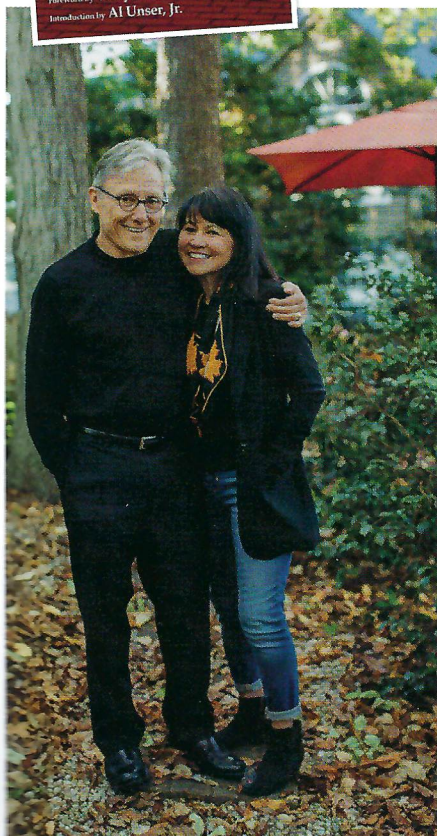
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A PASSION — A DREAM — A NOVEL: THE LEGEND OF THE FIRST SUPER SPEEDWAY



For Mark Dill, 2020 was not all bad. It was the year he published his first novel: **The Legend of the First Super Speedway.**



For Mark Dill, 2020 was not all bad. It was the year he published his first novel: *The Legend of the First Super Speedway.*

Mark and Esther Dill moved to North Carolina from California in 1990. Recruited by Nortel, trading the Silicon Valley lifestyle and California pace for quiet Cary, North Carolina was a welcome change. “It was the right place at the right time. Cary was a great place to raise our daughters. It’s only gotten better over the years.” Esther was a dedicated mother and elementary school teacher. Mark served as Vice President of Public Relations for Nortel.

Mark’s interest in racing and the history behind speedways was in his blood. He was born and raised in Indianapolis. “When I was growing up, other than minor league baseball, there were no sports until May when the Speedway opened for practice. The whole city came to life. I’d get home from school and listen to live reports on local stations and soak in all the interviews with drivers like Mario Andretti and Dan Gurney— those guys were like gods to me. It wasn’t long before I saw how big the Indy 500 was because of its history. The track was built in 1909, and there is no other existing motorsports facility that old or run consistently.”

While studying journalism at Indiana University, Mark was news director for Indianapolis Raceway Park. He raced cars in Sports Car Club of America (SCCA) competitions. After moving to Cary, Mark led Nortel’s sponsorship of the car that won the 1997 Indianapolis 500. When he was invited to run marketing for the Indianapolis Motor Speedway (2010-2013), he had the time and opportunity to really dig into his long-awaited research.

Mark has written articles about the early history of speedway racing for IMS programs, historical society magazines, and auto racing journals. His work with New York historian Howard Kroplick on *The Vanderbilt Cup Races of Long Island* helped inform his own research. Working for the speedway

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and living in Indianapolis again, Mark spent a lot of time in the Marion County Public Library, “digging through the local papers – The Indianapolis Star, Indianapolis News, The Times and The Sun. They all covered the Speedway.” He scoured primary sources, journals, and books excavating the history, the stories, and facts.

The Legend of the First Super Speedway is a historical novel that unfolds through the eyes of protagonists Barney Oldfield and Carl Fisher. “They grapple with a cultural battle for the soul of American auto racing, including early auto racing’s good, bad, and ugly details because that is the way it really happened.” Mark adds, “It’s about racing in the greater context of multiple breakthrough technologies – automobiles, the telegraph, and telephone. The story spans from 1902 to 1910, with the first race at the Speedway after it was paved with bricks. That crystallized a moment of a big transition from gentleman road racers on public roads to the professionals who raced on a closed-circuit made for the purpose of racing.”

Mark shares his racing passion with his grandson. “I raised two daughters and loved it. It’s just different with a boy. He loves cars. We have this shared interest. We get each other.”

Mark is Vice President of Public Relations for Sports Car Vintage Racing Association. Esther manages the book project and marketing and created the author’s website (markgdill.com).