



## **Corvette's Le Mans Heritage Honored at ALMS Monterey**

### **Chevrolet Celebrates Le Mans Drivers and Race Cars of the Past and Present**

#### **May 24, 2010**

Chevrolet saluted the men and machines that laid the foundation for Corvette Racing's success in the 24 Hours of Le Mans with a special Corvette Legends of Le Mans program at the American Le Mans Series Monterey on May 21-22. The event brought together Corvette drivers and race cars of the past and present.

Fans paid tribute to the pioneers of Corvette performance and gave a spirited send-off to the Corvette Racing team in its final U.S. race before the 24 Hours of Le Mans on June 12-13. This year marks the 50th anniversary of Corvette's first participation in the world's most prestigious sports car race.

Chevrolet paid tribute to Dr. Dick Thompson, who co-drove Briggs Cunningham's No. 2 Corvette at Le Mans in 1960. Thompson was reunited with the restored white and blue Corvette that is now owned by Bruce Meyer. Dick Guldstrand appeared with the Dana Chevrolet Corvette that he co-drove with Bob Bondurant at Le Mans in 1967. The iconic red, white, and blue No. 9 Corvette was provided by current owner Harry Yeaggy. One of the star-spangled Greenwood Corvettes that went to Le Mans in 1973 was displayed courtesy of owner John Thompson. The first 2011 Corvette Z06 built (VIN 001) with special white and blue Le Mans graphics by GM Design completed the Corvette quartet.

Thompson and Guldstrand participated in a media reception on Friday, relating their experiences at Le Mans in the days when the Mulsanne Straight stretched for miles without chicanes and only two drivers shared a car. Two-time Le Mans winner Ron Fellows and current Corvette Racing drivers Oliver Gavin, Olivier Beretta, Johnny O'Connell, and Jan Magnussen contrasted their adventures at Le Mans with the modern Corvette C6.R race cars. On Saturday, fans lined up for autographs from Thompson and Guldstrand at the Corvette Legends of Le Mans display in the ALMS paddock.



Corvette Racing ambassador Ron Fellows drove the 1960 Cunningham Corvette on the Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca circuit during a photo shoot. "I don't think I've ever had sustained goose bumps for so long," said Fellows, who scored Corvette Racing's first Le Mans class victory in 2001 with teammates Johnny O'Connell and Scott Pruett. "The first thing that struck me when I fired it up was a familiar sound – after 50 years, the cars look different, but there is still that awesome Chevy V-8 sound. I was surprised by how nice it was to drive – it starts and stops fine, and has good power. But high-speed cornering must have been interesting back then. The Kink at the end of the Mulsanne Straight must have been a real thrill for these guys back in 1960!"

Johnny O'Connell drove the 1967 Guldstrand/Bondurant Stingray, and he was impressed. "You can't drive a car like that without realizing that what those guys did was amazing," said O'Connell, the only American driver to score four class wins at Le Mans. "That car is all beast, and the strength needed to turn that thing was incredible. It really made me appreciate those guys as race car drivers and athletes. That was state-of-the-art technology in 1967, and driving a Corvette C6.R gives me an appreciation for how far Corvette has come over the years. Drivers back then were a different breed. I can't even imagine how difficult and challenging it was."

Video interviews with the Corvette Legends of Le Mans can be viewed on the ALMS YouTube channel:

Dr. Dick Thompson

<http://www.youtube.com/user/ALMSOfficialVideos#p/a/u/0/RHxhJ62JoSQ>

Dick Guldstrand

[http://www.youtube.com/user/ALMSOfficialVideos#p/a/u/0/FJ\\_8Wlu7rsY](http://www.youtube.com/user/ALMSOfficialVideos#p/a/u/0/FJ_8Wlu7rsY)

Corvette Racing's next event is the 24 Hours of Le Mans at the Circuit des 24 Heures du Mans in Le Mans, France. The 24-hour race will start at 3:00 p.m. CET on Saturday, June 12. Portions of the classic endurance contest will be televised live on SPEED.