

## David Morgan

A Tulsa insurance executive during the week with a very successful 10-year weekend racing career.

### Chapter 01 - 1:18

#### Introduction

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**Announcer:** On March 9, 1967, Tulsa, Oklahoma native David Morgan went to the Corvette Assembly Plant in North St. Louis, Missouri to take delivery of a new Corvette. It was a special-order L88 bought by Sunray DX Oil. David drove the car from St. Louis to Yenko Chevrolet in Canonsburg, Pennsylvania for its initial race preparation. Twenty-three days later it was on the grid for its first race, the 1967 12 hours of Sebring. David and Don Yenko co-drove to first place. David went on to win the 1967 SCCA Midwest Division Championship with the car.

David Morgan was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma at Hillcrest Hospital in 1926. He first began racing Soap Box Derby cars when he was 12 years old, racing down Berry Hill in Tulsa.

As an adult, his first car race was in 1958 when he won a sports car club of America divisional event in Ft. Stockton, N.M. It put him on a ten-year racing career. Monday through Friday David was a Tulsa insurance executive, and on the weekends, he was a race car driver. Throughout his very successful racing career, he won many trophies and honors.

David is 94 as he tells his remarkable story on the oral history website [VoicesofOklahoma.com](http://VoicesofOklahoma.com).

### Chapter 02 - 8:45

#### Sunray DX Oil Company

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**John Erling:** My name is John Erling and today's date is September 9, 2020. David, would you state your full name please?

**David Morgan:** David L. Morgan.

**JE:** What does L stand for?

**DM:** L stands for Llewellyn. That's a Welsh name. I think the only other person I ever heard of was John L. Lewis. He was a big labor leader back at that time. That's the story of my middle name.

**JE:** Your date of birth:

**DM:** 1/22/26.

**JE:** January 22, 1926. So that makes your present age...

**DM:** 93...I guess it would be 94.

**JE:** (laughs)

**DM:** Age is not important when you get up that... All I know is that I sure lost a lot of friends in the meantime.

**JE:** Yeah, and I've just got to comment on what great shape you are in. You're sitting here with a tie and a white shirt because you have been to work today.

**DM:** And I'm going back.

**JE:** Oh really?

**DM:** Oh yes.

**JE:** We'll talk about your insurance. So you go into the office now at 94 every morning at what time?

**DM:** 9:00.

**JE:** And you're generally there till about when?

**DM:** Except Monday, Wednesday and Fridays, I am there 5:30-6. And those three days, I try to leave by 4:30-5.

**JE:** That's pretty amazing. So thank you for taking time off from work to come home to do this.

**DM:** Thank you for being interested, John.

**JE:** Absolutely. And where are we recording this interview?

**DM:** In my home.

**JE:** Here in midtown Tulsa.

**DM:** Midtown Tulsa.

**JE:** Alright. And this pretty lady sitting over here...

**DM:** Is my pretty wife.

**JE:** And she is...

**DM:** Of 50 years.

**JE:** Her name is Marlene. Marlene, hello, nice to have you here...

**Marlene Morgan:** Hello, John.

**JE:** To help us with this. I was going to ask you how long you have been married. So when were you married?

**MM:** Well in 1967 August, after the big racing winds had happened, then we got married.

**JE:** You have become very much a part of this racing story, I know that.

**MM:** Right.

**DM:** Uh huh.

**JE:** Marlene will be interjecting when she feels like it and keep us on the straight and narrow. David, where were you born?

**DM:** I was born right here in Tulsa in the proximity of Swan Lake/Utica Square. I was born in Hillcrest Hospital at that time. I built three homes right there in that vicinity and got rid of them through the years.

**JE:** What was your mother's name?

**DM:** My true mother's was Hazel, who I never knew really. I was a very small boy and she passed away when they were going to Arizona to help their breathing. So I figure it had something to do with tuberculosis or something like that. I never really knew. Dad remarried and that was my true mother that took care of me.

**JE:** Your father's name?

**DM:** Glenn D. (David) Morgan.

**JE:** He remarried and her name was...?

**DM:** Madelene.

**JE:** And she became a mother to you.

**DM:** She became a mother and she was a beautiful college person. She and dad traveled the world together.

**JE:** What was her personality like?

**DM:** Very outgoing. Dad was also but he was quieter and more serious and he had a lot of responsibility. For 45 years, he ran the refinery over there.

**JE:** Did you have brothers and sisters?

**DM:** I had two older sisters. They were enough older that I was not really around them very much - beautiful people. One graduated from OSU or Oklahoma A&M back then, Jane did. Marge went to Stevenson, Missouri - a girls' school. They traveled...dad had to travel quite a bit.

**JE:** Tell us about your father and his living. What did he do for a living?

**DM:** He ran the Mid-Continent Petroleum Company. The river, on the other side of it, is the Mid-Continent Refinery. Those were the tanks that you see. This was the largest inland refinery in the world. A fellow named Jacob France bought that refinery and developed it. He banked at J. Pierpont Morgan's Bank in New York. He said, "I want a young engineer, somebody to go down there to Tulsa and run this thing". Dad was an engineer from Ohio State University, born in Ohio.

**JE:** Your father was selected to come here...

**DM:** By Jacob France who was an early day pioneer. That's how he got here and that's how I got here.

- JE:** The name of the company was Mid-Continent.
- DM:** Mid-Continent Petroleum Corporation. And then they bought DX. He named it - D was for the diamond, X was for the unknown quantity of the oil. They were the sixth largest oil company at that time right here in Tulsa. They decided that racing would be a good avenue to get them expanded into big-time racing.
- JE:** And I'm going to pick up on that. Let's talk about your education. Elementary school - where did you go?
- DM:** I walked to school at Marquette for the first year. That was when they were having labor troubles over at the refinery, so I had a German Shepherd named Sam, the guard that walked behind and I walked to school there.
- JE:** So the labor troubles became so violent that even the child of an executive had to be protected?
- DM:** Definitely. The labor union had decided to unionize the oil refinery business. They picked this because it was the largest and they thought they could pick it off. It was kind of bad. I remember dad, his building is still across the river - it's a two-story beautiful brick building there. His office was right there at the gate. You looked down and it had a 30-caliber machine gun mounted up on top. They were dead serious about things. And the union was unsuccessful in unionizing them.
- JE:** This would have been around the 1930s because you were 6 years old in 1932-33. So this was a major story at our town at that time.
- DM:** Definitely. You know, I didn't pick up on any danger or anything like that, but dad was quite active and he was manning the fire hoses that they had set up at the gate using water to cool this thing down. Dad had an office which is still there, the Mid-Continent Building...
- JE:** You mean downtown Tulsa?
- DM:** Downtown Tulsa.
- JE:** Right.
- DM:** And he had an office out there at the refinery. Me being an only child at home, I tagged along with him quite a bit in that refinery.
- JE:** You went to school at Marquette?
- DM:** Marquette. Then I went to Barnard. Barnard was an up and coming elementary school. Then I went to Horace Mann which was downtown, caught the bus at Yorktown and 26th Place. We made a loop and came down when I had to ride the bus to school.
- JE:** We are going to be talking about cars. Your father, did he have a deep interest in cars?
- DM:** He did. He was from Ohio and they build the Auburn and the Cord there in Indiana. He always had to have one of the first models. Behind his house, there was a big old three-story house and the top floor was the dance hall. The third floor was devoted to social dancing.

**JE:** Where was that?

**DM:** That was in Van Wert, Ohio. They still had brick streets.

**JE:** But you never lived there?

**DM:** No but we spent every summer there, my sisters and myself. My folks would go off on vacation. Dad always drove either Cadillacs or Packards. Both of them had side mount tires on the fenders and we kids would play on them. But no air conditioning.

**JE:** You then were raised in a very well-to-do family. I mean if you were driving Cadillacs, it was a well-to-do family.

**DM:** It was substantial, yes. We never knew about a depression because working for a company like that, we had servants and it was nice. I was right there at Swan Lake.

### Chapter 3 - 4:45

#### Soapbox Derby

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**John Erling:** You got involved in soapbox derby racing.

**David Morgan:** At 12 years old.

**JE:** 12 years old. By that time, you were like in 6th or 7th grade, somewhere in there.

**DM:** I think about 6th.

**JE:** OK, so then how does that come about?

**DM:** Well, I was interested in cars. Dad thought that we could engineer a soapbox derby better than what these guys were doing. Yes we had facilities at the refinery over there that we could draw on (laughs). So I won the local soapbox derby here. I had great interest from that time on. My mother went with me, going to Ohio. We had very good contacts there - Harvey Firestone Jr. Met the train. He was still wearing the arm band that those people wore back then when their father died.

**JE:** You jumped to Ohio - why - from soapbox derby.

**DM:** That's where the finals were.

**JE:** OK. There was a certain hill here in Tulsa that you went to.

**DM:** Berryhill. It's still there. What's the park over there up on top? It's behind all the oil tanks and so forth. Dad's boss was Mr. Coonce and Mr. McDowell. Mr. Coonce had a beautiful farm there at the bottom of Berryhill. My first racing experience was going down Berryhill and it drew well. They had 5000 people come out. Remember Tulsa was only 140,000 people back then.

**JE:** Did your dad engineer those wheels a certain way?

**DM:** Oh yes, fully. He was an engineer. We all had to use the same wheels and that was very, very important that they were just right. But dad did that. Yeah, I put them on according to the law. That's the way I helped put the car together.

**JE:** Did everybody build a different body?

**DM:** Oh yes, yes. You had to use the same...you bought a kit, I think, that had the four tires/four wheels and you designed the body any way you wanted. People went for aerodynamics and I don't think at the speeds we were going that aerodynamics entered into it. You just had to keep them on a very straight path going down that hill.

**JE:** Right. How many would go down the hill at the same time?

**DM:** Two.

**JE:** Ok, and then if you beat that person, you got to come back and race again. You kept doing that until you were the only man standing.

**DM:** Exactly.

**JE:** So did you do that many years; I mean, they only had one a year.

**DM:** I just did it the one year.

**JE:** One year, but then didn't you race in the nationals?

**DM:** Well a kid lost his strength on it and turned into me the night before the nationals. We had set the time record and we were favored to go on but he knocked the car out of alignment just enough so we had to try to break in a new set of bearings. Dad did that by telephone by telling these people how we would break these wheel bearings in. That was the start of things at 12 years old.

**JE:** So the night before you were just doing a practice run and another guy bumped into you.

**DM:** Yeah, just enough. If you look at the pictures, you will see how spindly those wheels were and it didn't take very much - any swerving whatsoever threw them out. That was a disappointment, of course, because I had been played up and was going to be a favorite and a fellow from someplace in New York.

**JE:** But then you raced the next day?

**DM:** Uh huh.

**JE:** Did you win that race?

**DM:** I won that race.

**JE:** All right.

**DM:** But the car was not as fast as it had been.

**JE:** You were looking for a record time, not just winning. You wanted a record time (laughs).

**DM:** Yeah. It was kind of hokey back in those days.

**Marlene Morgan:** I have to say, though, it was important because later in my own generation, a little book showed up in our library and the teachers wanted us to read it because it was about the soapbox derby in Akron, Ohio, and pictures of it. Then it was, of course,

much later that I met you and realized you were a part of the beginning of that story - Akron, Ohio.

**JE:** And you may have seen David's picture.

**MM:** May have (laughs).

**DM:** Quite a bit of difference in our age.

**JE:** So you won in Akron that race.

**DM:** But I was eliminated. I was not as fast that next day.

**MM:** Well it wasn't the timed trials.

**DM:** Yeah I won the timed trials but I was not as fast as I had been, so that was all over for the soapbox derby. I only did the one year and then I wanted to jump into some other kind of racing.

**JE:** You knew you wanted to do some more racing.

**DM:** Absolutely.

## Chapter 4 - 9:15

### President Harry Truman

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**John Erling:** High school - we want to talk about your high school.

**David Morgan:** From Horace Mann, I moved to Central High. I went there because they had a good wrestling coach down there, believe it or not, and I wanted to pick up on that - dad did, he was influential on that - but I only stayed at Central, I think, about three months. The war was on. I wanted to get in and get out. Dad wanted me to be as well trained as possible because he didn't want his only son to be a cannon fighter is what he referred to. So I went to Oklahoma Military Academy. We went 46 months straight. We didn't take breaks for Christmas or any holiday because they wanted to get you in and out, so I picked up a couple years of schooling by going year around up there at Oklahoma Military Academy. Oklahoma Military Academy was very good for me. Later on when I went into the airborne, I had my commission. I was a four-year ROTC graduate and so they said our training was better than anybody's and it was noted as the school of the southwest.

**JE:** So when you came out virtually of high school, you went to the military academy. I think you graduated in 1941?

**DM:** Well I was the class of '45 at Oklahoma Military Academy.

**JE:** Oh, OK.

**DM:** And I had good contacts there. That's where I ran with the Pryor boys. There was Frank Jr. His father lived in Sophian Plaza, which is still there - the suite is still there. It's the southwest corner suite. Mr. Pryor was president of Standard here, which was the largest

here. Then he got tapped for going to become president of Standard of Indiana. The situation had been set up where the Pryor boys would graduate and get into the oil business. Neither one of them wanted to do that. We were having Sunday lunches together as training. He says, "Morgan, you stay with me", meaning train under him...

**JE:** In the insurance business...

**DM:** Uh huh. Take the insurance business and not try to go into the oil business at that time - meld the two together - and he would make sure that I made more money in two years than I would have made in the oil business. So that was set up for them, so I was the recipient of it. He liked me well enough to stay. He thought I knew all about the insurance business and oil insurance. He was a Stanford graduate and they made him president of Standard of Indiana. I think that was the largest of those companies when they broke up the 13 Standard companies.

**JE:** But I want to bring you back to when you graduate. The war was on from 1939 to 1945. You were 15-16-17 years old in that period.

**DM:** Right.

**JE:** But then you finished high school, or the military academy - you finished in 1945. The war was ending then.

**DM:** It was ending but I was put into it. From my four years of ROTC, it put me far enough ahead that I got directly into that. You got commissions at OMA either in the cavalry or tanks. I decided I didn't want to be in what happens inside of a tank when they are in the battlefield so I was smart enough not to pursue that. I wanted to get into the airborne, which was just a beautiful move on my part. I was in the honor guard because from OMA, you knew how to dress well and look the part and you didn't know what you were talking about. We had West Point officers teaching us. So I went to the airborne.

**JE:** What division were you attached to?

**DM:** 82nd Airborne, the honor guard. I was in charge of a squadron at the 82nd Airborne. Harry Truman was the president and he was very proud. He was not a military man himself but he loved to see us parade and he sent us really all over the world. He wanted to show off. We were all the same size, same height. We went through jump school at Fort Benning, Georgia. In fact, I was in charge of a sea stage down there, which were towers, 250-foot towers, that they had gotten from the World's Fair in '33 or something like that. We got to train and practice off of those. I loved that.

**JE:** How many jumps did you make?

**DM:** I made 26.

**JE:** Were you ever injured?

**DM:** Yes the second jump I made. We were jumping out of planes that were not really designed to jump out of - C46 Douglas. It had bad prop blast. If you got it just wrong



stepping out of the plane, it threw you into what we called a cigarette roll. The chute could wrap around you and so you would lose a lot of lift. We were only 1000 feet high because they wanted to get you down on the ground in a hurry because the Germans would get you. That was their favorite. They used their 88's that they would pick out the soldiers. I never got into any of that bad part. I just had all the honor and knew how to dress. President Truman loved to show us.

**JE:** Did you see him?

**DM:** Oh yes.

**JE:** He would come around?

**DM:** Oh yes. He knew me by first name.

**JE:** He did?

**DM:** Oh yeah.

**JE:** Would you talk to him?

**DM:** Yes...yeah.

**JE:** How did he get to know you by first name?

**DM:** He was just that interested in our squadron, which was the 82nd Airborne.

**JE:** So he could leave and come back again and say "Hi David" to you?

**DM:** Yeah.

**JE:** And remember your name?

**DM:** Yeah. That didn't impress me at the time...

**JE:** But that was pretty good. You referred earlier to being sharp dressed - he was a sharp dresser, wasn't he?

**DM:** Yeah, he had been a haberdasher - is that what they used to call them?

**JE:** That was a clothing store - Haberdasher - you're right.

**DM:** He did like us and we did like him because he exposed us to beautiful places at all times. He didn't have the presence that we had. We were sharp and he was still a haberdasher.

**JE:** (laughs) But he was president!

**DM:** But he was the president and he liked us and we liked him. There was even some civil disobedience over here that he put us into to get straightened out - kind of like the troubles we are having today. They were having some troubles in Boston. These young kids would come off these ships - the "hooligans" or whatever they called them back then - would pick on them and they told us to go in there and kind of police it and take care of things.

**JE:** You weren't parachuting in at that time?

**DM:** No.

**JE:** Didn't have to. But anyway, he used you that way.

**DM:** Yeah. The only jump in here is he wanted to see a jump into Soldier Field. Well, our chutes, you couldn't control them like you can today - I mean, different shapes and so

forth like that. And it did not work out. Somebody got into the stands. It was kind of a bad deal. And I had, from that cigarette roll, hit the ground. We were jumping from 26 seconds descent, so we were coming in hot and it broke 12 bones in my right foot and ankle. I limped off of that, got out of there in a hurry because somebody was coming in behind you. The powers that be said OK, if you're injured and can't continue training... We did everything in double time. At Fort Benning, there was no walking whatsoever. Everything was...and your officer or sergeant would say "give me 100" - that meant 100 pushups. If they didn't like the way you had your hat on or something like that. So we were the "hotsy totsies" and we enjoyed the statures that we had. But that ankle...so they said well you can drop back to Company F and start over. And there was no way anybody would go back through training if they could get out of it. They took my jump boots. The boots were made in Corcoran, Massachusetts. I think they are still using them. I've got a brand new set in the back of my car.

**JE:** (laughs) You never know, do you?!

**DM:** No you never know what you're going to jump out of! And they just cut it down the center and taped it and strapped it and made it a walking cast. Then you had to run to keep up with the rest of them. So I did finish jump school, which was six jumps including a night jump at Fort Benning, Georgia.

**JE:** So you were, what, two years in?

**DM:** Um huh...

**JE:** And then you came out of the service. We talked about then how you got into the insurance business. That was after the military.

**DM:** That's right.

**JE:** Alright. So then...

## **Chapter 5 - 4:13**

### **Race Car Driving**

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**John Erling:** Let's get you into real racing. How do you get into racing?

**David Morgan:** Hap Sharp was vacationing. His dad had a place at La Jolla Beach and Tennis Club.

**JE:** And I've got to ask you, who is Hap Sharp?

**DM:** Hap Sharp is J.R. Sharp's son in Greenhill Farm. I think John Oxley still owns it. It's north of the Bomber Plant. Greenhill Farm encompassed all that. Then the city put their water line from Spavinaw down to Tulsa. Sharp owned all that land so he gave them the water

rights, or he gave them the right-of-way, and they gave him water. I don't know, it still might be going on - from Greenhill Farm all the way to Claremore. They bought another branch called Nichols Branch. It's still out there.

**JE:** And Tulsa still gets its water from Spavinaw.

**DM:** That's right.

**JE:** So Hap Sharp...

**DM:** Hap was the only child of Liz Sharp and Mr. J.R. Sharp, who was an extremely wealthy oilman.

**JE:** Did Hap Sharp have an interest in racing?

**DM:** Yes. We raced hydroplanes to begin with, these little hydroplanes. A fellow named Clyde Bear of Bear Marina was here. He took care of our engines. Frank Vincent was a friend of Kiekhaefer. Kiekhaefer developed Mercury Motors. Mr. Kiekhaefer liked us. So we were vacationing out there and spending a couple of weeks right on the beach.

**JE:** Where?

**DM:** In California, Lahoya. Lahoya Beach and Tennis Club was the place to be and there were six houses that went on around up to...I forget the name of the high-dollar hospitalization that's there...Scripps, I think it was, I'm not sure...and these six homes. Well, Hap and I didn't have anything to do so we went out and Mr. Sharp bought us a new corvette. At night, we would go to Miramar...I think is the name of the naval base that was shut down at night. We would go out there and see how fast we could make those cars go up and down the runway.

**JE:** Alright, so that's your introduction to the corvette. He bought this corvette for both of you just to have fun with basically is what you're referring to.

**DM:** Exactly. He knew we knew pretty well what we were doing. But Hap and I tried to share one and that lasted one race because I scared the hell out of him and he scared the hell out of me because you'd go as fast as you could get them going, 100 or so, and then just turn as sharp as you could. They were good cars and they stayed together. That was the start. So I came back and bought a car from Ev Rose, Rose Trucking. I think they still have a place in Tulsa. They were Houston based. Ev Rose had been a very wealthy guy and this corvette I bought from him was a cheater. I didn't know it. It was scaled down.

**JE:** A cheater?

**DM:** Cheater, yes. It was scaled down about  $\frac{1}{8}$  of an inch all over. The glass was very thin and it was a very fast car and I won a lot of races with it. I had a fellow named Creitz that used to build the engines.

**JE:** Here in the '50s?

**DM:** Uh huh.

**JE:** Was it a '58 corvette?

**DM:** Yeah it was a '58. We raced from '59 to '68, or '58 to '69 – I get mixed up a little bit on the fact that we got cars before they were actually made for the public from General Motors, all of those vettes. So I raced just a bunch of races...

**JE:** With that '58 corvette.

**DM:** Well, we got new cars every year from Chevrolet.

**JE:** But the first race you entered was an event in (was it) Fort Stockton, New Mexico?

**DM:** Fort Stockton, New Mexico – I think it was. Every abandoned air base would have a fundraising car race track. So then we just followed. We would use those and they were very good to us. I got to be a midwest champion and so forth, got lots of trophies.

**JE:** Well the next year, you won all 16 races that you entered.

## Chapter 6 - 5:00

### 12 Hours of Sebring

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**John Erling:** And then you compete in the 12-hours of Sebring. That was on Hendricks Army Airfield World War II air base in Sebring, Florida.

**David Morgan:** FIA is the sanctioning body of only two racetracks in the U.S. and that's Sebring and Daytona.

**JE:** How many miles around was that track?

**DM:** 12 miles, 12.5.

**JE:** But the 12 was also for 12 hours you ran?

**DM:** That's correct.

**JE:** You started at what time of the day?

**DM:** 11:00 I think it was.

**JE:** And you'd go till almost midnight?

**DM:** Uh huh.

**JE:** And this was not any smooth driving, was it?

**DM:** No. Sebring was breaking up badly. I mean, it was neglected. But that was part of the game. In sports car racing, you do not have outside lighting. All the lights are supplied on the cars themselves. So your vision is not just perfect out there at 130-160 miles an hour. At Daytona, for instance, I always worried that if you got off that track out there, they couldn't find you because you would be sailing off of that embankment that was...I said it was 45 but I saw some writings on it, they said it was 35. But anyway, that's the big bank. DX Sunray...we were having good luck for them and they decided to field three cars.

**JE:** Right, but I'm going to come back again here. For six of those Sebring appearances, you co-drove with Delmo Johnson.

- DM:** He was the Chevrolet dealer, his father was, at Dallas. He was the largest Chevrolet dealer. As such, they had plenty of “in” with the factory. Don Yankle was the other, Yankle Chevrolet.
- JE:** Tell me how it works to co-drive. Are you two hours on, two hours off? How does that work?
- DM:** We were limited through the sanctioning body to 44-gallon tanks, is what our vettes had.
- JE:** What kind of gasoline are you burning?
- DM:** Essentially aviation gas, it was 12.5 compression ratio. Consequently, you could not have a lower octane fuel. It was supplied by either Sunray DX. Gulf Oil has a team. Roger Penske came up that way.
- JE:** I’m going to bring you back again. So did you drive two hours? How did that work?
- DM:** We’d either drive two or four hours.
- JE:** This is allowed? What kind of equipment – did you have a helmet?
- DM:** Oh yeah, we had Bell helmets – the big people back then. They might still be as far as I’m concerned. I know one saved my life when I hit a dirt bank in the 10th hour at Sebring. The corvette had a roll bar and I was knocked forward. We used a good harness, a 7-point harness, which is the same that they were using military wise for the airplanes. But I still had enough movement that I hit that Bell helmet hard enough onto that bar that it cracked the helmet. Bell didn’t think you could do that and they were there immediately. They wanted to get down there and find out what happened. That was the only really hard thing that happened to me.
- JE:** I can’t imagine – you’re bouncing around, you’re vibrating. The vibrating is very loud, so that when you finish and you start walking around, your body was still vibrating ,wasn’t it?
- DM:** Oh yeah. It took its toll. I was very young though too. But being a front-engine car, it made it doubly bad. You’ll see these beautiful pictures of these cast guards over the mufflers going down the side of the cars. They came right by you within probably 2-1/2 feet, in your ear for that length of time.
- JE:** Wow. It affected your hearing probably?
- DM:** Oh somewhat, in some more than others. Of course, we did try to wear earplugs but hell, you came in and you didn’t have time. Our communication with pits was very, very limited. Particularly with the corvettes being glass, you could not transmit signs well enough. Our engineers figured out to put copper strips on those vettes and that’s how we were able to get communications from the car to the...
- JE:** You could talk by what – radio, two-way radio?
- DM:** Two-way radio is what it was.
- JE:** Oh so you could tell them, “I’m coming in for a pit stop”?
- DM:** Yeah. We were under their control. They told us. Now there’s the strips on the car right there. We figured that out – I mean, not we but our team.

**JE:** We should point out here the corvette, for those who are listening back generations to come, was America's sports car. We all remember the television show "Route 66".

**DM:** That made it.

**JE:** When the corvette starred in that television show, it became THE most successful concept car in history, most popular sports car in history. And so, when you were going to drive, that was the only sports car to drive at that time.

**DM:** That's right.

## Chapter 7 - 4:07

### Henry Ford

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**David Morgan:** Henry Ford decided he'd had enough of that General Motors deal and he was going to go around it. He came up with an all-star team and they built the cars called GT 40s. They were extremely dynamically built. Dan Gurney was lead driver. They had to make a bulge in the glass because he was about 6'4" or something like that, to get clearance for his head for that bouncing around that you're talking about. But we never knew really too much about what Ford was doing because Henry...Hap and I ran into him in an elevator in Le Mans and he wouldn't get on the elevator with us. I mean, he...

**John Erling:** You're talking about Henry Ford?

**DM:** Yeah.

**JE:** THE Henry Ford...and he wouldn't get on the elevator with you...

**DM:** No...

**JE:** ...because you were from General Motors and corvette?

**DM:** Uh huh.

**JE:** (laughs)

**DM:** I always thought that was pretty cute.

**JE:** And probably pretty small too.

**DM:** Yeah, he was not that neat a guy I didn't think. Of course, I was with pretty strong people, with Sharp and head of General Motors, and Zora Duntov. Those guys all knew more than Henry would ever learn.

**JE:** (laughs) Right! Even though he knew a lot about how to make cars, Model A's and Model T's, and the production line. But in '61, you win the GT Class and finish 11th overall. In '64 and '65, you co-drove one of only five 1963 corvette Grand Sports ever built.

**DM:** Uh huh.

**JE:** OK, this is the time to ask you - what was it that made you such a successful race car driver?

- DM:** I was fast.
- JE:** Yeah but you were daring. Wasn't it a daring thing to be going 140-50 miles an hour?
- DM:** No you accepted it. I mean, speed was not a problem. Remember we raced with a downpour at Sebring. Naturally windshield washers at 140 miles an hour didn't work. So you open the door and prop your foot out to look down at the pavement to see the yellow markings so you'd have an idea. Your time on a 12-mile course did not drop off that much. It's amazing how fast you could go that way.
- JE:** At 150 miles an hour, you have that door open?!
- DM:** Yeah.
- JE:** Some people would say you're crazy.
- DM:** Probably (laughs). But I lived through it.
- JE:** Yes you did (laughs). In all your racing, you had one crash.
- DM:** Oh no, I had a few.
- JE:** Oh.
- DM:** But I only had two that...I got hurt when a kid hit me broadside. He had panicked and it was at over 120 miles an hour. I broke the scapula of your shoulder because the corvette had a piece of the roll bar coming in there and it was all solid and it cracked that. It's very painful, but you're not supposed to ever break that boneo because it's surrounded by muscle and so forth. But I never had any fears about getting hurt.
- JE:** Well that was it then. If you didn't have any fear about getting hurt, then you weren't dealing with that; others were and probably were more cautious than you. I'm analyzing it myself right now, but I think you hit it right there. You said you didn't have any fear of getting hurt.
- DM:** No. Of course, you could turn that around - I never wanted to get hurt. I was never worried about getting killed because I knew somebody was taking care of me there. But I never wanted to get hurt. I saw fires, guys burning. I saw things happen on the track that were not joyful sites. And there were times that there was \_\_\_3:55\_\_\_ on the track from an accident or something like that, so you just had to say, "I'm going through it", and it always worked out. I never worried about injury per se.

## Chapter 8 - 7:00

### Jack Zink

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**John Erling:** Then we're going to jump you to 1967 and that's when you connect with Sunray DX Oil here in Tulsa, Oklahoma. It all came together. You are living here. Your father is

an executive of Sunray DX. In fact, as you said earlier, he came up with the idea of DX. Again, that stood for what?

**David Morgan:** D for the diamond and X for the unknown quality of what was in the fuel.

**JE:** D was for the diamond in the logo?

**DM:** Correct. I always got along well with the DX bunch. They appointed a guy that was supposed to be watching our racing team but we didn't pay too much attention to him. That was the advantage of being an amateur. I wasn't worried about losing a job and I wasn't worried about getting hurt.

**JE:** Right, and we should point out you remained an amateur through all your racing.

**DM:** Yes.

**JE:** You never turned professional. And why was it that you remained an amateur?

**DM:** So I could pick and choose my tracks. There were tracks that maybe I had seen a bad thing happen on them. And if it's not fun, well you're not going to keep doing it. I mean, I was doing everything for fun. Delmo was the character of all. I had such great friends. Unfortunately, they are all gone now.

**JE:** So you fly to St. Louis corvette factory to take delivery of this new '67 corvette. When you get off that plane - in fact, you stepped off a Boeing 707 at Lambert Field in St. Louis - and you had no way of knowing this was the beginning of a whole new journey for you.

**DM:** Correct.

**JE:** You take that car and then you drive it.

**DM:** Don Yankle, who was a good engineer...General Motors came up with the idea that these cars, all their tolerances, are so tight that if we could, as they called it, "green up the block", everything would fit better when they put it back together. We were short of time so I said hell, I'll drive the thing back to Canonsburg, Pennsylvania. That's where they were going to tear it down and start over again. I got off the plane, go to the lousy part of St. Louis, dirty old plant - the workmen got a kind of kick out of me because I just poked my finger in and say well *what are you doing there and why* and tell them to get rid of anything they could for weight.

**JE:** Oh you wanted that at the factory, to get rid of as much as you could?

**DM:** Uh huh. So then, I drove it. I can remember the night was kind of rainy and they have lots of railroad tracks and trolley tracks in St. Louis in that part where that factory was. I had street tires and they wouldn't take grip. I had all this horsepower. You know, I was being semi-careful. If I'd wrecked that thing before they got to work on it, they wouldn't have been very happy with me. Anyway, I just drove it all night and got into Canonsburg - I think it was 600-some miles - without getting into any trouble with the police or anything.

**JE:** Right. So then they began to remove unnecessary items in the car.

**DM:** The cars were completely stripped and they started over. That's what our guys were good at. Yankle had two that were excellent.



**JE:** Then it went into the paint shop.

**DM:** Yeah. We were going to go to Le Mans and I wanted to make sure that my training and so forth...I wanted to see red, white and blue/U.S. So consequently, blue bottom - that was the blue. And it had one racing stripe. This was before I had ever seen any of this stuff. It had a white racing stripe and then we pinstriped the red. That was the color of our cars. It was the entire time I raced.

**JE:** And then Sunray Oil's logo was dark blue, I think - their logo sprayed on the lower half of the body.

**DM:** Which worked out. Red was the interior. Of course, we got rid of all of the interior.

**JE:** What about the seat? You're going to be sitting on this for a long, long time. You must have made some cushioning in it.

**DM:** I think we used Recaro seats that were made in Europe. We did have good...we fixed them ourselves how we wanted them.

**JE:** There were some safety concerns back then too because there were drivers who were killed, crashes.

**DM:** Oh yeah.

**JE:** A famous name was Mario Andretti.

**DM:** Yeah.

**JE:** Did you meet him?

**DM:** I met Mario when he was racing for Jim Hall at Indy. I've even met his grandsons now. Jim Hall sponsored Indy cars. My connection with, God love him, Jack Zink from here. Jack Zink would have these guys come to his plant. We were bachelors. We'd cook. He designed this ironing board that would come down in the kitchen and serve buffet style at this plant off of Peoria out here.

**JE:** We should point out that Jack Zink drove in Indianapolis.

**DM:** He never drove; his dad would not let him.

**JE:** Oh really?

**DM:** His dad...now there's a character. He always walked around with those hats, the sun hats. He was pretty much overweight so he would wear white shorts made out of toweling.

**Marlene Morgan:** Terrycloth.

**DM:** Terrycloth. Mr. Zink would come through...there were no private offices at Zink. It was all wide open. Everybody had desks. But he just let Jack and I kind of do what we wanted to.

**JE:** So Jack maintained an interest in Indianapolis but he never drove?

**DM:** No, but he sponsored cars.

**JE:** But he sponsored cars, OK.

**DM:** And everybody knew him.

**JE:** So here are the two of you. I mean, you were the driver, he had the interest, and it was fun to be together here in Tulsa.

**DM:** Oh yeah. Jack had a great, great cadre of friends. These guys would come in. They all liked to come down here with our little bachelor pad over on 24th Street. I built it.

**JE:** You built it?

**DM:** Yeah, because I put a frame down and put the 2 x 4's and I'd lay out that. The house is still over there. What's our doctor friend?

**MM:** Bob Ingram.

**DM:** Bob Ingram. It's a beautiful house, first block off of Lewis on 24th Street. I had that house I built and then there was a two-story that they have turned into a three-story now - 2213 - and our number was 2231. I brought Marlene into that in 1967.

**JE:** Alright, and we should mention here we talk about the Zink Dam, which is very much in the news. It was his money that went into that Zink Dam. That's why it was named that.

**DM:** That's right.

## Chapter 9 - 4:55

### 24 Hours of Daytona

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**John Erling:** So, '67 corvette. You get it ready now for a race. In the first race you ran, where was that?

**David Morgan:** It was Daytona.

**JE:** 24 hours of Daytona.

**DM:** Uh huh.

**JE:** So what happens in your first race?

**DM:** This is where I take credit for. Sunray DX...we had been doing all this racing but we had never done round-round racing...that's what I call it...track racing, which is Daytona with high banks and so forth. I kept reading about Jerry Grant from Washington. He was doing all the good out there, so I just called him. Sunray might have paid him as far as I know, could be. He was a big old guy that wasn't scared of a car or scared of the walls or anything like that. We got some real savvy learning from him. On those banks at 200 miles an hour, the air would form just like you hitting a brick wall. It would knock you back down. I mean, if your ass then swung up a little bit too far, man - it was like somebody hammering you. That's what I learned about round-round tracks.

**JE:** Would it be right to say there's a gravitational pull on you then at that time?

**DM:** Yeah. We were supposed to have had 6-point...

**JE:** G's...don't they call them?

**DM:** You couldn't lift up your hand or anything in the cars with the G forces.

- JE:** In that first race, you had brake failure, 40 minutes left in the race.
- DM:** Oh yeah. We had a two-bit part, 65-cent part that broke. All I could do was head for the sand bank. I just had to keep it straight from rolling over and over.
- JE:** But you finished the race?
- DM:** Uh huh. It took a long time, though. But we had such a lead built up.
- JE:** OK. So you didn't manage first place?
- DM:** Yeah, but we were going for overall and easily we were going to do it. At that time, we were the highest placed American car.
- JE:** You continued to drive that summer. Then comes 1968 and Sunray decides, "Well this is good, we're going to expand our race team", and they enter three cars in the 24 Hours of Daytona. Here comes a '68 and you still have your '67. I understand you were given a choice, and you could choose to go with the '68 or stay with the '67. What did you choose to do?
- DM:** Well I chose the '67 because I knew what it was going to do. The '68 was aerodynamically superior but I didn't think that would make much difference in a race that long. So consequently, I took the '67 and we were way ahead. Well the '68s, then they had an unrelated failure of rear end failure on those. They were still able to run but they were out of contention. We took the famous picture of the three cars together on the Daytona bank so it made for good publicity for Sunray DX.
- JE:** You talked about the aerodynamics of the '68. The '67 was predicted to be slower. But the big problem, as I understand it, with the '68 was the front end lift and the designer, as we've talked about, Zora Duntov, said that above 150 miles per hour, they became bad airplanes.
- DM:** Well that would be Zora's thinking for sure. Yeah, Delmo Johnson was quite a character. He'd like to go by the pits and, of course, going into turn 3, you were going 194 miles an hour. That's where they had the trap set up to check on your speed. But I can remember...Delmo would go by and he would just turn the wheel loose and the front wheels would go every which way because there was no pressure on them. Then he would get it back down and go on. Delmo thought he was very cute that way.
- JE:** Well, the front end was flying, wasn't it?!
- DM:** (laughs) It was flying. We discovered the low pressure bidding was on the hood. That hood...that was the major advantage it had over the '68. Right before your windshield was a low pressure (I'm no engineer), meaning it kept you on the ground or destroyed the lift of the front end and, therefore, it was faster. Now some place in all the write-ups, they attribute me as saying something like, "Well if it gets out of hand on that race track, you just head it in at that speed against the wall and wear it down and it gets you straightened out".

**JE:** (laughs)

**DM:** Well, yeah that would do it. But that's some more of what aerodynamics happened to those cars.

**JE:** But those new and improved '68 corvettes had many problems, I'm reading here now, including severely overheated differentials and that took them out of contention.

## Chapter 10 - 5:00

### Jim Norton

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**John Erling:** Let me ask you then the Rolex 24 at Daytona - that's a 24-hour race - and you've just probably shown me now a Rolex. Did you acquire that from racing there?

**David Morgan:** Uh huh.

**JE:** Wow, how special that is.

**DM:** Special deal.

**JE:** That's a 24-hour race. So how many hours and how many people are driving then the same car?

**DM:** Daytona was just two of us.

**JE:** And you're driving 24 hours. How long were your shifts?

**DM:** Two and four hours.

**JE:** Every two or four hours. And not much sleep. I mean, you said you'd get a nap. You think you'd nap for 20 minutes or could you sleep for an hour or so on those breaks?

**DM:** I think I did a pretty good job.

**Marlene Morgan:** You had that trailer. You'd go rest in the trailer and I have pictures of you. I knew to leave you alone when you were resting, but I did go back one time and you said, "Something's going wrong with the Porsche, I can hear it". He had an ear for every other motor out there going around.

**DM:** Yeah, that was one thing, I could figure out engine noise and they used me a great deal for that.

**JE:** Even your own car you could hear something is not right, even though others couldn't.

**DM:** Yep, just got attuned to that.

**JE:** Man, you were born to race, weren't you?

**DM:** I should have been.

**JE:** No, you were.

**MM:** And sing. He has a very gifted ear.

**JE:** Oh really?

- MM:** Yes, he could have made more money as a singer.
- JE:** But it wasn't as dangerous.
- MM:** (laughs)
- JE:** Do you sing in choir?
- DM:** I sang in 6th grade at Barnard. I would sing "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" and I had a red velvet suit on.
- MM:** Yes, girls that went to school with him would tell me that story until the last one died a couple years ago about David Morgan on the stage singing "Somewhere Over the Rainbow". He does have a good voice.
- JE:** As we're talking about all these brands, I can't help but notice you have a tie clasp on here that says "Toyota" on it. Why Toyota?
- DM:** Well, I own two agencies. The one here I started here.
- JE:** Toyota agency here?
- DM:** Uh huh.
- JE:** What was the name of it?
- DM:** Toyota of Tulsa. It was down at 6th and Elgin. That little building is there, the old Phillips station is in front of it. A guy came by and had a load of Toyotas, a fuel man, and he says, "Would you be interested in selling Toyotas?" That's about the essence of what it was. I said yes. I figured the only thing they had out there was the German Beetle with no air conditioning and three speed. I knew that any air conditioned car and automatic transmission would go over here, \$1950 I think it was.
- JE:** Was that before American cars?
- DM:** Well yeah, we didn't have any small cars.
- JE:** You started your dealership by selling Toyotas.
- DM:** Uh huh. Then I bought the one in Oklahoma City. Had roots of when I went over there to check on the Mercedes and I got fascinated by the dealership over there, so we built a building out there on 39th. Dick McMann from here was a partner of mine. I never had any money. I mean I had spent all of my money. We built that out there and it was very successful.
- JE:** How many years did you have a Toyota dealership?
- DM:** 10 years wasn't it?
- MM:** Uh huh.
- JE:** Well then you were a celebrated name too so it was kind of interesting...it was kind of interesting why you wouldn't be selling Chevrolet products.
- DM:** Yeah, and now I'm back, my largest account is Jim Norton's group in the insurance business.
- JE:** And right now you're with what insurance company?
- DM:** Well I'm with Summit Financial and we do a benefits department. They've got something like 50 offices around the country.

- JE:** Rich and Cartmill...were you with them?
- DM:** I was with them and they retired me a couple years ago without benefits. That wasn't really smart on their deal, unfortunately. Jim Norton came in as a very nice large account.
- JE:** Yes, Jim Norton has been in the business many, many years and he sells several brands, doesn't he?
- DM:** Oh yes.
- JE:** What does he sell?
- DM:** Well Buick was their family, but they've got Chevrolet and Toyota.
- JE:** Jim Norton, rather than going to Rich and Cartmill, followed you to where you are today and so that's your big account right now.
- DM:** That's correct.
- JE:** And that turned out to be a good deal for you.
- DM:** Excellent deal, yep. Very few people can land on their feet like that.
- JE:** Yeah, that was just a few years ago. Now you're 94 and you're still wheeling and dealing at business at this age and a few years ago. You've got to give Jim Norton a lot of credit for following you.
- DM:** Uh huh, well Jim and I always got along well, never had any trouble being partners.

## Chapter 11 - 7:00

### Always an Amateur

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- John Erling:** How do the cars of yesteryear compare to today?
- David Morgan:** I don't feel I'm a very good judge of that any more. I don't think I follow it that closely. I look at all these little Koreans, Japanese...
- JE:** Kia, who would have thought?!
- DM:** Yeah, well there's good marketing and I helped get Honda here, taught the guy here. He was selling one a month. He called it the one-a-month club. That's all they were selling of Hondas when I had Toyota. Made fun of him. Toly was the money behind that...Toly Arutunoff. He's a local guy.
- JE:** Is there any race that you feel really good about, great racing achievements?
- DM:** Any that I finished and won were great.
- JE:** (laughs) Right. How about your favorite courses that you enjoyed the most?
- DM:** I think I liked Elkhart Lake. I can't compare any of the others because most of them are on airport racing...flat. They were fun for me but they weren't fun for spectators.
- JE:** The flats...

- DM:** Uh huh. I did everything that I wanted to do.
- JE:** Was that '67 corvette your most enjoyable car?
- DM:** Well I had a Lotus 20 that was a lot easier to drive. I'd call it The Pencil. I won the Pan American Championship which was the last of the formula junior races over here. That was much more fun to drive. But that was a forgiving car. I mean, it was a safe car. The Europeans and all, they knew better than to get in our way. The first woman sports car driver was Denise McCluggage. She hated us and tried to get us disqualified.
- JE:** Who was she driving for?
- DM:** Ferrari.
- JE:** Ferrari.
- DM:** Yeah I think she was sleeping with ol' [unsure of name]. She had pretty good equipment, but she was a horse otherwise.
- JE:** (laughs)
- DM:** But the people that I got to associate with were just fine people. Gosh, if you'd read some of their letters that I still get. Some of them, the fact that they had an awful lot of money didn't mean anything; they were still bad people. But most of them were just neat people.
- JE:** And you retired, do you remember what year and how old you were?
- DM:** Well my last race was 1968. Hap and I drove one grand touring in the '68 then.
- JE:** How old were you when you retired from racing?
- DM:** 42.
- JE:** 42 years old. What made you retire then?
- DM:** I had done it all, did what I wanted to do. I did the same way about racing. I went to the races I wanted to.
- JE:** You said you were an amateur, but you did get paid, didn't you, for this?
- DM:** Huh uh.
- JE:** You mean you drove all those races...I don't know how many races...do you have any idea how many races you drove. You don't know?
- DM:** No, but I'm sure Delmo was right on the 50 on that last year.
- JE:** You mean you did all this driving and you were never paid?
- DM:** Well you have to qualify that in the fact that, for instance, I had a contract with Goodyear, ran all their tires, that that's an expense.
- JE:** So you got paid for being endorsed by them?
- DM:** Yeah in a way I guess. We've got some lifetime magazines with Gulf Oil interviewing me. I did endorsements but I did what I wanted to do and if I didn't like it, I didn't do it. So not taking money for them...
- JE:** You had a relationship with Firestone Tires. Did you meet Harvey Firestone?
- DM:** Uh huh, I've got a picture here.

**JE:** Alright.

**Marlene Morgan:** Well that's the soapbox derby when you met him.

**DM:** That's clear back...yeah...

**JE:** You met Harvey Firestone when you were driving soapbox derby?

**DM:** Uh huh.

**JE:** As a youngster.

**DM:** Yes. It was the days when if your dad died, you wore a black band on your tailored suits and so forth like that. It's a good picture of him. They took good care of us. No I never did anything for...it was a hobby.

**JE:** But you were in the insurance business all this time so you did have an income coming in.

**DM:** Very good.

**JE:** And you were able to balance insurance and car racing because much of that was on the weekend, was it?

**DM:** On the weekend, right.

**JE:** And then you'd come home and do your insurance.

**DM:** Uh huh. You know, they'd fly and pick me up and fly me back. We had good equipment. So I would just pick and choose on anything I wanted to do.

**JE:** There must have been those who wanted to make you a professional and sponsor you. You had probably many offers of that. You had to have since you were winning all these races.

**DM:** Oh I'd like to say that but I don't think it was really that great. I didn't have many offers because they knew that I was going to take care of me first.

**JE:** And maybe a sponsorship wasn't that lucrative back then.

**DM:** Oh that's true too. They didn't pay these guys...endorsements, yes I'm sure. But I can't think of any of them until later years that really could make a decent living out of them. Mr. Hendricks that has my '63 and '64 car, he also owns 600 Chevrolet dealerships in the country. I could call him and get his G5 and go someplace if I want to.

**JE:** That '67 corvette, where is that now? It's in a museum where?

**DM:** It's on Long Island.

**Marlene Morgan:** With Glen Spielberg.

**JE:** Did you ever just buy a corvette for personal use and drive around?

**DM:** They always gave me corvettes.

**JE:** (laughs) Of course, of course they would have. How stupid of me...

**DM:** Well that's not stupid.

**JE:** You had a corvette most every year you wanted.

**DM:** Usually I had a street car and then the race cars were supplied.

**JE:** Right but they supplied your street car too.

**DM:** Uh huh.



- JE:** So there were some benefits that came along with this.
- DM:** Oh yeah.
- JE:** And then you were really celebrated as a driver who won so many races. You must have made many personal appearances maybe and signing autographs and that type?
- DM:** Oh yeah, you do that and to this day, I answer probably two calls a week that somebody's writing a book. I would think that they're out of material by now. But you get these calls.
- MM:** There are so many little models now of the cars that you drove.
- DM:** Yeah, diecast became popular.
- MM:** And they want those autographed. They sent one in and then we have to sign it and sent it back and they send us a dinner ticket.
- JE:** Doesn't that make you feel good, though, that after all these years, you have not been forgotten in the racing community?
- DM:** Sure.
- JE:** Of course it does.
- MM:** And then you called and came along.
- JE:** (laughs).
- DM:** I mean it's an honor to be picked out.

## Chapter 12 – 7:26

### 39 Minutes

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- John Erling:** When you get into your regular car and traveling, did you ever have a heavy foot. Did you get picked up for speeding many times, any times?
- David Morgan:** Never wanted to get picked up because they could disqualify you from racing.
- JE:** Oh really?
- DM:** Yeah, they didn't want us doing anything dumb like that. Consequently, I didn't get many tickets.
- JE:** Many...
- DM:** And I'd always tell the policeman what my situation was and they all seemed to understand that.
- JE:** You mean that you needed to get someplace in a hurry?
- DM:** Yeah.
- JE:** (laughs)
- DM:** The only long range deal I have, I ended up with a Gullwing Mercedes, aluminum bodied. There was only seven of them built for over here. I got it from a dealer down in

Oklahoma City. I had the dealership over in Oklahoma City so I had to go down there once a week. It would get sort of boring. I was just driving the Gullwing. It would register 160 without any trouble and it was solid. The engine was turning low considering. The turnpike was brand new and I thought well gee, this would be fun just to run it a little bit.

**JE:** OK, this is a Mercedes now you're talking about?

**DM:** Mercedes Benz Gullwing. They are an extremely valuable car; now I hear that they are 10s of millions of dollars. They had the wings that came up. So I couldn't get it to slow down in time and I came up on a highway patrolman at about Sapulpa.

**JE:** How fast do you think you were going?

**DM:** Oh probably 130. So I came up on him so fast; oh shoot, I'm in trouble. Well I can either stop or just keep going. So I get to Kellyville I think it is and there's a highway patrolman standing outside of his car and he salutes me as I'm coming by at that speed...well this is really fun. At that time, they'd hand you a card on the Turner Turnpike and it had the time that you went on...

**JE:** Because it was a toll...

**DM:** And then when you got off. Consequently, I thought well this is good. So he stood out there at Kellyville and they did the same thing to me at the halfway mark. They stood by, they saw the car coming and I just let her go...last was Stroud. so when I finally got to the end of the turnpike, it was 39 minutes from here to the city.

**JE:** (laughs)

**DM:** You know, it gave me something to do and I knew I saw safe and the car was good and I wasn't going to do anything dumb.

**JE:** This was daytime, of course.

**DM:** Daytime.

**JE:** OK, so did they ever catch up with you?

**DM:** No they were proud really.

**JE:** Did they know it was you or they spotted a car that was...

**DM:** Oh they spotted the car, I'm sure they knew...well they knew how fast it was going. I mean they had radar.

**JE:** So they just said well just let him go!

**DM:** Yeah (laughs)

**JE:** (laughs)

**DM:** And that was a fun little trip. I had that darn ticket; it's disappeared around here someplace.

**JE:** What ticket?

**DM:** The in and out...

**JE:** Oh, your receipt for the toll road.

**DM:** Yeah. So that broke the monotony of driving the turnpike once a week.

**JE:** That's great.

- DM:** I've had a charmed life. I mean people say that and I've had nothing but good.
- JE:** You said you had lived a charmed life. As you look back on this great life, how would you like to be remembered?
- DM:** As an honorable person that had a tremendous amount of good friends and a good wife and, like I said, good kids.
- JE:** Tell me how many children do you have?
- DM:** I've got two girls and we adopted a boy. We lost our boy, he was 3, in Noel, Missouri and he drove a Land Cruiser off a cliff.
- JE:** 3 years old...
- DM:** He was advanced. He was riding small cycles, those little cushioned...
- Marlene Morgan:** He loved cars...he had a love for cars.
- DM:** Uh huh. We were unloading up there, a weekend trip to Noel. So I lost that boy and he was beautiful like Marlene.
- JE:** But that's amazing a 3-year-old boy could get in and engage the car?
- DM:** Yeah.
- MM:** He had paid attention...in the blink of an eye he did that.
- DM:** And his Doberman.
- MM:** His dog, the Doberman, was with him. Well, life has its intrusions and...
- JE:** That was tough for you to get over that, both of you.
- MM:** Yes. We've had other intrusions and they change your life. They change everything about you. That one certainly did. So you asked about children...it's a long story because then, a total miracle. I mean, adoption agencies were closed. But an attorney saw David on the sidewalk and said, "I have a baby, I really want you to take this baby". She was a good one. But then, suddenly, a mental health issue kicked in. In that day, nobody could tell us what it was; it was just life out of control. But she brought us a baby. That was okay; we could do that. We adopted him and then 4 years later, she brought us another one...beautiful children. Their husbands are off somewhere. So it was our family. It was ours to take care of our children.
- JE:** In this case, grandchildren...
- MM:** Yes. I have to tell you this. You know, I think I can tell you; it's our spiritual way of looking at it. We're each given a cup to drink. It's our life. Jesus was given a cup to drink and he asked God if it be His will to take it. Did that happen? No. So, our cup is ours to drink too. And in it, you pour your grease and your glories; you blend them together...your sorrows and your joys and you blend them together. That's your cup to drink. At our 50th wedding anniversary, I told Jim Miller there was a book I had read; I liked that. And so he delivered that as a sermon at our 50th anniversary in the atrium of our church. It's up to us what we do with these intrusions into our life.

**JE:** Right. Interesting how you call them that...intrusions into our life. That's very good. Jim Miller is the pastor, of course, of First Presbyterian Church in downtown Tulsa. Well we can't get through this life on earth without having an intrusion no matter how accomplished or celebrated we are.

**DM:** Right.

**JE:** Everybody has it. It doesn't make any difference if you're rich or poor. We're all going to have it. There's no question about that. Well I just enjoyed being with the two of you here today and I thank you for giving us your time, talking about it. This was a good way to finish it off. Thank you, Marlene, I appreciate that very much.

**DM:** Thank you.

**JE:** Any pearls of wisdom you can give me?

**DM:** You obviously have seen it and heard it all so...

**MM:** Well I think you're very good.

**DM:** Yeah, you draw out.

**MM:** I prepared for you because you had said I don't know anything about racing, and I think he knows a lot.

**JE:** Well I do my preparation as well.

**MM:** I think you did.

**JE:** So thank you, both of you very much. I appreciate it.

**DM:** Thank you. I mean it's our pleasure.

**MM:** One of our joys.

**DM:** Yeah.

## Chapter 13 - 0:33

### Conclusion

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**Announcer:** This oral history presentation is made possible through the support of our generous foundation-funders. We encourage you to join them by making your donation, which will allow us to record future stories. Students, teachers, and librarians are using this website for research and the general public is listening every day to these great Oklahomans share their life experience.

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