

Leonard Vahsholtz, Pikes Peak International Hill Climb

Woodland Park's own superstar won 18 titles (the most by any driver) on the Pikes Peak International Hill Climb, the nation's second oldest auto race behind the Indianapolis 500. In cobbling together a legendary career in the fabled race, the Mobridge, South Dakota, native became the "Winningest Driver on Pikes Peak." His titles came in three divisions- stock, sprint and super truck, and he ended his run last year with a triumph in the Open Division in his 2005 Ford Explorer. Since his first PPIHC run in 1977 in a Torino dubbed "The Red Sled," he chalked up 95 wins in 139 races on the Hill. He was the event's 1977 Rookie of the Year and also teamed with his son, Clint, to record more father-son titles (32) than anyone else, surpassing Bobby and Robby Unser. He and his family have been Woodland Park residents since 1963, and during an impromptu drag race with a pal on Highway 67 in 1965, legend has it that he got the inspiration to become a great racer. (he lost the race and \$5.00, by the way). The Race to the Clouds became the beneficiary of that decision. He retired in 2007 after winning the Open Class with a personal record 11:30.536, the best ever for a two-wheel-drive, full-bodied vehicle. Along the way, he found time to build numerous engines for NASCAR Busch racing teams, Baja and Desert off-road trucks, and Pikes Peak competitors.