

Jigger Sirois



Leon Duray 'Jigger' Sirois was born into a racing family from a small rural town in Northwest Indiana. Jigger was destined to become a racecar driver from his early years. His dad, Frenchy Sirois, owned a hardware store in Shelby, IN and was an Indy 500 mechanic and long time race fan. Frenchy was on three Indy 500 winning teams in 1951, '57, and '58. Jigger began his driving career in 1957 and has four midget track championships to show for it. The usual ladder system that led to Indy was to learn how to race in midgets, sprints, dirt champ cars and finally if you were any good...you might get a ride at Indy. Jigger was severely injured in a 1962 midget crash and was unconscious for seven days. After recovering from his injuries, he stayed with the program and continued to win races. He got his Indy opportunity in 1969 and almost set on the pole as a rookie. On the first day of qualifications, the car owner waved off a qualifying run that would have made the race and (due to weather) would have put Jigger on the pole. They ended up missing the race on the second weekend when the car owner again waved off a time (26th fastest) that would have put them in the 500. Over the next decade Jigger drove various Indy cars, including several rides in turbine cars, but was never able to put one into the 500 starting field.

There is a tough luck award at Indy called the "Jigger Award". It is given to a driver who misses the Indy 500 because of unusual circumstances. Jigger is the namesake of this award that is presented by the American Auto Racing Writers & Broadcasters Association.

The Sirois family is having a vintage racing auction in Indy on the Saturday prior to the 2011 Indianapolis 500. They are donating all the proceeds to the Indianapolis Riley Hospital for Children.



Jigger vs. AJ in the Astrodome



Jigger at Indy 1969