



# MR. NORM'S BIOGRAPHY



## A Legacy of Automotive Milestones.

**1948:**

Norm Kraus began his automotive career selling used cars with brother Len from a gas station their father Harvey owned, located at the corner of Grand and Spaulding in Chicago.

**1951:**

The business flourished and the lot next to the service station on Grand Avenue was purchased and converted into a used car lot, using the service station as a facility to do repairs.

**1956:**

Noticing interest in stick shift and performance type cars, they focused on purchasing these types of vehicles for resale. It was at this time that the famous appellation "Mr Norm" first appeared, due to a space limitation in a newspaper ad. The name stuck and Norm Kraus became "Mr. Norm."

**1962:**

After several years of solicitation by the local Dodge sales rep, the decision was made to become a new car dealer and Grand Spaulding Dodge opened in the Fall of that year, named for the corner on which it was located. The focus of the dealership was high performance. Many industry professionals predicted lackluster success at best.

**1963:**

A new Grand Spaulding Dodge showroom and service department was built to accommodate the new business. Tying in the performance theme that was established from the onset, the "Mr. Norm's Sport Club" was started and the relationship with youthful performance purchasers was further developed. The first Clayton Chassis Dynamometer was installed in the service department and the dealership began selling "Mr. Norm's" racing apparel.

**1964:**

Norm formed the first Grand Spaulding Dodge racing team comprised of two cars, a Max Wedge and a Hemi Ram. Meanwhile, sales of new Dodges doubled over the previous year, a phenomenon that would continue for the next seven years!

The first of many "Mr. Norm's" Sport Club social/dances with The Buckingham's as feature music group took place at the dealership. The service department was enlarged to double the original size to handle ever-increasing demands based on sales of Hemi Rams and Max Wedges. Mr Norm's radio commercials began on rock channel WLS in Chicago, one of the



most powerful AM radio station in the US, and were heard around the country.

1965

1965:

Norm teamed up with Gary Dyer and began match racing with an altered wheel base Supercharged Hemi Dodge Coronet that altered the course of racing forever by laying the groundwork for what became the professional Funny Car Category. This car turned an 8.63 e.t. at Lions Dragway late in the year to become the fastest funny car in the country, making the front page of the Los Angeles Herald. Late in the year, Mr. Norm went to the fledgling SEMA Show in Anaheim, California and instituted a full-scale high performance parts department at the dealership.



1966

1966:

Grand Spaulding Dodge continued to grow at a meteoric rate and became the largest high performance Dodge dealership in the country. This was backed up by the largest parts and service departments dedicated to high performance in the country. That year marked the opening of Grand Spaulding Auto Leasing. Also, a second Clayton Chassis Dynamometer was added to handle the escalating demand for dyno tuning.



1967

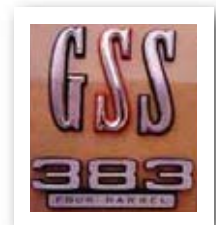
1967:

Mr. Norm developed the first 383 Dart that became the prototype for the factory 383 Dart GTS. Grand Spaulding Dodge purchased additional property for expansion of the dealership.

1968

1968:

Mr. Norm developed the first 440 Dart GSS that became the prototype for the factory M Code 440 Dart GTS. The high performance parts department was expanded to double its original size and additional property on Grand Avenue was purchased to increase the size of the used car lot for the sale of high performance trade ins.



1969

1969:

Mr Norm's Dodge Super Charger super fuel funny car wins the Coca-Cola "Cavalcade of Stars" Championship.

1970

1970:

Additional property was purchased on Grand Avenue and dedicated to the flourishing market for trucks and vans.

1971

1971:

Mr Norm developed the compact 340 6 Pack Demon, a high performance muscle car that offered a significantly lower insurance premium with no loss in performance.

1972

1972:

Mr Norm created the Supercharged 340 Demon GSS, a super high performance muscle car that offered big block power in a small package. The dealership was enlarged again with the purchase of a two-story 60,000-sq. ft. building across the street from the original building. It featured a large 75 car indoor showroom as well as enlarged fleet and leasing departments. A new franchise was acquired, and Mr Norm's Kawasaki, a motorcycle dealership, was started. That year Grand Spaulding became the Number Three Dodge dealership in volume sales.



1973

1973:

Mr. Norm developed the conversion van concept as a substitute for the declining market share in muscle cars and scored another first. He opened a van department in the fleet office to supply the burgeoning van conversion business with vehicles. He purchased 280,000-sq. ft. of additional property to store the increasing automotive inventory. Grand Spaulding became the Number Two Dodge dealership in volume sales.

**1974:**

Grand Spaulding Dodge became Number One, the largest volume Dodge dealership in the world.

**1975:**

Grand Spaulding Dodge fleet department became so large that it supplied all of the Chicago Police Department cars, as well as the Illinois Secretary of State, Department of Transportation and many municipalities. Also, special orders of police pursuit vehicles equipped with 440 Magnum V8 engines were dyno tuned for maximum power. Many of these vehicles were seen in the film the "Blues Brothers" starring Dan Akroyd and the late John Belushi.

**1977:**

Mr. Norm sold his ownership in Grand Spaulding Dodge.

**1989:**

Mr. Norm was inducted into the Mopar Hall of Fame.

**1996:**

Mr. Norm was inducted into the A/FX Funny Car Hall of Fame

**1997:**

Mr. Norm teams up with Larry Weiner and creates the Limited Edition Mr. Norm's SuperCharged 500 collectible sport trucks.

Mr. Norm receives a Lifetime Achievement Award by Mopar Action Magazine at the Mopar Nationals.

Mr. Norm appears at the SEMA Show in Las Vegas as a special guest celebrity.

Mr. Norm becomes a spokesman for Year One, the largest muscle car restoration supply company in the world. He is seen in ads by over one million people in the first printing.

Collectible die cast models of Mr. Norm funny cars become available.

Oil painting by famed artist James Ibuski debuts at the Bakersfield Reunion featuring Mr. Norm's legendary '65 supercharged nitro burning altered wheelbase car. Each litho sequentially serial numbered and signed by Mr. Norm and the artist .



**1998:**

Mr. Norm inducted in the Supercar Showdown Hall Of Fame in Columbus, Ohio.

Mr. Norm is featured on the TNN television program "My Classic Car."

Mr. Norm is the featured guest celebrity of the Chrysler's At Carlisle event.

Mr. Norm inducted in the Route 66 Cruizin Hall Of Fame in San Bernardino, California

Mr. Norm is the featured celebrity at the "My Classic Car Reunion" in Evansville, Indiana

**1999:**

Mr. Norm's Sport Club returns. After a nearly 30 year hiatus, the Sport Club returns thanks to the dedicated efforts of Mopar enthusiast and collector Jim Bodanis. Launched at Chrysler's At Carlisle, the Sport Club is enthusiastically supported by hundreds of loyal Mr. Norm's fans from around the country and Canada right from the start.

Noted artist David Snyder debuts at 3300 W. Grand at the 1999 edition of Chrysler's At Carlisle. Serial numbered and signed by Mr. Norm and the artist, the lithograph features the legendary Mr. Norm's Grand Spaulding Dodge dealership circa 1970 at the height of the muscle car era.



Mr. Norm makes a guest appearance at the Mopar Nationals and visits with fans and Sport Club Members at the Mr. Norm's Sport Club Tent. People posing with Norm for photos include none other than Bill "Maverick" Golden of the Dodge Little Red Wagon

Mr. Norm makes a guest appearance at the Woodward Dream Cruise in Detroit

Mr. Norm is the guest celebrity at Moparfest in Ontario, Canada

#### **2003:**

Mr. Norm's 68 Dart 440 GSS 1/18th die cast model is introduced through Supercar Collectables.

Mr. Norm introduces a full line of GSS street and race cars 1/18th die cast models through Supercar Collectables.



#### **2004:**

Mr Norm introduces the Mr Norms Sport Club special event, for members and having club plaques for winners of A,B,E,. body cars and all around car of the show. And will introduce more events for 05.

#### **2005:**

Mr. Norm's 1964 Super Stocker will be available in the spring of 2005, in limited edition from Supercar Collectibles. The second in the series of Funny Cars, it is a 1/18 scale diecast model of the first Mr. Norm's race car, the beginning of the Funny Car Era.

#### **2006:**

Mr Norm introduces the new Mr. Norm's 1968 GSS Hemi Dart at the SEMA SHOW in the Mr. Gasket Company Exhibit. Limited to only 40 serial numbered vehicles, several are sold immediately and production starts in Florida. Mr. Norm's 1968 GSS Hemi Dart is displayed at the 2007 San Diego International Automobile Show in the SEMA SHOWCASE

#### **2007:**

Mr. Norm is a guest celebrity at the Grand National Roadster Show in Pomona, California, where his original Hemi Colt is displayed along with the first new 1968 GSS Hemi Dart.

Mr. Norm's 1968 GSS Hemi Dart is displayed at the Chryslers At Carlisle in Carlisle, PA

Mr. Norm's 1968 GSS Hemi Dart is displayed at the Mopar Nationals in Columbus, OH

Mr. Norm introduces the new 2008 Mr. Norm's Dodge Ram Super Truck at the SEMA SHOW in the SONY Exhibit. Production is limited to only 100 serial numbered vehicles.

#### **2008:**

Mr. Norm's Dodge Ram Super Truck is displayed in the Dodge Corporate Exhibit at the 2007 Arizona International Automobile Show in Phoenix, AZ

Mr. Norm's Dodge Ram Super Truck is displayed in the Dodge Corporate Exhibit at the 2007 Sacramento Automobile Show in Sacramento, CA

Mr. Norm's Dodge Ram Super Truck is displayed in the Dodge Corporate Exhibit at the 2008 San Diego International Automobile Show in San Diego, CA

Mr. Norm's Dodge Ram Super Truck is displayed at the 2008 La Jolla Motor Car Classic in La Jolla, CA

Mr. Norm's Dodge Ram Super Truck is displayed at the 2008 Grand National Roadster Show with the first production 1968 GSS Hemi Dart and a Mr. Norm's 1968 GSS M-CODE 440 Dart

Mr. Norm's Dodge Ram Super Truck featured on KUSI TV San Diego Good Morning Show