



INDUCTEE BIOGRAPHY: MOTORSPORTS LEGEND MARIO ANDRETTI

Superman Hall of Heroes inductee Mario Andretti is a living legend. Throughout his career in motorsports, he was not only able to win at every level, he was also able to master every discipline in which he chose to race. Andretti took the checkered flag 111 times in his career, collecting national and world championships along the way. He is admired for his warmth, dignity and class and gives back to the community through organizations like Meals on Wheels, The Fund to Benefit Children and Youth and his various efforts in support of our troops and wounded warriors.

Mario Andretti's accomplishments in motorsports are unequalled. He is the only driver in history to have won the Indianapolis 500, the Daytona 500, the Formula One World Championship, and the Pikes Peak Hillclimb. He also earned four Indy Car championships, along with multiple endurance race victories. Andretti won at virtually every level of motorsports since he arrived in America from his native Italy at the age of 15.

Andretti's road to success, however, was not paved as smooth as the tracks on which he raced. He was born in Montona, Italy (now Croatia) around the time World War II broke out. By the end of the war, Montona became part of Yugoslavia, which meant the Andretti family was now living in a communist country. After three years the family went back to Italy, and spent the next seven years living in a refugee camp in Lucca in Tuscany. In 1955, the family was finally granted a visa and they emigrated from Italy to the United States. Four years later, Mario and his twin brother, Aldo were racing.

Andretti won his first Indy Car race in 1965, the Hoosier Grand Prix, and finished third in the Indianapolis 500, earning him Rookie-of-the-Year honors. He won his first Indy Car championship that same year at the age of 25, becoming the youngest driver to win that title. He backed it up in 1966 with his second championship, on the strength of eight wins and his first pole starting spot in the Indy 500.

In 1967, Andretti's passion for racing saw him win NASCAR's Daytona 500, take his second pole at the Indy 500, claim his first of three career victories in the 12 Hours of Sebring endurance race, finish as runner-up in the Indy Car national championship and be named Driver of the Year for the first time. Andretti even tried drag racing in 1968. Realizing a lifelong dream, Mario qualified on the pole in his very first Formula One race at the 1968 U.S. Grand Prix at Watkins Glen.

Andretti's celebrated win in the Indianapolis 500 came in 1969. He scored a total of nine wins and five pole positions that season and went on to win his third national Indy Car title. He ended the decade with a total of 30 victories and 29 poles out of 111 Indy Car starts.

In 1971, Andretti won his first Formula One race in South Africa, driving for Ferrari. In 1978, he captured the F1 World Championship while driving for Lotus, making him the first driver in motor racing history to win the Formula One and Indy Car titles. Andretti topped the sport's best again in 1979, taking the International Race of Champions (IROC) series.

Andretti returned to Indy Car racing in the 1980s, and at the age of 44, he took his fourth national championship by winning six events, eight pole positions and setting 10 track records. As the 80s progressed, Andretti continued to make racing history with some personal milestones. With his son, Michael, they established the first-ever, father-son front row in qualifying for the 1986 Phoenix Indy Car event, a feat they accomplished a total of 10 times before the close of the decade.

Even though he retired from full-time competition in 1994, Andretti continued the next few years to seek the one major trophy missing from his mantle, the 24 Hours of LeMans. He competed an additional four times, winning the WSC class and finishing second overall in 1995. Today, Andretti is very active in numerous business ventures, and will still slip into the cockpit of a race car, giving rides in a two-seater Indy Car.

Off the track, Andretti is a role model known for being a hard worker, respectful, generous, ethical, optimistic, genuinely kind, ambitious and passionate about life. He has an incredible ability to work with people and is a team player, always giving lots of credit to the team. Despite tremendous fame and success, his head always fits on his shoulders and he prioritizes family. In addition to the love he has for his family, Andretti's love of the American troops is widely known and he even made a 10-day trip to the Middle East in 2011 to help boost the morale of servicemen and women. In his hometown of Nazareth, Pennsylvania, he is enthusiastically committed to local charities, especially Meals on Wheels and The Fund to Benefit Children and Youth. The Library of Congress honored Mario Andretti by adding him to its Living Legends list, an honor that goes to those who have made significant contributions to America's diverse cultural, scientific and social heritage.