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As a child living in Los Angeles, I was infatuated with the big Harleys that the Highway Patrol rode. Every time I heard one coming I'd stop whatever I was doing and watch them ride by. I knew one day I'd have one of my own.

My family moved to Indiana in the mid-sixties and my older brother bought his first motorcycle, a 650 Triumph Bonneville. It was a basket-case and needed completely rebuilt; so in the basement of our home on South Meridian, he meticulously cleaned and reassembled his motorcycle. This was my first taste of building motorcycles as he would let me help clean parts and hold the flashlight while he worked. It was comical to watch us get the bike up the basement stairs once completed, but when the bike fired for the first time, I was hooked! I had to get one of my own!

Through motorcycling, my brother met Richard Kennedy, (Bob Schulteti's brother-in-law) and as I got to know Richard, I had the opportunity to go to Southside Harley-Davidson and meet George and Bob Schulteti. Even as a kid, they both treated me like I had a million dollars and would answer any question I had, which I'm sure most probably seemed silly to them.

I'd go to the shop and just look at the motorcycles and dream about owning one. The smell of the building, the creaking floors and the sounds of the big Harleys was ingrained in my memory that has lasted to this very day!

Eventually my brother sold his Triumph and bought a Harley Sportster, another basket case and another opportunity to watch him rebuild a motorcycle, lending a hand whenever possible. Once completed however, as this was the late sixties while the Vietnam war raged on, my brother was called to duty and didn't get to ride it much before going into the Army. This was also one of; if not the first real motorcycle I rode as a kid. I had a couple of friends that lived on farms that also had motorcycles tucked away in their barns that didn't run. It usually worked out that if I could get them running, I could ride them around their farms, which I did every chance I got! I'd collect discarded pop bottles along the roadside and return them to the local grocery for the deposit money to buy gas for the motorcycles. Since I wasn't old enough to get my driver's license, I had to ride my bicycle to their farms to ride the motorcycles, and then ride home, many times after dark as I would ride all day if I could!

It wasn't until 1969 that my neighbor bought two motorcycles from Sears, as they were discontinuing the single cylinder "Sears Allstate 106" motorcycle, and he offered to let me ride one with him and his friends as they would go woods riding on the week-ends.

Being impressed with my riding skills at an early age they urged me to start competing at some local non-sanctioned races and I jumped at the chance!

I rode whatever I could borrow till I had enough money save to buy my own bike. I couldn't afford a Harley yet and the next best thing was of course, a 650 Triumph Bonneville like my brother had! Still not being old enough to get my drivers license, I also couldn't buy a motorcycle without my parent's signature. My Dad wasn't a fan of the idea however, he took me to the dealership and there it was; a shiny new Bonneville that going to be mine! I was so excited I was envisioning riding it to school, to Daytona even back to California! I was shaking I was so thrilled! My Dad hadn't said much to this point,

but then he asked the salesman how fast the Triumph would go and he proudly spouted off something like 100 miles an hour or more. My dad pointed to another bike, a 175 Honda, and asked; how fast will that go? The salesman said "about 60 miles an hour on a flat road"! Dad said, "That's the one you can get". I was crushed; however, I had to have a motorcycle of my own so that's the one I bought. I rode everywhere I could on the back roads and off-road because I still didn't have my license. I even rode to and from school while I was taking my driver's education class!

Once I had my license, I was in every motorcycle shop I could find talking motorcycles, riding and racing. I had a friend that worked at Greenwood LP Gas which also sold Hodaka motorcycles and he invited me to stop in and meet the guys. The "guys" turned out to be Jack, Ed and Ron Lemastus. They were long-time competitive woods riders that introduced me to AMA sanctioned racing.

My first big race was a 100 Mile Enduro in Upland Indiana. It had rained the night before so the course was muddy, wet or under water. With the temperature in the upper 30's, it made for a miserable day but I had a blast! I couldn't get enough. I raced every week-end; Enduro's, Hare Scrambles, Moto-cross, (the big natural terrain tracks like they did in Europe) Stadium Super-Cross and Flat-track events. It was my obsession. I devoted all my time to racing. I worked two jobs while in High School to support my habit. If I wasn't working, I was working on my race bike, racing or driving across the country to the races.

In the early 1970's I was the Service Manager for a local Suzuki dealership which worked out for me as a sponsor for my Moto-Cross racing. It was funny because by now I was on my second Harley and rode it to work every day. Of course the owner didn't think it looked good, me riding a Harley to work at a Suzuki dealership, so I had to park it inside where our customers wouldn't see it. By the mid 70's I was confident that I had something to offer in motorcycling and knew Harley-Davidsons were my passion so I asked Bob Schulteti if they needed any help at Southside.

At the time, AMF owned Harley-Davidson and sales were slow, consequently Bob told me they were okay for now, but keep checking back with him, which I did every few months for probably two years till finally he said yes, they could use a hand. He sat down with me and told me they weren't looking for just another employee, but someone they could anchor to that held the same passion and values that had kept the family in business for many years. I gave him my word and with a smile and a handshake, I became an employee of Indianapolis Southside Harley-Davidson. I was ecstatic! I don't think we even discussed how much I was to be paid, and if we did, it didn't matter! I was thrilled to come to work every day! I started as a mechanic and worked with some great guys that held the same love for Harley as I. I learned as much as I could from the best in the business.

The shop was small so every morning we would "roll iron" and move bikes out into the yard so we could get to our work-benches, and every evening, we'd "roll iron" again and move the bikes back into the shop for the night. With space being so limited, we worked side by side and it wasn't uncommon for the guy next to you to start a bike up right in your face! We didn't have air conditioning but we had huge fans that sat at each end of the shop that pulled the cool air through from the front in the morning, then from the back in the afternoon as the sun would move from East to West through-out the day.

As time went by, I worked as a mechanic in the mornings then helped at the counter at lunch time. Now in those days, when you worked at the counter, you sold parts, motorcycles and clothing.

If I remember correctly, we had around 15-18 motorcycles on our showroom floor. Since there were only a few models available; kick or electric start Sportsters, a couple of Super-Glide models, and couple more FLH or Dresser models, we had one of each and in a couple of different colors.

I think we had something like eight or nine different t-shirts, five or six different jackets, gloves and a few helmets; that was our "clothing department". We had 10-12 employees then compared to 50-60 today! We now have departments for every segment of the business; so many models available that it's hard to keep up with, everything imaginable in the way of clothing, collectables, helmets and riding gear, a Service department and parts department that each in it's own is five times larger than our whole store on South Meridian!

By the late 1970's or early 1980's I started focusing on Flat track racing; mostly due to wanting to race the Harley-Davidson XR750's! These bikes are awesome, very limited and only a select few get to ride one, let alone race one!

Being a "Privateer" in those days was pretty tough as Harley-Davidson and Honda both had factory race teams with deep pockets! Each team consisted of three to four riders, two to three full-time technicians, and a support staff to help drive the semis with at least two bikes for each rider and enough parts to build a couple more bikes if needed. The rider's were the best in the business and had the best equipment available.

Most privateers had only one bike, did a lot of their own tuning and usually had the support of a dealership and sponsors to help foot the bill.

I was blessed to have the support from Southside Harley-Davidson, more importantly from Bob Schulteti. His insight and experience was beyond compare. The knowledge he shared with me was priceless, his attitude towards racing and life in general was always inspirational.

My first year of Professional Flat Track racing I was ranked 7th in the year-end National standings.

I continued racing the Grand National events for several years across the US. We built and raced one of Harley-Davidson's first 500cc race motors and eventually the XR750. It was like nothing else in the world! In those days we ran the motors completely un-restricted and could use all the horsepower those motors could produce! These days, the AMA, in an effort to get more manufacturers involved; have restricted the XR750's so other bikes can compete against the Harley's. It was a good move as we continue to see the field growing again. In the 1980's we would have around 120 entries at the National events which waned to 50-60 entries in the early 2000's. Factory teams went away or dramatically down-sized, the grandstands had empty seats and the competition suffered. It's good to see the growth of the sport again.

I'm still at Southside Harley-Davidson, still building motorcycles, now mostly customs or restorations, married 28 years to my beautiful wife Ruth Ann, which I met at Southside Harley-Davidson, raising our son Matt and enjoying life as we know it!

Racing has been a great chapter in my life; we've met many life-long friends and had a blast along the way. It truly is a family. You can bicker like brothers and sisters, roll around in the dirt fighting like wildcats but at the end of the day, if there's anything you need, there's no question you have a brother or sister to lend a hand and help you however they can.