



## **Oral History Interview with Members of the Wood Family**

**From the Collecting Innovation Today Oral History Project**

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Interview location: Wood Brothers Racing, Stuart, Virginia  
Interviewer: Barry Hurd

## Notes

### For the Reader

- Please note that time codes shown in transcript (e.g., 00:00:18) are taken from the original full-length interview video and may not match the individual interview “chapter” videos.

### Transcript Processing

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Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:00:00):

What I'm gonna ask you to do is I want you to just maybe point out some of these pictures, tell us some stories about some of these great memories that you have up here on the wall. Ah, kinda let you guys sort of lead us on that and then we'll just do this for, like, 10 minutes or so. But-

Speaker 1 (00:00:17):

Just watch your hand.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:00:18):

Yeah, I'll watch my hand. So, I mean if, just look back there. Tell me about, well, this is, ah, this picture, is that all five brothers together that I'm looking at right there?

Leonard Wood (00:00:28):

Yes, mm-hmm (affirmative).

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:00:29):

Tell me a little bit about, when was that taken and what's the story behind that?

Leonard Wood (00:00:33):

That would be, ah, before 1965 because Glen, I mean, Ray, he retired from the pit crew in 19..., right after 1965, and, ah, and this would be David Pearson at, ah, one of the tracks. And, of course, this is our older brother which passed away in, ah, I believe '89 or '90, somewhere along there. And he, he was the only one, ... well Glen might have played the guitar a little bit..., but, ah, he was kind of a, loved to play the banjo.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:01:11):

Are you guys guitar players or as well as the racers?

Glen Wood (00:01:13):

I wasn't very good at it.

Leonard Wood:

Oh, ah, well, he wasn't too bad, but I didn't never play. I was always interested in, ah, trying to make the, ah, cars run. I was just interested in mechanical, ah, sort of mechanical end of it.

Glen Wood (00:01:32):

This, this picture, does that look like I'm serious about what I'm fixin' to do?

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:01:37):

I'm not even sure that is you. When is that?

Glen Wood (00:01:39):

Oh, that was probably '70 or somewhere along there.

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Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:01:44):

What's, what's happening there? Tell me about that.

Leonard Wood (00:01:46):

Well, we're getting ready to make a pit stop.

Glen Wood (00:01:48):

Yeah, I did change tires some. Basically, Leonard and, and Ray Lee did it to start with, and, but I never changed tires, only when it sorta, others didn't show up or somethin'.

Leonard Wood (00:02:02):

Well, they used to have, ah, the pit crew, ah, rulin', you know, of how many people you could use or whatever. But normally it would be, ah, Ray and I or myself and Ralph Edwards. But sometimes you need the left side changed and we'd use him to change the left side, you know, ah, help out on that side. And then one time we had, you could run, use two jacks. You know, you'd jack up the right side and then as you let that one down and somebody would jack the left side up before the other jack man got around, and they did away with that rule. So, you had to use the same jack both sides, but.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:02:45):

Now how important was it to prepare for one of these, these pit stops. I mean, you guys really turned it into a-

Leonard Wood (00:02:50):

Well, what you do is, like, ah, you try to figure out how can you gain anything, you know. How can you gain more horsepower, you know. So, pit- pit stops is...how can you gain more time in the pits. And, ah, so that's sometimes just as important as gaining horsepower, you know? And nowadays it's more import- more important than ever. But, like, you'd start out, in 1960 the, ah, Fireball Roberts' Chief Mechanic, Smokey Yunick, they was the best there was, you know, and he had a 45 second pit stop for two tires and gas.

Leonard Wood (00:03:32):

So, we got to lookin' at it, you know, if we use a power gun, you know, we can improve that quite a bit we think. So, then when you use a power gun, you can't get the lug on..., I mean the socket on the lug so how can you improve that? So, you streamline the entrance of the lug, of the, ah, socket so it slides on, and then now you've got the lug in the socket, you've got to shake it out, so how can we get rid of that? So, you put a spring in it. So then now you're just going one to the other, just fast as you can, it flips it out before you can get to the other one.

Glen Wood (00:04:10):

And the other thing that happened along there that he came up with was the jack. Normally the standard jack you could pump it probably 12 times to get the car up and he designed one that is still in use today that was one or two pumps would do the job. So that's what really helped things.

Leonard Wood (00:04:36):

Yeah, you find your weakest points, you know, and the, ah, the jack, ah they weighed more, the cars weighed more. So, what you did, you sorta, ah, designed the jack to, ah, the amount of pressure that the guy could put on it and to lift it up, in as least amount of pumps, you know, and still get the car up, move the handle, you know. And then of course the jack people took pictures or a video at Michigan and saw that this thing's coming up in two or three pumps, you know, and the others it's taking 10 or 12. And so anyway, it didn't take 'em long, they started making jacks, you know, that was fast.

Leonard Wood (00:05:17):

But, ah, you take each thing, you know, and then the fuel wouldn't go in fast enough. The tire men are done, you know, so then you streamline the fuel system to where the fuel, it'll suck the fuel in rather than just lazily flow in, you know, so that was a big hit.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:05:36):

And so how did you guys, how did you guys work together? Did you sit all around the kitchen table and talk? What was that process? Tell me-

Leonard Wood (00:05:40):

Well, you know, we traveled together. You travel all the way across from here to California, you know, and you-

Glen Wood (00:05:47):

In trucks, in cars.

Leonard Wood (00:05:47):

Yeah, so, ah, then, like, in the early days the drivers went to dinner with each other, you know, and you would talk over what went on, you know. And I remember one time, Marvin Panch was driving and, ah, the car was handling good all week and all of a sudden it picked up a push, but... and then you get around, ah, when at dinner and you get to talking, and they'll come up with something, you know, mention something and makes you think, "Yeah, I bet the right front tire was low." And sure enough, it was half flat when we got back to the track the next morning. But, ah, yeah, we, Glen and I have always, ah, discussed things together. It, ah, you know, when we would make a decision on when to pit, how to pit, we did it as a team. And, of course, he was far better a businessman than I am. But, ah, I always counted myself, pride myself as the, you know, on the mechanical end, you know.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:06:57):

Did you ever have any serious disagreements between, ah, between the two of you?

Leonard Wood (00:07:01):

No, I'd say we, ah, we're still-

Glen Wood (00:07:02):

Very few.

Leonard Wood (00:07:03):

We're still here.

Glen Wood (00:07:04):

(Laughing)

Leonard Wood (00:07:05):

We're still together, so, ah, yeah, we always got along good. I remember he, he used to go to the, ah, grocery store to pick up groceries, sandwiches and that sort of thing, and while I was back workin' on the car. Well, was in the truck one day and the, the engineer from Ford Motor Company was in the truck with us. And we always kind of thought they kind of laughed at us because we were eatin' Beanie Weenies and sandwiches and ham sandwich meat and all that, tomatoes and all that. So, Glen asked this, ah, engineer if he'd like something to eat. He picks up a bag and he says, "Garbage." So, we figured he was talking about our food you know, but he was in the garbage bag (laughing).

Leonard Wood (00:07:56):

Ah, but yeah, we've had a great experience, ah, you know. I can remember lots of times I'd be trying to figure out what was wrong with the car, you know, and, ah, Glen'd come around and make a comment, say, "You know, you might be doing this," you know, and he'd bring it to your attention, make you think... or what was really happening. So, we've, ah, we've had a great, great racing career and, ah, a lot of memories. He used to drive at Bowman Gray Stadium it ah..., I can remember one time we was over there and he says, ah, "When I go down the straight away and hit the brakes, it, it goes to the floor." And he'd come back in the pits and there's a full pedal. He says, "I know you think I'm lying," but of course I, that's one thing about it, you knew, when your brother's driving for you, you knew he wasn't lying.

Leonard Wood (00:08:59):

So, we're trying to figure out what's the matter with it, so I got to lookin' and the exhaust is blowing straight back on the master cylinder because the master cylinder is under the floorboard on a, like a 39 Ford, a 37. And so, I took the header off, and I don't know if you've ever seen, ever heard a flathead Ford with the header off-

Glen Wood (00:09:20):

With, that's what this is.

Leonard Wood (00:09:22):

It's, I mean it's a terrible sound because the, the flame is lickin' out the side of the block and, and it sound terrible. And but anyway, that's the only way we could fix it and we didn't have time to do anything else. So, he goes out there with it sounding like that and wins his first race at Bowman Gray Stadium.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:09:43):

What do you, what do you think has kept you guys together and the family for 60 years, this year, is it? I mean, just tell us a little bit about that. How's that, that all go together?

Leonard Wood (00:09:50):

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Well, it's just, ah, like I said, we started out in 1950 and he was a driver, and I was his chief mechanic and, ah, of course I stayed, I was 15, he was 25, and of course I stayed 15 years old for 10 years according to the media, you know, Glen's 15-year-old brother. But, ah, and then we began making a little money, you know. It was a hobby to start with and then we began making a little money and, ah, doing better and better and Glen was a track champion at Bowman Gray and North Carolina State Champion in 1954. And then when Ford come along in 1956, ah, Curtis Turner and Joe Weatherly says, you know, you need to get the Wood brothers on your team, you know. So, then they approached us and that's when we started actually Ford Motor Company backing us.

Glen Wood (00:10:51):

And they've been backing us ever since in, in different ways.

Leonard Wood (00:10:55):

We've always run Fords.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:10:57):

Has it been a challenge to keep the business, the business aspect of it together, Glen?

Glen Wood (00:11:00):

At times it got to where you wondered if we could continue this, especially in about 1960. Ford had been in it in '56 and seven and they pulled out for some reason. And about 1960 is when the Charlotte Speedway was built and, ah, and I know Curtis Turner wanted me to come down there and I wasn't entered in that race and I told him I couldn't come. And, ah- I didn't have a driver and I wasn't going to drive that race, and so he said, well he would drive it. And he was at that time supposed to drove Holman-Moody's car and he kept, when we got down there, he kept being so busy foolin' with the track itself and trying to practice his car a little bit, we put Speedy Thompson in it. And after a while, Speedy was running faster than he was, so we just left him in it and won the first National 400 it was, at that time, in 1960.

Glen Wood (00:12:07):

So that sort of put us back in the ball game again, and of course Paul Sawyers knew about that, in Richmond. He said, "I'll give you \$2500 to bring that car and Speedy up here." So, we took it up there and won that race. So, we were sort of back going again then.

Leonard Wood (00:12:26):

Well, and over the years, you know, like he said, right before the Charlotte race we blew an engine at North Wilkesboro and looked like always, it looked like when it, things, chips was down, it always something happened that would bounce us back, put us back, ah, going again where we could afford to, to do it. And then the, ah, the thing with Speedy though, that was a big home run for us. A big, the first superspeedway we ever won, you know.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:12:59):

What were some of the other- I mean over the 60 years a lot, a lot of victories- what were two or three of the big highlights, you guys shared together? I mean, are you there, things that pop out that-

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Leonard Wood (00:13:06):

Well, the- the Indy thing in 1965 was, was huge, you know, the Ford Motor Company. That was another thing, Ford Motor Company, you know, wanted us to come up and pit the Jim Clark car, the Lotus Ford, and, ah, and that was a big, big hit, you know. We got a lot of publicity over that. Most publicity I guess we ever got in our life in the least amount of time. But then the, ah, '76 500 with David Pearson, that was a huge win. You know, when Petty and Pearson crashed on the last lap.

Glen Wood (00:13:47):

And Tiny Lund in '63.

Leonard Wood (00:13:49):

Yeah, yeah it was a Cinderella story, you know. Ah, Tiny and three of his friends, ah, came through the tunnel right at the time that Marvin wrecked his sports car. This guy wanted him to drive a sports car, you know. We used to go down there like four weeks, as speed weeks was four weeks, you know, so. Meanwhile you drive, he'd drive a sports car or something and it got upside down, caught fire, and they come through the tunnel and saw it and picked the thing up and drug him out and saved his life and then get in the car and win the race. So, it was very touchin'.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:14:28):

And just tell me, when you decided to quit driving, Glen, did you guys sit down and talk about it? Or was that a family decision? Did you just walk in, announce it and say, "I'm going into business, leave me alone."

Glen Wood (00:14:38):

That weren't the way it was.

Leonard Wood (00:14:39):

(Laughing)

Glen Wood (00:14:41):

The last race I ran in, ironically me and Marvin Panch and John Luce promoted the race. Well, I'd been running this backseat car, they call it modified, at that little track and it was thought that Marvin had been driving some for us anyway and he'd drive the big tracks and I'd been driving some of the short races. So, it was decided that there'd be more people come see the race if I was in it than him, so he agreed with that. And I sat on pole and Junior Johnson was outside pole, and they had two little 25-lap preliminary races. I won mine, he won his. Well, we both had some soft left-side tires that Junior had got from me and at the end of it, both of 'em was wore out we thought, at least I thought mine was, and he came over and wanted to borrow the best one I had to go with his best one. Thought maybe it might last. Well, I was promoting the race and I wasn't going to be nasty about it, so I let him have it, knowing full well that he'd beat me if I had to put on some harder ones, which I did.

Glen Wood (00:16:03):

And I led it for quite a while, but I had to give it up finally and, and he, ah, went on and won the race. And we run along about 20 laps to go, and here come Ned Jarrett. Well, I let him go, it's too hard to keep him back there anyway. And five laps to go, I'm running along, felt somebody hit



me in the back end. I looked and it was Pearson and I..., and of course Ned and Junior both was in Fords, as I was, and he was in a Dodge. So, I said, "I'm not letting him by if I can help it," and I made it without it, so I finished third in the last race. And it wasn't supposed to have been the last race, it just was.

Leonard Wood (00:16:49):

Yeah, well I'm standing up there.... [noise]

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:17:21):

All right, let's, so the question is what kind of pit stop would you run on this car? What kind of service does this need to-

Leonard Wood (00:17:25):

Ah, this is the, you know, what happened was, like, the guys had, ah, they came out with a motor that would go on a motorbike. Well, I didn't have any money, ah, you know, but I wanted something with a motor on it that would pull me along, you know. And of course, they didn't have such a thing as a go-kart, this is not designed after a go-kart because there wasn't any such thing. So, ah, you know, as you can well see, the metal is just out of a junkyard. It was just scraps, I picked up, ah, in, because like I said, I didn't have any money but, ah, then my brother-in-law gave me this motor, which is a Johnson. Ah, it came off his dad's, ah, washing machine. And then I just started putting things together.

Leonard Wood (00:18:16):

The spindles are made out of ah, ah..., the more expensive cars had like a U-joint that went from the frame to the wheel to work the mechanical brakes. So, this is a huge, ah, universal joint so I took the universal part out of it and welded a spindle onto it. That's how I made my spindles. And then this chain and sprocket over here, ah, my brother-in-law's brother, ah, Clifford Wood, ah, my brother-in-law's a Wood also, he used to buy these army amphibious Ducks because he had army trucks, six by sixes, but this Duck had the same running gear, engines, transmissions, but all the rest of it, it was just, he threw it away, you know. So, this chain and sprockets come off of a- a amphibious army Duck that I used.

Leonard Wood (00:19:15):

And then of course the bearings, ah, is out of a '39 Ford transmission. And then the, ah, little press pulley right here, this, this is a bearing out of a '40 Ford water pump. And, ah, which works really nice. It's smooth as can be when you just take your foot and just push it, it moves forward. And then over here, there's another pedal that you pull a belt against this pulley here, which is the brakes. And then, um, of course these, ah, wheels is like, ah, I bought 'em for, like, 50 cents from a guy, come off his wagon. These are new but they're identical to ones that was on it. And then of course I made the gas tank out of a, this piece of brass, soldered it together.

Leonard Wood (00:20:06):

But, ah, I just wanted something to move me along, you know, um, with a motor. You know, because this, and then, ... this is the kickstarter. And, ah, I remember... see actually you could take and run the pulley, a belt on..., I took the brakes off of it and put a pulley direct on here, a belt directly on here with a.. a high speed and I got it out on the highway, and I drove it from, like, ah, my home over to... it was

about four miles over to the Clifford Wood garage, you know. And I remember meeting my principal, school principal on the road, and he, he made a comment, you know, and ah, very, he was, um, complimenting me quite highly over making this thing, you know. I figured he'd be on to me about running it on the highway, but he was just kindly impressed about me making the machine.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:21:07):

Ah Glen, do you remember when he brought this and showed it to you? What did you think of your little brother's entrepreneurship?

Glen Wood (00:21:12):

Well, I watched him build it, but I didn't have anything to do with it. Ah, but it was quite a chore to do this the way he had to do it. But it was way ahead of the ones that came before this. The ones we had a little bit before this were wooden wheels that you'd go out and cut a tree down about so big and cut your little wheels off and bore holes in 'em, and then you'd put it on something similar to this and, and you'd guide it with your feet. And the only way we could ride would go up a hill and let it roll down.

Leonard Wood (00:21:55):

Let me, let me tell you a little about this. See, see they was big brothers, Ray and Glen was my big brothers which, ah, you know, I've always, always looked up to 'em. Still do. And, ah, so I was five years old, now this might sound like I don't remember what I'm talking about, but I was five years old. He built me a little, little truck wheel wagon you call it, you know, same as his. And so, I'm sitting down here to the lower part where it's not so steep, getting ready to go down the hill. Well, he's sitting up here on the top side, on the high-speed hill, waiting for me to take off. So, when I pull out, start down the hill, he roars off that hill and he hits my left front axle and breaks the wheel, breaks the axle, and I cried 'til he fixed it (laughing). But he, he and Ray used to be into the, ah, they call him truck wheel wagons, you know, you just sat on 'em and steer 'em with your feet. And you can ride down a hill, slide 'em sideways, I mean it was, it was a lot of fun.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:23:03):

And talk to me about, you didn't tell us how old you were before when you built this, so tell me about your age and, and how you knew how to do this. I mean, not, not everybody just builds cars-

Glen Wood (00:23:12):

At 13.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:23:13):

... at 13. So, tell me about that, or both of you tell me.

Leonard Wood (00:23:16):

Well, I mean, I don't want this to come across the, the wrong way, but I always, you know, have been interested in mechanical things, I always liked making things, you know. And I just wanted to make me something that would pull me with a motor and looking back, you know, I think the, ah, ideas was kinda neat ... this is Lincoln valve springs, ah, of a Lincoln engine. And, ah, there's some..., what keeps the bearings back here from sliding is a pin, a hole drilled through the axle and a pin pushed through it, bent

over, and then one, you know... and then the wood part has got a notch up here that the bearing sets up in and then the strap, you know, I really don't know how I thought all that back then, but...

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:24:13):

Let me ask you, is there anything that you learned at 13 building this car that later you thought about when you were working on the race cars? I mean, was there a lesson to be transferred?

Leonard Wood (00:24:22):

No, I, I do know that without caster in it, you can't drive one. I mean, if you got caster the wrong way, you all over the place. So, you see, this thing's got caster in it and the, it, it drove quite well really. Ah, I know I used to wear the grass out in front of the house going in circles but, ah, yeah... I'm, ah, kind of proud of it, with a-

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:24:57):

And could you just tell me one more time, how old you were when you built it and how old it is now, what we're looking at today, just so we have that.

Leonard Wood (00:25:06):

I was 13, ah, and then of course, ah, we started racing big cars at 15. So, I was already, um, had a start on what I wanted to do and when this, when Glen decided to go racing, man I was, I was ready to go. I just, ah, thought that, you know, we used to, he used to haul lumber and of course I used to help him a little bit, you know, and I would load lumber and all and they would, it was a big rivalry on which truck would pull the most lumber out of a steep mound, you know. And so, ah, when racin' come along, you know, we was just ready to go because there was as much envy in what truck would pull a big load as it was which car would outrun on the racetrack, you know, so. Ah, it was, it's always been competition we kind of enjoyed, you know, ah, when we started racing cars. It gives you a challenge, you know, when somebody says you can't outrun somebody, or they can outrun you, you know, it just makes you work that much harder to try to do better.

Glen Wood (00:26:26):

Theres was, ah, our first engine we had, a friend of ours, a friend of Curtis Turner's, built our first engine and we ran it around half of the season without doing anything to it. And I think, correct me, but I think my dad overhauled it the first time. Well, Leonard was watching him and kept up with it and by the time it come to do it the next time, Leonard said he could do that. So that's sort of, and that wasn't very long after he was 15.

Leonard Wood (00:27:01):

He rebuilt it twice and then I started after that.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:27:04):

And you had no, ah, fear about trusting your little brother to build this car?

Glen Wood (00:27:07):

Well-

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Leonard Wood (00:27:08):

Well, that's, that's what made it work. Glen has always, ah, you know, give me confidence. He, you know, he stood behind me, you know, and he, all my brothers, kind of thought of me as the mechanic in the family, you know.

Glen Wood (00:27:25):

Which he was there's no doubt about that.

Leonard Wood (00:27:28):

I remember tuning up my brother's, ah, '48 Ford one time and, ah, he had two carburetors on it so, ah, I tuned it up and I thought it was sounding pretty good so my dad, believe it or not, he'd never run over 35 miles an hour. He would not run fast at all, so we would always pick at him wanting him to run faster. So, he pulls out from the garage, you know, where I'd tuned it up and there's a little bit of a loose gravel on the road as he pulled out on the road. And he mashed on the gas, and the thing spun sideways. I thought that showed that the motor was performing pretty good (laughing).

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:28:08):

That would be a sign. Okay, let's cut. Very good. And we'll, ah, we'll go talk about the back seater here [inaudible 00:28:17], yeah, I remember reading about that. 'Cause you were in the sawmill business, right?

Leonard Wood (00:28:21):

Yes that's, that's where this name came from.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:28:24):

Right, okay.

Leonard Wood (00:28:27):

That's this car.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:28:28):

Oh great, okay cool.

Leonard Wood (00:28:30):

So, I'm going make him a lawnmower and it's going to have that on it.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:28:33):

There you go. All right, well let's-

Glen Wood (00:28:40):

Do you need to get that beside-

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Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:28:42):

... let's bury the ax and we'll do-

Glen Wood (00:28:43):

... beside of this a little closer? The car itself?

Speaker 1 (00:28:48):

What's that? Yeah, go ahead.

Leonard Wood (00:28:53):

They had a, an article in the program on the, in the, ah Winston-Salem Journal, woodchopper chops his way to victory.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:29:04):

(Laughing), he had his chops down, as we'd say today, right?

Leonard Wood (00:29:11):

And one guy-

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:29:12):

... all right let's, let's roll tape and we'll talk about this a little bit. So, Glen, this is the, ah, the famous woodchopper. Tell me a little bit about this car and then we'll, we'll ask Leonard-

Glen Wood (00:29:22):

Well, this is a creation that Leonard and I sort of started together and I'll let him tell you how he came up with it.

Leonard Wood (00:29:31):

Well, you know, when Glen started racing, you know, we started running at Bowman Gray Stadium and that was a big deal, you know, if you could win at Bowman Gray. And your problem was you always spun your tires coming off a corner, you know, you couldn't get traction. And then if you had a lot of horsepower, it just made it harder yet. So, these- this overhead Ford, it's a 352 bored out to 370 cubic inches. But, ah, and then you, you couldn't get traction, you know. So, ah, we decided well we'll just move the motor back. So, I moved it back, you know, and was cutting and chopping, you know, and moving it. And so, it didn't really fit right until I got it back to, to this point. And then when we got it back to this point, then we just started making the frame around it and reinforcing the frame to fit it properly. And then, ah, slid him on back in the backseat, so to speak, and then that's a Falcon steering wheel to make it long enough.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:30:42):

Just go walk back and show us that, though.

Leonard Wood (00:30:45):

Yeah, I extended this as far as I could, but I needed more length so the Falcon steering wheel, you know, they come out with that safety collapsible, because it was so far back -- dished, you know. And I can remember when Glen got in it the first time and was backing it out of the garage,

Glen Wood (00:31:03):

Well see, when you're sitting here you don't have anything to judge by, what ... where the back is going, you know? (Laughs). And he said he, he was about to ... says, "How am I gonna drive this thing?" (Laughs) and so whenever he got to Bowman Gray course you got a longer distance. You got a good, uh, uh, length of judging it, which way it's going from this angle, you know, to the front and, uh, and I can remember he was going in the first race at run in and then he got spun out, uh, but we was, uh, getting ready to go to a race, you know.

Glen Wood (00:31:41):

One time and they says, "Where you going?" and we said, "Well we thought we'd go down to the race, you know, tonight." And so the guy looked under the hood, you know, "Yeah fine looking motor you got in there," and he thought there was no motor in it. "Oh, you do have a motor in it." He looked back a little farther, you know. But, uh, it, uh, it did quite well. It went to Starkey, Virginia, you know, the place where he, uh, promoted that race and won eight in a row, you know.

Glen Wood (00:32:13):

And, uh, so, uh, this thing would, uh, uh, carry the left front wheel, you know, and, uh, they had crossties like six inches high and you couldn't get on the inside because these crossties ... well he'd, he'd get inside a little bit and then, uh, pop the throttle and lift that wheel up and just walk it over the crosstie farther inside of the guy and then once he got inside the guy, you know, it, uh, you, you kindly history at Bowman Gray, if you get on the inside of somebody, you know?

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:32:47):

Yeah, Glen tell us a little bit when you sat in there and started driving it for the first time, did it feel like you had, sticking to the track better or what was the real driver feel(?).

Glen Wood (00:32:54):

Basically I was trying to get used to it (laughs) 'cause it, it did drive different and you had, uh, judge in, uh, where you was at in heavy traffic, uh, from there back just seemed like two cars ahead in length and I had to learn, you know, where I was at other than that I couldn't get close to a car enough to be competitive but somehow it would run good enough with the traction off with that, that I didn't have to worry about them too much. I did win the first championship, I mean the championship the first year we had this thing.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:33:36):

And was this also, I think you were saying, was like a transitional vehicle after you had learned some things and this you decided to concentrate on other types of cars, is ... am I remembering that right or ...

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Glen Wood (00:33:47):

Well after this we, we built another one after this car and we decided to put the engine back up front, but it never did like this one. Never ever won as many races as this car did.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:34:02):

So, so just for, let's say we had some, some young people who don't really understand down force and all this, just explain to us what the mechanical benefit was to moving that, uh, engine back.

Glen Wood (00:34:10):

Well ...

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:34:11):

The innovation there.

Glen Wood (00:34:12):

It moved the, uh, weight, uh, transfer so much farther back onto the rear wheels, puts more, so much more weight on the rear wheels and to give you a little, uh, insight on unsprung weight, uh, farther yet, I decided, well, I'll put some weight on the housing, you know, the axle housing and, uh, you know, uh, Bowman Gray is a great place to look at a car, watch it handle, you know, you watch it enter the corner, go through the middle and drive off.

Glen Wood (00:34:46):

Now if a driver would've tried to told me what this did when it put the unsprung weight on it, but it actually, the wheels bounced off the track, you know, the unsprung weight, you could see the tires bounce off the track and of course it would've been hard for Glen to tell me what to... I mean, he would have known it wasn't feeling right, but it would've been hard for him to explain but I could see it from a naked eye that these tires are coming off the track and that just gives you an insight on, you don't need unsprung weight.

Leonard Wood (00:35:21):

See this is a little quarter mile completely flat.

Glen Wood (00:35:25):

Flat, flat track.

Leonard Wood (00:35:26):

I mean there's no, no bumps really on it, you know, you don't think but, but it just give it that little, little bounce to it, that it bounced the tires right off the track.

Glen Wood (00:35:37):

So that still applies today.

Leonard Wood (00:35:39):

Yeah.

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Glen Wood (00:35:40):

The same thing.

Leonard Wood (00:35:40):

You don't need unsprung weight (laughs).

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:35:43):

Okay cut. Very good. Nice, nice job. Let's, uh, let's move over and talk about the, uh, the modern ren... [inaudible]. So, you wanna roll?

Speaker 2 (00:35:50):

I'm on a roll.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:35:51):

Okay, here we are ... so you guys, 60 years, you've still got a race team going and this is, uh, this is probably the show car right? Or is this the ...

Leonard Wood (00:36:00):

No this is a, this is a race car, I mean, uh, they, uh, want to do is ... nowadays I, I mean you can have the perfect race car, uh, just absolutely beautiful and it don't run quite right and they come back and they cut the whole front end off of it, or the tail off of it and re-skin it or whatever just, I mean, overnight so to speak they do this, you know, and which years ago we were never hear to cutting one up but, yeah, they, uh, uh, the crew chief that we have now, David Hyder, he is so, uh, perfectionist on making everything.

Leonard Wood (00:36:45):

Uh, it's the most detailed race car I think at the track these days and of course you know the safety thing you got all this foam on the inside now, you know, and a big steel plate, uh, safety wise, I mean, I know y'all seen all this. Uh, but, uh, yeah racing has changed quite a bit. I mean, look at this, uh, seat, uh, how much safety is built into that seat, you know, to keep the guy ...

Glen Wood (00:37:15):

And that's about a \$15,000 seat.

Leonard Wood (00:37:18):

It, uh, they, uh, yeah... they ...

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:37:20):

How would you compare that seat to the one in the backseat that we just looked at?

Leonard Wood (00:37:23):

Well, I was gonna tell you, he told me one time this is the worst seat (laughs) I've ever seen in my life (laughs). I didn't, I didn't spend enough time on his seat, you know, what, what he couldn't understand is later when we got more drivers we started making seats (laughs) that had side braces and all that stuff



and he was wondering why they didn't make one for him, you know (laughs) but, uh, Parnelli Jones kinda started out years ago, he had this seat, it had kind of hands around his, his spring, spring action and they'd form right around his chest to, you know, keep him on the road course which is a great seat.

Leonard Wood (00:38:04):

And I remember Curtis Turner, he was driving in Charlotte and, uh, somehow the seat, uh, the way it was made when it hit a bump it broke his rib so we went to, uh, straight to, uh, Rockingham and he had this broke rib, well, he couldn't stand that so I remember making a, a pad that come off the roll bar that was a, a ... probably a six by eight pad that rested right against his shoulder and then it, uh, that's how he won the race at, uh, in Rockingham. First, first race ever at Rockingham with a broke rib.

Glen Wood (00:38:44):

And that was ironically the last race he ever won.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:38:47):

Hmm. Well, you were talking about how the cars changed what about the business? I mean, how ... the business has changed a lot too from the early days. What are some of the big changes?

Glen Wood (00:38:55):

Well, that little car over there on the wall on top there, when we bought the car it cost \$50. And of course, we spent three or four hundred building the engine for it, but they had a limit on what you could, if you brought the car to the track and somebody wanted to buy it for \$500, they could buy it and you had to give it to them and that's considered all it's worth. Well, that wouldn't buy enough lug nuts to put the wheels on here 'cause these are high price lug nuts here (laughs). And it's so much difference in the expense as to what it started. Um, if we'd have had what we had now I don't know what we would have done with it. You'd 've invested the money you wouldn't even have to spend it.

Leonard Wood (00:39:47):

Uh, I tell Glen, we could, we could run a, a good race car I'd want to throw in the trash can and I'm serious, I mean, it, they just ... like I said, when they, when something don't run quite to suit them they just cut the thing completely up and rebuild it and, uh, I just always figured... work hard enough you ought to be able to work it out a little bit but ...

Glen Wood (00:40:09):

One of the big things today is things go as obsolete so fast. In just over a month, this don't work anymore.

Leonard Wood (00:40:20):

And you got your competition.

Glen Wood (00:40:22):

Yeah.

Leonard Wood (00:40:22):

And if you don't cut yours up the other guy's cut his up so ...

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Glen Wood (00:40:25):

You can't keep up.

Leonard Wood (00:40:26):

... you, you, your competitors, you gotta do it to kinda stay where your competitor is.

Glen Wood (00:40:30):

They try to make rules so that don't happen as much as it can but, um, some of the rules they make themselves causes that (laughs).

Leonard Wood (00:40:39):

Yeah. It, uh ...

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:40:41):

Talk, talk to me a little about this long relationship with Ford Motor Company. I think it might be one of the longest race team manufacture associations ever. What's, what's that meant to you and how has that evolved over the years with some of the people at Ford you've worked with?

Glen Wood (00:40:53):

Well, this, this started in 1950 as, as sort of a hobby and we bought the little car and ran around ... and we began to get better and better and, and today I would never ever believed that we would have lasted this long but right now I am the oldest car owner in NASCAR and I'm kinda proud of that and, and we are proud of the fact that we've run Ford cars the whole time and I'm sure they're proud of that too.

Leonard Wood (00:41:25):

Yeah just, uh, like it's, it's a feeling that almost, uh, you ... when you mention Ford Motor Company, NASCAR, and the Wood Brothers it's, it's one in the same, kinda you know, and Ford, we've been great friends with Ford all the years...and Edsel Ford he couldn't be nicer, you know, great friends with Edsel, he's been very helpful over the years and, uh, it, uh, it makes us very proud that we've, uh, always run Fords.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:41:59):

Is there a big interchange of ideas over the years between the manufacturer and the, the racing team? Would they give you ideas and you give them the ideas and transfer technology back and forth, and so on.

Glen Wood (00:42:09):

Well I gain knowledge, you know, from what you do, uh, and then of course, years ago, uh, you had to kind of talk the motor company into designing the car a little bit in favor of racing and, uh, then of course, then later on NASCAR stepped up and got one in the same body, you know, uh, but used to, a certain brand like would come out with a better body design well they'd run away with it. Well NASCA-Bill France didn't like that, you know. And they'd try to, uh, find ways to slow that particular car down, you know, but, uh ...

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:42:48):

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Did you ever have a thing where you asked Ford to design a car a certain way to help you win? I mean, is there an example of that?

Glen Wood (00:42:54):

Well, they designed the Talladega car in the, uh, Mercury Cyclone, the one with the low nose.

Leonard Wood (00:43:00):

The Spoiler.

Glen Wood (00:43:01):

It was called a Cyclone Spoiler and they also had a, a Cyclone Spoiler I guess that had a regular nose but this ... the, they designed one that was just like the Talladega, uh, car, you know, and we won the first race in Atlanta with it, you know, but it had that real low nose and man it was, we went to, uh, Daytona in 1970 and beat the Dodges and Plymouths with that big wing on the back, you know, and it kind of surprised everybody.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:43:32):

Oh, was that design something that you had asked them to do?

Glen Wood (00:43:35):

Well, you know, we was always after them to streamline the car, you know, uh ...

Leonard Wood (00:43:41):

It got out of hand with that wing Dodge car that had, that's, that's when they stopped it. They'd be no more of that.

Glen Wood (00:43:46):

Took, took, took all the wing off and the slope nose and all that.

Leonard Wood (00:43:53):

It was supposed to have been a stock car that just sold basically on the street and, and that had gotten away from what they had aimed for it to be for. And it, it ... the difference in the cars even years later if they'd had made each run the kind that a manufacturer had there's so much difference in the design that there would've been 10, 15 miles hour difference.

Glen Wood (00:44:20):

Yeah, one sided.

Leonard Wood (00:44:21):

And it just had to be narrowed down just sort of like this, everybody had sort of the same thing.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:44:28):

So where, where do you get your advantage on the setup on the car and what's, what's, what's the team's advantage now if the cars are so similar?

Leonard Wood (00:44:34):

Well, yeah, you, you, you ... they got this deal with the bump stops, you know, and if you can get your car, uh, nose really close to the ground and still get a good enough ride that he can drive it and, uh, that's, that's, that's the key is to get the car low and still not bounce around. You know, have a, a, a kind of a cushion that kinda floats it along, run, hit the bump, you know, and ...

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:45:04):

How much of it is computers and how much is still a guy who knows a car?

Leonard Wood (00:45:07):

Well, the, uh, computer engineers has gotta play a big hand in it now, uh, but of course, you know, I think it's still a lot of, um, things that you do to cars that make them run that's not in the computer, you know. It's a certain percentages of weight you want on each wheel or wherever, you know, uh ...

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:45:32):

So that human element still is an advantage.

Leonard Wood (00:45:33):

Yeah, still computers are good, the engineers are good but still you gotta have that driver and crew chief combination that matches what he needs on the racetrack.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:45:46):

And how, how important, is a driver more important or less important as these cars become more computerized and [inaudible 00:45:51].

Leonard Wood (00:45:51):

Well, I guess it's depending on how smart the crew chief is, you know, I mean, if the crew chief's real smart and he knows the setup he need, you know, then, uh, the driver can just get in and drive it. But if you got a driver that's- I mean, real engineering, uh, uh, degree or something, you know, then he can give feedback to the..., you don't even need nobody, but just somebody who can change parts, you know, if you got a driver smart enough that can tell you what to do to the car, you know.

Leonard Wood (00:46:22):

Like Alan Kulwicki was one guy that, uh, he knew, you know, exactly what he need to do to the car and so all you really had to do was just have somebody to, uh, do the work, you know. But, uh, yeah... I think a, a real smart driver is very important these days. And of course, there again, you've gotta have both, you know, it's so competitive you gotta have the crew chief smart on his end and the driver smart on his end. You got both then it makes a good combination.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:46:52):

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Is it still the competitiveness that drives you guys even after you've been doing it all these years? I mean, you still get that- that thrill when you go out to the track and you wanna beat the other guys? That still with you?

Leonard Wood (00:47:01):

Oh yeah that's... You'd be in the wrong business.

[crosstalk] Glenn Wood: If it wasn't, you might as well not been there. Yeah, it still is.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:47:07):

Tell me a little bit about that.

Glen Wood (00:47:07):

I know I used to get a big thrill out of winning.

Speaker 2 (00:47:11):

Hold on quick, let's go ahead and change tapes real quick.

Glen Wood (00:47:12):

Okay.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:47:12):

Now tell us about this, you don't want anybody to pass you, you wanna win, you wanna get in the winner's circle. I mean even after all these years you've still got that fire in the belly. So, tell me, uh, tell me about that.

Glen Wood (00:47:20):

Well I used to drive in earlier days and, uh, and when you go out on the track the announcer would announce you was coming out and you'd go up the back stretch and the crowd would roar and the applause, it just did a whole lot for you and then you won the race and it was a great feeling to win a race and I know for a long time I wondered if I was going to win one and when I did, well, you wanna win another one and then you gotta win another one and after I, after I quit racing people had asked me did I get the same feeling by owning a car and it winning, and you do, the same thing. It ain't, no difference. When I was driving a, a Pearson or a Cale or whoever it's still a great feeling to win a race.

Leonard Wood (00:48:18):

I think it's the, it's the greatest feeling to watch your brother go out and win, you know, we've had the greatest drivers in the world, it's still a big thrill to us to see the car win, you know, as, as much as ever, you know, and the long- the longer you go without winning, the more you wanna win, you know? But it was, uh, nothing like watching your brother go out and win like four in a row and then skip one and then start the string all over again, you know.

Leonard Wood (00:48:46):

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And like he used to do at Bowman Gray but, uh, you know, you like to win, you know, I design remote control cars, uh, uh, so, uh, you go out and win with that it's- it's still competition, you know. And you, and you love winning no matter if it's your remote-control cars, go-karts or these or whatever. But, uh, yeah, it's, uh, I could get extremely excited to see Bill Elliott pull in the winner's circle.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:49:18):

Okay, one final question here. Just tell me, this is like a family business, I guess your dad was a mechanic and now your, uh, your kids are in the business but just for the people 50 years from now are gonna wanna know how this all worked, just give me a rundown of the whole family and how different people were involved with the Brothers over the years.

Glen Wood (00:49:34):

Well, start off.

Leonard Wood (00:49:36):

Well, I mean, uh, Glen started, when he started racing he's, uh, he goes down to this local track near Martinsville and, uh, his friend is, is a Gifford Wood, he's a Wood also, none, no kin, but he gets on the racetrack with his personal car and keeps up with him so he figures he's got a real race car, you know, that he could do a lot better so that's when Curtis Turner's mechanic built his first engine, that sort of thing but then our brothers, uh, older brother, he didn't come on until a little later but, uh, our brothers come in and started helping us in pits on race day, you know.

Leonard Wood (00:50:19):

And, uh, then of course we go back to the start when Glen brought that first race car in, uh, dad, he wasn't, uh, real ... he didn't want Glen to race because it was dangerous and, uh, he says don't unload that thing here (laughs). Later on, he become a big fan of Glen's because he went to Starkey and watched Glen race, you know, and win, he was very proud.

Leonard Wood (00:50:46):

At the dealership he was working at, uh, a Ford dealership in Bassett that he could kind of brag to his friends and not brag but his friends would come with him. But, uh, uh, anyway, uh, all our brothers have been very supportive over the years and still are. Uh, Ray, Clay, uh, Delano and Glen and myself. And then our sister Crystal she's a big supporter as well. Uh, but ... and then of course our mom, uh, was very proud too.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:51:23):

And then the kids.

Leonard Wood (00:51:26):

All of the kids, uh, Ed and Len, you know.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:51:27):

Yeah, okay.

Leonard Wood (00:51:28):

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Uh, they, uh, they used to be my right hand, uh, like, uh, you had, uh, uh, they knew what I was thinking before I even said anything, you know, so I didn't even, uh, have to really even say nothing to them, but they was a big help to me like in the Pearson days, you know, but it was, uh, always help me change the engines or whatever but if I wanted to change the engine, you know, they knew I was gonna change it before I decided to change it but ...

Glen Wood (00:51:59):

They, they're actually, uh, the big runners of the business now, uh, it's getting away from me.

Leonard Wood (00:52:08):

He, he ... uh, Eddie, Len and Kim, the niece, my niece, uh, his daughter, yeah, they run the operation now and, and they've done a great job doing it because as you well know it's hard to stay in business these days, you know, as competitive as it is and they've kept it going, uh, and so we're very proud of them and, um, you know, they, uh, I support them and they ... they've always supported me.

Glen Wood (00:52:40):

A whole lot of the teams this day and time has come in with a lot of money available and, and what we have is what we have come up with from day one 60 years ago and it's all just been come from the business itself. It, there's no outside business that, of ours that helped do this and it, it got to be a, our whole life and it's, it's been good to us.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:53:15):

It's unusual that one family stick together this long, you obviously get along pretty well with everybody right?

Glen Wood (00:53:21):

Yeah, that's what made it work.

Leonard Wood (00:53:23):

The, uh ... yeah, I don't know about Glen, maybe Glen has seen it but, you know, I worked with, uh, my nephews Ed and Len for years and years and years and I have not ever heard them disagree with each other. As much as I've been around them and, uh, I mean, Glen might say a little different (laughs).

Glen Wood (00:53:46):

I, I'd say that they probably had less disagreements than Leonard and I ever had.

Leonard Wood (00:53:51):

Oh absolutely.

Glen Wood (00:53:52):

They just don't.

Leonard Wood (00:53:53):

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Yeah, they, they, uh, they get along so well and then, uh, um, Len he's just, uh, uh, very good at the business end of it, Ed is good at the PR work little bit more, so I'd say than Len and Len's good in the mechanical end of it as well.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:54:16):

Okay let's pause for a second.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:54:23):

It's a little history lesson.

Leonard Wood (00:54:25):

Well, I mean ...

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:54:26):

Don't, don't start yet until I'm, I, I know I got the, my machine running here.

Crew (00:54:29):

You're good.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:54:29):

Okay. Just tell us, I mean, at some, at some early age you started building little cars and things like that and led in... tell us how that all started and what you were thinking.

Leonard Wood (00:54:37):

Well, um, first of all I used to carve out little cars out of wood like I'd go get a, a block of wood and yellow poplar always worked the best, you know, that was the best, uh, material that you could get and I would take a pocket knife like and carve, um, a 49 Ford, uh, any kind of car '40 Fords you know, uh, this ... and then I'd carve the seats out, and a dash and then glue the top on and where you could see the seats inside and paint them up.

Leonard Wood (00:55:16):

Uh, that was, when I was in the second grade I made a tractor trailer with a, it was a little, uh, tractor trailer that I made that ... and then back during the war, you know, they didn't, you couldn't get toys so I would make a, a little '40 Ford- a '40 Ford pickup or a car and sell it like for 75 cents, uh, during the war and, uh, which, uh, like I said I always enjoyed working on cars and anything mechanical, you know.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:55:52):

Was there something that inspired you to do this? Somebody in the family or people down the street?

Leonard Wood (00:55:57):

Well, my dad was a mechanic ever since I was born, you know, before I was born, you know. But, uh, it was just something, uh, I always enjoyed making things. You know, I always wanted to kind of make it better if I could, you know.



Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:56:14):

And so, you were like solving problems as you were building these things?

Leonard Wood (00:56:17):

Yeah and of course, you know, as I grew older, you know, uh, you'd have a problem, me, like me changing tires or whatever I was doing you'd run into a problem that was slowing you up well I always tried to figure out something to fix the problem, you know.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:56:36):

And, and this is a tough one but what's the process you would use? Did you go stare at something? Did you write notes? Did you draw pictures? How did you motivate yourself to solve these problems?

Leonard Wood (00:56:47):

Now it's just like, uh, what was it, Daytona and it was five o'clock in the morning and I was changing valve springs. Well, they had this spring valve, valve spring changing tool, it was very narrow and your little, uh, valve retainers was made like a rooftop and that thing would slip off to the side and I'm changing them by myself so I said, (laughs) "I'm gonna fix this." (laughs) so then I make me a valve changing tool that, uh, I mean, would just changing things easy as pie, you know. So, when you got the problem and you see your problem you try to figure out a way to make it better and fix it, you know.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:57:32):

Tom, is that hurting us? That air-conditioning?

Crew (00:57:34):

No [inaudible 00:57:34].

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:57:34):

No? Okay.

Crew (00:57:36):

[inaudible 00:57:36].

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:57:36):

But, I mean, from our standpoint you said I see the problem and I solve it but is there any internal thing going on in your mind you're ... or is it just kind of intuitive? I mean that's what we're trying to get to that ...

Leonard Wood (00:57:45):

Well, it's just like that, uh, little lawnmower you saw, uh, I don't draw anything out on paper. Uh, I just think about it in my mind what I wanna make and how I wanna make it and then I just make it, you know. I don't use any blueprints or nothing to make any of it, you know, I just know what size this I want or how long this I want and then you just, it ... like the tractor it all came together just like I'd pictured it in my mind.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:58:19):

Okay well tell us now when you're 13 or 14 you're ready to start working on race cars in essence with your brother. Tell, tell us how that all started.

Leonard Wood (00:58:27):

Well, you know, I've always been interested in, uh, uh, the engines and that sort of thing and, and like I said the guy had this motorbike but you could buy a motor and put it on a bicycle, you know, and then here this guy's riding a bicycle and motor pulling him and (laughs) I just wanted something that I could put a motor on and I wanted four wheels and a motor, something that would pull me along so I, uh, my brother-in-law give me the motor and then I just, when I got the motor I just took it from there and made my frame and all that sort of thing and fixed it all up kinda as I went along.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (00:59:09):

What about the early days of racing when you were actually working on the cars that were on the track? What were some of those innovations that you came up with then?

Leonard Wood (00:59:16):

Well, you know, you ... like, uh, you always want to make the ports flow better, you know, back in the flathead days, you know, you, you would, uh, polish your ports and reshape the ports and then you would relieve from the valve to the seal nut, uh, you know, it had a little separation there and you, you'd grind that to where you get more flow over that and you change the angle on the valves and all that sort of thing.

Leonard Wood (00:59:46):

But in the early days you'd, uh, like, you, uh, I had a good friend, uh, from Reidsville, North Carolina, Taylor Carter and he loved kids so he always liked to help me, you know, and so, uh, I would go and, uh, he would teach me a lot of things, a lot of ways how to make, how to port your engine, you know, and, uh, you know, all about cam shafts and how to degree them and all that.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:00:14):

And, and when did you start applying this sort of inventive thinking to the pit stops? Do you remember when that, that started?

Leonard Wood (01:00:20):

Well, I started in 1960, uh, you know, like I said the top teams, you know, was doing 45 seconds for two stops and you know if you've got, and he was using a lug wrench, you know, just a four-prong lug wrench and of course back them days, you know, a four-prong lug- lug wrench, what can you do? So, number one you make it very true so don't wobble and then you gotta have like a, you put on a sleeve over this, uh, center, uh, prong and then when you hit it you see it would roll freely in the sleeve rather than slipping in your hand so that was a speed up for the four-prong lug wrench.

Leonard Wood (01:01:02):

But, uh, what you wanna do is get rid of that and go to the power wrench and then when you go to the power wrench then you streamline everything. Like you don't want your lug nuts to cross thread so if you re- recess the end of the lugs, see, and you take all the threads off so the lug will slide on there, it's

too sloppy, you know. Uh, if you cut it to the size the threads are where the lug will slide over there's still grooves on there.

Leonard Wood (01:01:36):

Still part of the threads and that'll hang the lug. So, what you do machine it down farther and then press a sleeve over it and loctite it and then, uh, machine that back down to the exact size it needs to go on in and don't cross thread.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:01:54):

And were you the first people or person to do this? I mean ...

Leonard Wood (01:01:58):

I think so (laughs).

Leonard Wood (01:02:03):

I mean, like I said, you, when you see a problem and, you know, when you're setting there working with it, you think, "Well, how can I fix this?" You know, so you come up with a fix for it, you know.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:02:11):

Now, when new were, when you were working these problems, did you talk to a lot of other people on the team or were you more like-

Leonard Wood (01:02:16):

No.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:02:16):

...you went off by yourself, and-

Leonard Wood (01:02:17):

No. I just think (laughs) about it all night long. My wife used to tell me that (laughs), that cars was her biggest competition (laughs). But no, uh, you just, uh, uh, when you got a problem, you gonna think of a way to fix it. And, uh, that was always my theory, "Fix the problem." You know.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:02:39):

Okay. Take us up to the, the famous '65 race, when you guys, uh, when Ford hired you to, to work the Clark car. Tell me that story and, and some of the things you did to [crosstalk 01:02:48]

Leonard Wood (01:02:48):

Well, as you know, Ford Motor Company asked us to come up there. So, we roll in there, we don't know if these guys is gonna welcome us being there, or they're gonna resent us being there, so, 'cause it's Ford's idea and f- and it had the Ford engine, you know.

Leonard Wood (01:03:04):

And, uh, what, when we walked in, they was glad we was there, they showed their e- b- you could feel they wanted us to be there. So, uh, we started, uh, preparing the car for a pit stop, uh, you know, like (laughs) the wheels, the little dial pins that the wheels fit onto, they were so tight, you couldn't get the wheel off. So, number one, you polished them down, to where it slid on nicely and snug.

Leonard Wood (01:03:36):

And then, we was going through the inspection, and, uh, this inspector says, "How come you got the outlets so far up on the tank?" You know, like, the, the outlet was about, oh, um, 10 inches off the bottom of the tank, you know, up towards (laughs) the middle, and he says, "How come you got the outlets so high?" And (laughs) I said, "Well, that's just up there." (laughs).

Leonard Wood (01:04:03):

What it had was a great big John Venturi inside. Eh, you know, a Venturi speeds the outlet, you know, and then, as it comes out, it picks up speed and, and then actually sucks the stuff out, like I was mentioning. And, uh, so, uh, anyway, he says, "Well, I'll bet you \$1000 you can't pour 20 gallons a minute out of that thing." So, it- it had this three-inch outlet, going into two three-inch tubes, and, uh, well this Venturi, you know. So, we didn't bet with him, because we didn't care to, eh, all we was interested is getting through inspections.

Leonard Wood (01:04:44):

But when we got through, we turned the valves on, after we'd streamlined everything. And it put 58 gallons in, in 15 seconds. So, you know, everybody thought we was gonna be in the pits a minute, because that was the first year they went with, uh, gravity flow versus pressure. They had pressure years prior. And, uh, so we knew we was gonna be under 20 seconds, you know, when we, uh, did that. And then, I think, our first stop was 17, 18 seconds, or something like that.

Leonard Wood (01:05:18):

But see, we didn't let 'em know how fast it's flowing, we just turned 'em on, and then, when it's full, stop to watch, you know. (laughs) I remember Chapman's, uh, scorekeeper, uh, Cyril Audrey was his name (laughs), and he was running the stopwatches, and so he just walks around, whistling (laughs). You know, with, oh, boy (laughs).

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:05:45):

Was it important to keep those things secret? I mean, how long could you keep a secret like that, before there...

Leonard Wood (01:05:49):

Well, I mean, they, uh, they didn't kinda, they was very surprised after the first stop, but (laughs), you know, back those days, you kept everything a secret, you know. It's just your nature, you know, in stock car racing (laughs). You know, you di- what really made it run, you tried not let nobody know about that.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:06:08):

And, um, w- what was your impression of that number 82 car? I mean, did you have any, uh, the time to really study it, from a mechanical standpoint, or?

Leonard Wood (01:06:18):

Well, it's just, uh, it run awesome, you know. And he, he was just, uh, uh, such a, a really professional driver. I remember telling him that, "If you stop too short, the hose won't reach. And if you overshoot it, it'll buckle the hoses and mess up the flow." And he said, "You just tell me where you wanna stop." So, he put it right on the money, and I, and when I released my hose from the far side, I leaped back, as I was leaping back, the car was moving out. So, he was very much on top of things, and...

Leonard Wood (01:06:51):

And, eh, Chapman and, uh, uh, Dave Lazenby was his Crew Chief, eh, Chief Mechanic. Uh, I was very impressed with them. They r- redesigned A-frames, right there in the garage area, you know, made 'em right there in the garage area. And, you know, back then, they brazed stuff together, you know, eh, as weld, you know, they braze it together. And, uh, changed the steering geometry right there.

Leonard Wood (01:07:22):

And then, they made a, a little... There's fuel blowing out the back, they found, uh, one of the drivers was following on the last practice, and there's fuel blowing out the vent. Uh, so they made a little cork float valve in this, then when the fuel came back, your cork float shut it off, kept it from spilling that gas out, which could've played a big part in, you know, finish, m- making the race, on the amount of fuel used.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:07:51):

And is there something about the Venturi? You, you guys went and finished it even more, polished it even more, to make that fuel flow?

Leonard Wood (01:07:58):

Oh, the, yeah, the, uh, we worked on the, uh, connecting the, uh, uh, the valves that connect to the t-car, you know. We streamlined all that stuff, so it fit on there perfect, you know, it didn't hang up, you know, you know... If it fits too tight, you can't release it, and you don't wanna be looking stupid out there, can't get the valve off the car, you know. So-

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:08:23):

So, so you'd actually rehearse, you'd try something to rehearse your time? How, how does that all go together?

Leonard Wood (01:08:28):

Oh, yeah. Well, I mean, y- you, you get it to where you can get it on there as fast as you can get it, so nothing is slowing you down, you know. And then, it had a, a little old, uh, cap, which is still on there, that is a overflow cap, that would blow open, you know, and leak fuel. So, you didn't want that to happen, so I just put a little spring attached, and welded a little knot on the cap, and you just flip the spring over the knot.

Leonard Wood (01:08:59):

You know, you had to release this thing, when you filled it. And you wanted to shut it, but you wanted to make sure it stayed shut. So, when you shut it, you just flipped that spring over it, which was just a quick

fix. I mean, that wouldn't be the way I'd fix it, if you had plenty of time, you know. But last minute, you realize you had a problem, so you had to come up, best way you could.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:09:19):

Now, over the years, of the oth- the other forms of racing, NASCAR, whatever, what are some of the other things you, you came up with, to go faster, shorter pit stops, you know, perform better?

Leonard Wood (01:09:28):

Well, I mean, you make the, uh... When, if you're talking about the airgun, you make the socket to where it slides on, real nicely. And then, you'd end up cut... Like, a six points, uh, 12-point socket, you'd cut half of 'em out, where you only had six. And then, you put a spring in the socket, to throw the nut out. And then, you streamlined the, uh, stud, like I was telling you.

Leonard Wood (01:09:52):

And, uh, then, when you get that done, well, now, what else is slowing you down? Well, the jack won't come up fast enough. So, uh, we speeded the jack up, uh, to the point, like, it's 3,800 pounds, I believe, at the time. And, uh, you use, you geared it to where, uh, you designed it to where two pumps would jack it up, uh, rather than 12. Uh, which (laughs) is a huge advantage (laughs).

Leonard Wood (01:10:19):

And then, now, we got, we got the tires on, we got the jack up, you know, and everything, now we're beating the gas man. So, there's, uh, you know, restriction on your gasoline, uh, on your, when, back then, you had a fuel cap to start with, and you put a, a Venturi underneath that lip, you know. And then, uh, you streamline your gas tanks, and then the, the, uh, valve going into the tank itself. And then, a- and when you get through, it's actually sucking the fuel in, rather than just lazily going in.

Leonard Wood (01:10:56):

Like, if you got your sight glass, and you just see it kinda lazily emptying, well, you'll have fuel in your can yet. But if you get it sucking it in there, when you see the sight glass, eh, you can actually feel your can just, "Whoop!" You know, it, it jerks the can, because it emptied so quick. So, then you got it right.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:11:18):

Tell me a little bit about how, as the, uh, the Chief Mechanic, and all these famous drivers, how you guys would work together, to, to, you know, go faster and do better. Or tell us some stories about some of those racers, and what you, how you worked with them.

Leonard Wood (01:11:31):

Well, all, all drivers has got a l- something a little bit different characteristic of them driving, uh, w- excuse me, whatever. But, uh, you, uh, you basically know what makes the car go round the racetrack fast. I mean, you know, you, your camber set and your caster, your geometry and all that. And then, you listen to the driver. And the driver will come and tell you, "Well, I'm pushing a little. I'm loose a little." Or, uh, then you f- you tune the car to fit the driver.

Leonard Wood (01:12:06):

And then, uh, some drivers will know, uh, when they are like they need to be. And some, that's not as experienced, uh, you kinda got to go what you know works good for 'em. And then, then, you go by the stopwatch, what, what makes it go fast, and, and him still be happy.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:12:28):

Let's talk about some of the drivers. Obviously, like, tell us about Gurney and Riverside, you were pretty successful there. What, tell us about that.

Leonard Wood (01:12:34):

Well, Gurney, you know, uh, he was one of the best road racers there's ever been. And he was so smooth, and, uh, he, uh, he wanted his, uh... He'd get in the car and he'd mash the brakes, just hard as he could mash it, when he's first get- (laughs) got in the car, you know. And I'm thinking, "What's he doing?" (laughs). He's checking to make sure no brake line (laughs) oil leak (laughs), uh, the brake systems don't leak, or something.

Leonard Wood (01:13:03):

But, uh, yeah, he, uh, he was one, it, to, you wanted the front end to grip. Of course, you, uh, every driver does. But, uh, when you made the front end grip, uh, he just seemed to make it pay off, you know? He, he was so smooth, and, uh, uh... Then, of course, you don't want it to spin either, you know. But, uh, you just work with the dri- a, a driver like that is no problem to get him set up, because he does his part, and now it's up to you to do your part. Like, if you get it, if you get it like it's supposed to be, he'll take care of the rest, you know. E-

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:13:41):

How, how he did he compare to somebody like A.J. Foyt?

Leonard Wood (01:13:43):

Well, I mean, A.J. was, uh, great on ovals, and he was, wasn't bad on, on road courses. But, uh, road courses was Gurney's thing, you know. He'd, he'd back off early, and he'd get set for the, to make the next turn, you know, and, like, through the esses, lots of guys would go through the esses and they'd go wide open and then they'd off at the next one. And then, the, now you just sashaying, you know.

Leonard Wood (01:14:09):

Where he'd just find a constant throttle, where he could just go through there, at that same throttle opening, and it'd just straighten it out, you know. He wouldn't be sagging back and forth. So, if you found out that'll get you through there, like, half a second quicker.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:14:26):

How about, uh, Parnelli Jones, what was he like?

Leonard Wood (01:14:28):

Oh-

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:14:29):

[crosstalk 01:14:29]

Leonard Wood (01:14:29):

...Oh, he was great (laughs). He, he, I'd say he'd run as good as, as Gurney, but (laughs) he might use up more real estate than Gurney (laughs) would. He'd be off the course a little more, taking the dirt a little more than Gurney would. But (laughs), boy, both of 'em was tough (laughs). And to see both get, go head-to-head, it was very interesting.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:14:48):

Yeah. And then, of course, all the success you had with David Pearson, tell us about him.

Leonard Wood (01:14:52):

Well, uh, see, one thing that made him so good was, well, number one, he knew his way around a racetrack. But he would just back off and let the car float in and take a set, and then you, he'd pick the throttle up. Well, you could make the front end grip, he'd just run faster. Some guys, you make the front end grip more, they throw the back out. And then, you end up jacking weight in it to keep from losing it. And then, now, when it settles down, it's pushing.

Leonard Wood (01:15:27):

Where he just let it float in, take a set, and, and go. Uh, y- you could run a car looser, freer, with him than anybody I know of, and he wouldn't be loose. See, that's the beauty part of it.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:15:42):

A- and tell us about some of the, the big races you won, and how you felt, uh. Obviously, the Indy thing, but you, the Daytona, tell us about some of those.

Leonard Wood (01:15:50):

Well, I mean, uh, the Indy thing was very rewarding, you know, because it went all over the world, you know, and, um... And that was a new experience for us, you know, to go up to Indy and (laughs) and then be in the winner's circle. And then, 'course, uh, they, eh, the Tiny Lund thing, uh, you know and, uh, Marvin Panch wrecked that sports car, he had already qualified the car. And then, Tiny and three of his friends, uh, came under the tunnel and saw his sports car upside down on fire, and he goes up there and pulls him out and saves his life. And then, gets in the car and wins the race.

Leonard Wood (01:16:33):

And 'course, he was... It was a very emotional something, you know, and to come into, uh, in the winner's circle, after the race. Uh, very special.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:16:43):

Now, even though you're helping the, these cars go fast, it, it's dangerous, isn't it? I mean, what was your feeling about the danger?

Leonard Wood (01:16:48):

Oh, yeah, I mean, it, it, uh, was very, uh, uh, y- you know, you, it, it'd really get to you to see these cars running so fast, at Daytona. And, you know, you just, you could just feel for 'em, you know. It, it, you



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know, it, it bothered you, you know, worrying about, you know, if any had an accident. And then, you see 'em spin out, you know, it was quite disturbing, really.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:17:15):

O- of all these things you've done, over your career, and the family's done, what is something that you're the most proud of? I mean, two or three highlights that, that, that pop up, either things you invented, or, or what... W- how's, what's your reaction to that?

Leonard Wood (01:17:27):

Well, it, uh, the, uh, the '63 500 was very special. And then, the '76 500, that Pearson and Petty wrecked, you know, and we still won the race. And then, the Indy thing, with Clark, was very special. And then, and then, the fact that, uh, I guess, uh, the, the thing I'm most proud of is ex- success that the Wood Brothers has had. And Glen and I working together, it was very special when Glen was driving, and, uh, you know, I was setting the car up and... To go out and watch your brother win races, you know, it, uh, that was very special, as well.

Leonard Wood (01:18:12):

And then, the fact it, my nephews Ed and Len, and then, Kim, uh, uh, running the business now. And they've kept it going, we're still here, 60 years after we started. And, uh, I guess that's, uh, one of the most special things about it.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:18:30):

And w- when other people in racing, you know, look, look at you, w- w- what do you like 'em to think? I mean, how d- it's sort of like, not how do you wanna be remembered, but how do you want 'em to think about what you did, in, in the race world? What would be your choice there?

Leonard Wood (01:18:43):

Well, you know, uh, I th- I get a lot... I think, I get a lot of respect, when I walk in the garage area, by all of the drivers and crews, now. And- and, 'course, I pick at 'em, you know, and, uh, and they like me, seem to like me picking at 'em. And that's very special to me, you know, that, uh, that, the respect they show me, uh, nowadays, when I walk in the garage.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:19:11):

Was there ever a problem that you worked on, that you, you just couldn't solve it, but you're s- it still keeps you up at night? Something with a car, I mean, something that's just plaguing you still, or?

Leonard Wood (01:19:19):

No. (laughs) I like how you (laughs)... I, I think I was very fortunate. I usually... Number one, when you're trying to figure a problem out, [clears throat] excuse me, you stay focused til you fix it. I mean, you don't let up. I mean, like, if, if I'm designing a manifold, uh, the internal part of a manifold, to make it flow better, or whatever, uh, I stay on it til I get it done, you know. If you're relaxing at all, you kinda lose your concentration.

Leonard Wood (01:19:55):

But, uh, it might take you, a couple of weeks, a month, to design a manifold, like you want it, you know. Keep working on the flow bench, or whatever. But, uh, uh, you got to stay focused, when you wanna fix a problem.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:20:11):

And then, what about, how'd you keep the whole team focused? Did you have anything to do with that? Did you come in and, uh, motivate them with talk, or, or, or how did that work?

Leonard Wood (01:20:19):

Yeah, I was, uh, I was in charge of the, um, uh, when I was Crew Chief, you know, it, uh, yeah, you, uh, um, you practice with your pit crew, you know. Uh, and if you got a problem, you, you practice 'til you fix it, you know. And then, uh, of course, you always, uh, um... You know, it's real easy to relax, you know, and think, "I got all the time in the world." But, man, you got to get fired up, "I can do it as good as he can." You know.

Leonard Wood (01:20:50):

And you don't wanna, the front tire man don't wanna be looking at the back tire man, to see how he's doing, you just wasting time (laughs). But you'll see that (laughs) happen. You know, a guy, one of, if he's beating me, you know, and he'll look back there. So, uh, yeah, that's a no-no. You stay focused on what you're doing.

Leonard Wood (01:21:10):

I can remember, uh, we, uh, fell out at Charlotte, one time, we had, uh, Cale was driving for us, and we run over an object on the racetrack, and it busted the oil line. And then, the, well, he come in, you know, and I looked under and saw we was history, you know (laughs). We, y- we had a broken oil line, and we was gonna have to stop. Well, my brother, Ray, was changing (laughs) the tire, you know, and I'm trying to stop him, to tell him (laughs), you know, we're through. Well, he's just going at it, concentrating so hard, that he, (laughs) I can't even hardly stop him, you know.

Leonard Wood (01:21:45):

So, you, you concentrate on what you're doing, you know. You, uh, and you, you, when you're changing tires, you do it enough that it comes habit formin', you know, 'course, nowadays, the guys put the tire on their self. But when you had to lay the gun down, you know, and pick it up and switch it, you know, you didn't think, "Well, I gotta switch my gun.", you just picked it up and switched it, you know. You, it comes just all habit, you know.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:22:12):

We, we were talking today, who came up with the idea of, of gluing the, uh, lug nuts onto the...

Leonard Wood (01:22:16):

Uh, Mario Rossi came up with that idea. He, in a pit crew race, in Rockingham one year. And the reason we didn't do it, it, we was worried it, we might cross thread a, a lug nut, you know. And no matter how good you got your studs it'd be that one time you'd cross thread a lug nut. So, we didn't use it. And then, after that happened, then you had to, because everybody else was.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:22:41):

Okay, good. Let's hold the roll for a second. Let me check with my bosses, over here, see how we're doing. They grade us, you know, and then-

Leonard Wood (01:22:47):

Yeah.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:22:49):

Okay, tell us, tell us about the, the '76 race, the crash and Pearson's, uh, calmness under the pressure.

Leonard Wood (01:22:54):

Well, it was, like, a couple laps to go, and David said, "I'm running wide open. That's all I can do." And 'course, that was his, he always played it down, he always wanted to do more than what he said he could do. He never, one time, said he could do more than, than he could do, you knew, you, he would always say he couldn't, and most of the time, would win.

Leonard Wood (01:23:19):

And, uh, anyway, he says, "That's all I can do." So, one la- on the last lap, he, uh, he blows by, uh, Petty. And, and, uh, then, 'course, uh, Petty tries to get back under him, and can't stay off of him, and then they get together. And then, uh, the crowd roared, you know, and I knew something had happened.

Leonard Wood (01:23:42):

So, first thing I saw was Pear- uh, Petty's car, backwards, coming, sliding backwards, up against the guard rail, you know. And I didn't know where David was. And I looked, and he's spinning round, down in the grass. Kept his motor running half wide open, keyed the radio, and said, uh, "The blank hit me." (laughs). And 'course, uh, this is while he's spinning around. And, uh, so Petty, he spins almost, slides almost across the finish line, like 50 feet short, or something or 'nother.

Leonard Wood (01:24:18):

But, uh, yeah, we got a bang out of him, uh, commenting about him hitting him, uh, while he's spinning around in the grass.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:24:27):

And was he also asking, even while he's spinning and disoriented, asking, "Where, where are we in the race? I still got a chance to win?"? Is that part of this, uh...

Leonard Wood (01:24:35):

Yeah, he was wanting to know where Petty was. But, uh, he just politely chuckled right on up through the grass (laughs). Uh, uh, very expertly, uh, professionally, not spinning sideways and all that, and, and went right across the line. And then, of course, they out there trying to crank Petty's and, eh, actually, you're not supposed to go out there and push the car, which they did. Uh, but, you know, th- he was a lap ahead of the next guy, anyway, so he finished second anyway.

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Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:25:08):

Okay. Hold the roll, just a second. Uh, for the, uh, the, the '65-

Crew (01:25:13):

Okay, we're good.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:25:16):

Okay, tell us about, uh, when Ford hired you, for the '65 pit stop.

Leonard Wood (01:25:18):

Yeah, well, see, Ford, uh, uh, John Cowley was, uh, part of the Ford, uh, executives, you know, uh, one was of 'em. And, uh, he, he called Glen, he said, uh, uh, this is John Cowley called Glen, and said, uh, "We'd like for you to come up and pit Jim Clark, uh, for the Indy 500." And, uh, you know, 'course, Glen and, and John got along really well, anyway, you know, so he said, "Sure."

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:25:48):

Okay. And a f- final question about, is there a story, uh, that you would like to tell us Lyn St. James and a pair of shorts?

Leonard Wood (01:25:56):

Well, I know, uh, it was back in the, uh, '70s, she came to Daytona and, uh, wanted, uh, somebody to build engines for her Trans-Am cars. And she was wanting to contact me, and, and then, 'course, she couldn't come over where I was at, I had to come over where she was at. And she, she had on shorts, and I, I guess you could imagine what she looked like, she looked very nice. And, uh, 'course, later on, we had dinner, not too long, about four years ago, I guess, at Daytona.

Leonard Wood (01:26:29):

And I had a new, uh, uh, Explorer, six-speed automatic, you know, and, uh, 290 horsepower, or something or other (laughs). And, uh, so, uh, we eat dinner at the Chart House, and she was just staying next door. She walked over, and I met her over there, you know. And, uh, so, uh, uh, I made her drive, when I left, so that I could say I rode with Lyn St. James.

Leonard Wood (01:26:57):

And so, uh, she went back to her hotel, I said, "I thought you was gonna try this six-speed automatic out." And, uh, so she got lined up to the hotel, it wasn't far, right in the hotel parking lot, and I think she went through three of them gears, before she ever got to where we was going. And so, uh, so I was gonna be the one to get the ticket anyway (laughs), it was my car (laughs).

Leonard Wood (01:27:21):

But, yeah, she's a very competitive somebody, a nice personality, and, um, you know, I always kid about her racing. Very, very, uh, experienced, professional race car driver.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:27:34):

Okay, cut for a second.

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Glen Wood (01:27:35):

They just weren't around here, skilled people to do that. And, and there were more of 'em there, and, and as it got bigger, you had to do that.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:27:51):

It's really a big business now, compared to when you started, isn't it?

Glen Wood (01:27:54):

It's (laughs) to say the least, it's a big business.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:27:56):

Tell, tell me a little bit about that. Why, why is such a big business now, compared to when you started?

Glen Wood (01:28:00):

Well, it's, it's just, I guess, television that's what made it big. But, uh, back when we started, there was no such thing.

Glen Wood (01:28:10):

Uh, there may have been a television built by 1950, but there wasn't many of 'em. I'm not sure what year they did. But I guess it was, uh, in the '80s, '70s or '80s, when they begin to come on, and televise the races. And then, of course, that led to big sponsors, and things.

Glen Wood (01:28:37):

And prior to that, you just had to do it on your own. And you had a little sponsorship, but not much.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:28:44):

So, it- but still always money, all business is money.

Glen Wood (01:28:46):

Well, for instance, in, uh, during the years we ran, in, in the '70s, with Pearson, we had a sponsorship of something a little bit over \$100,000, to run about 20 races. And that wouldn't run one now.

Glen Wood (01:29:06):

And that's just how far it's gone, from, from then 'til now. That's just, like, 30 years ago.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:29:13):

Uh, well, I'll tell you what, take me back, give me a little history lesson. We've always heard that, um, uh, this race business started with guys, uh, running moonshine around in the mountains. An- and... then... you kinda saw some of that. That's a true story. T- take us back, and t- paint that picture for us.

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Glen Wood (01:29:27):

Well, a lot of the race drivers, in the early years, did r- run moonshine. And, in a lot of the areas of this county, and joining counties, uh, it was their life, was to make and sell whiskey. And the only thing wrong with it, was that, that the government didn't like they didn't get their tax money for it.

Glen Wood (01:29:51):

And, but they made it as, I guess, as good a liquor, I didn't, never drank any. My dad did, but, uh, we never, of all us kids, never drank any to, that I knew of. But, uh, a lot of the drivers, that are racing in those days, did that.

Glen Wood (01:30:13):

And the reason being that they were good drivers. They had to be to do what they was doing, and outrun the law occasionally. And, uh...

Glen Wood (01:30:26):

I don't know how many, what percentage, probably half of 'em were that. But, uh, I never did, and m- I've got accused of it, but I never had a, any on my car, at all.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:30:38):

Now, back in those days, when the, the sport was starting, were there some really colorful characters? We always hear these different names. Tell us about some of those people, that, the, some of the early drivers, who were sort of larger than life.

Glen Wood (01:30:49):

One of the, one of the biggest ones, in the early days, would've been Curtis Turner. And, I guess, he's possibly the reason that I'm in the sport today. We used to go watch him run. There was a little track over at Mount Airy, and, near here. And he was driving over there, and it just started sorta, and, and we got to watching him, him. And there were a lot of the older guys, Glenn Dunaway, and Buddy Shuman, and I can name a whole bunch of those old guys, that people this day and time don't even remember they existed.

Glen Wood (01:31:26):

But, uh, Turner was one of the most outstanding drivers of his time. Anybody that ever saw a beach race, in Daytona, with him coming down in an North turn, with it pitched sideways about, oh, you'd think a quarter mile from the turn, but he just made s- look so easy. Now, there's a lot of people would come down, and then go wobbling off of the turn, he never did that. He kept up with it, with the wheel, until it was just as smooth going off, as it was coming in. And, uh, uh, it was just a thrill to watch him on the sand.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:32:09):

Now, were they, were they daredevils or just-

Speaker 3 (01:32:11):

Hey, just real quick. Do you want me to move that, or?

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:32:16):

[inaudible 01:32:16] rolling again.

Speaker 3 (01:32:16):

Okay, good.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:32:19):

So, so, uh, Turner was your inspiration to hop in a car, and then go drive crazy, or something?

Glen Wood (01:32:23):

Yeah, I think so. Uh-

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:32:25):

Tell me about when you... I mean, what, tell me that, that first day you said, "I'm gonna do this."

Glen Wood (01:32:30):

Well, y- you would think that you had to be just a, a daredevil or something to do it. You didn't really. Uh, I wasn't no such thing as that. Uh, I liked to drive fast, but I, I, I liked myself too, enough to not try to get into trouble by overdoing it. And at Daytona, on the sand, like at a, in the first race I ran there, in 1953, there was 136 cars started. And looking back-

Glen Wood (01:33:03):

... in pictures of over the bank, you wouldn't believe how many of the cars had went over the bank, especially in the south turn where they'd be comin' down the highway and not realizin' they was goin' fast and that was a short turn. And every time I ever come over that little hill like, it was just a gradual downhill a little end of the turn, I'd always hit my brakes to see if I had any. And then you had to realize that turn was comin' up fast and- and let off in time to make it. And I never did get off of the track. Out of the eight races I ran there, and three of 'em I won and in the Cup race I think I was seventh or twelfth or somethin' in a convertible race. And all of 'em I finished, and it was because you respected yourself enough to, to not do these things that you knew you'd get yourself in trouble.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:34:11):

Were there any other, people, like Turner obviously a big influence. Were there other, uh inspirations?

Glen Wood (01:34:16):

One of the... one of the drivers that was always gettin' in trouble goin' over that turn down there was Carl Burris, and he asked me one time, just how did I keep from doin' that? I said well, "First, I just make sure I can make the turn, let off and," and he said, "Well I do." But says he was followin' Curtis Turner down there one time and he waited till Turner let off, and then he went a little further. I says, "That is your mistake right there. When you went further than he did and you wasn't gonna make it. If you went as far as he did you possibly wouldn't make it."

Glen Wood (01:34:59):

But, um, I always liked that, um, uh, for some reason it was a two mile down the road and two mile back up the beach. And you just, once you got out on that beach, you're just zzzz-zooming along, all of a sudden there's a turn up here. And um, I guess in the start of it, they would, they started 'em one time like Le Mans start -- out of the car.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:35:33):

Right.

Glen Wood (01:35:34):

Which, they never did that again after this happenin'. When they about to get ready to start, somebody hollered that light, lit the fuse on the... I guess it was goin' shoot up a little firecracker or somethin' and people started runnin' and jumpin' in the cars before they was supposed to and it was a big deal, so they never did that anymore. But they'd start 'em and they'd be 10 abreast goin' down, you know how wide the beach was...some in the water and some up in the loose sand and... But somehow, like I said I made it through every race without wreckin'.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:36:16):

You remember, you remember a, uh driver, a "Speedy" Thompson?

Glen Wood (01:36:21):

Yes, we had a, um, times was gettin' tough then and I was close to gettin', "Maybe I just better give this up." And Curtis Turner and Bruton Smith had built a Charlotte Motor Speedway and, and they'd already run the World 600 and the track got so rough, they had to get on it really before it was finished. Time run out but they went on and had it anyway and it was rough, and it was still sorta rough in the fall for the 400-mile race, but I wasn't goin'. And Curtis called me up and wanted me to come and I told him, "Well, I didn't have a driver." And he said well, he'd drive it if I'd bring it. So, I (he) finally talked me into bringin' it and he was supposed to have drove Holman Moody's car and so he was gonna drive it and he said, "Speedy Thompson's down here." Said, "I'll put him in mine."

Glen Wood (01:37:21):

So, we got down there and he was so busy around there, that we just put Speedy in ours. Well, 'fore long he was runnin' as good as anybody out there, so we just left him. And it, then he won the race. And that was, let's see, 12, \$15,000 and a new car, and so that put some money in the pocket. And then, the next week, Richmond had its race and Paul Sawyer said, "I'll give ya \$2,500 to bring him and that car up there." So, we took it up there and won that race.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:37:58):

Is that sort of when you, you were switching more from a hobby into a business? I mean-[crosstalk]

Glen Wood (01:38:02):

That, that, well, uh just the next year, see Ford had been in, entered in '56 and seven, which I'd, had been chosen to be a part of that in '56 and, and in '61 th-they had started doin' some testing and we was invited to be a part of that test and it was to test spindles and steering linkage and stuff like that. And I got to thinkin', if they come back into racin', I need a new race car. So, I went to the Ford place and bought a new Starliner, '61 Starliner. And we'd never done that before, we'd always had a car that



would be wrecked or burned a little bit or something and, and it didn't cost much. And I think this car cost \$2,500. And that was hard to take a new car and go take the seats out and everything and make a race car out of it. But, as it turned out, in '62 they were back in racing and, of course I was with 'em then and stayed with 'em through up until '70, I think. They pulled out for some reason there. And John Cowley was, uh, I guess boss so to speak at Ford, tell us what we could and couldn't do and I says, "What are we gonna do with these cars and parts we have?" He said, well, that hoped that I'd use them for what they'd been givin' to me in the first place for. So, we took 'em and, and in that little span of, from '71 through '78 or somethin' with Pearson we won forty-three races. Some of the, some of the years we won exactly half we ran. And it was the biggest, uh, biggest years of our whole career.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:40:14):

Now was...I mean Pearson was your biggest winner as a driver?

Glen Wood (01:40:18):

Yes.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:40:19):

But you had some other great drivers.

Glen Wood (01:40:20):

We-

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:40:21):

Talk about some of the other drivers.

Glen Wood (01:40:22):

Well we had, um, we had a good relationship with Dan Gurney. We went to Riverside five times I think with him and won four of 'em. And we had a good relationship with A. J. Foyt, he run probably eight or 10 races and we won three or four with him. Cale Yarborough won several, Donnie Allison won one and Marvin Panch...he was our first, full-time driver and he won several races. And of course, Curtis and... I, I have them over there on the wall, but I can't remember all of 'em. But, uh, Pearson was by far ahead of the rest of 'em in, in percentage of the races we ran.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:41:14):

Now what about your first Daytona victory. What about that driver?

Glen Wood (01:41:17):

The first Daytona? The first Daytona on the big track, I, I was in the Convertible Division at that time, and they ran 'em together. Well, there was so much difference between the speed of a convertible and a hard-top that they never did it again but, I did have the fastest convertible. And I ran out of gas in the 100-miler or I'd have won that first one with it. But the thing was I was down there by myself... Leonard was in the army. And I didn't have any of my crew, I didn't have a crew at that time 'cause he was in the army and I just sort of piddled along myself. And Howard DeHart and some of 'em at Holman Moody's did the pit work for me. Which, I'd sort of depended on that anyway, but they was nice enough to do that.

Glen Wood (01:42:19):

But there's two different times that, that I was, uh at Daytona by myself, uh the last race that was run on the beach, I was down there by myself. And, uh Leonard was in the army. And won that race.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:42:37):

What... Now why did you start, really studying the pit stop and trying to make that a, uh quicker and quicker thing to help win the race? Tell me how that all started.

Glen Wood (01:42:46):

Well, along, along in the early days they, they uh, wouldn't even let you...they didn't suggest it, but y-you changed tires with a four-prong lug wrench. And gradually they began to have air wrenches in it but, uh we got to w-watchin' a little bit about where you'd be on, on the track before your pit stop, where you'd be after it, and if you made a good stop and you, you... I know Marvin used to say it, he didn't worry about gettin' behind, he said when he made a pit stop, he'd be back in front. 'Cause we did at that one time have, uh, not braggin' but we did probably have the best crew out there. And we studied it more than some of 'em did because of the fact that it's just like it is today. If you beat him out 10 seconds that's how far you're in front. And 10 seconds is, on some tracks is a half a lap nearly.

Glen Wood (01:43:51):

And Leonard did a lot of perfection on different things you do to make a quick stop and, and i-i-it just... I believe they used to have pit races, and we won a lot of them. They, they still have it I think, somewhere. But not quite like they did. But it's just a, a no-brainer when you think about it um, if you make up time in the pits, especially if it's under the green, you made a lot of time.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:44:27):

But why weren't more people... Do, I mean, were you the first to go in there and say, "Let's really study this and pull it second here to second there." I mean, you sort of invented this, this modern pit stop. What drove you to do that?

Glen Wood (01:44:38):

Well-

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:44:38):

Well obviously, you wanted to win, but tell me a little bit more how it happened?

Glen Wood (01:44:41):

Well i-it was basically just, uh by noticin' that when we'd make a stop, we'd be further out front if we made a good one and he just kept lookin' at it that way and we'd improve on this or that and which Leonard was an innovator a whole lot of that stuff that happened. In fact, the, the jack that like- like is used today. He was the one that came up with that. A standard jack that you bought at the hardware store, uh would take like 12 pumps of the jack to raise a car. He fixed one where it would take one or two. And, well that made it easy and course we had a good crew. There was, uh, of the five brothers, four of 'em were a-at the same time. Never all five of 'em, but there were four at different times. And they stayed together all the time and, and it was sort of a thing like, you didn't have to hire somebody

else that didn't know what they was doin' back then which is... is very rare today to keep people on. (laughs) That you have 'em on a contract or somethin' but, uh, i-i-it just made sense.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:46:04):

And, and tell me about, I mean the famous, uh Indy race in '65. All of the pictures around here of you guys with, uh Jimmy Clark. Tell me that story of who came to ya from Ford to to hire ya and, you know, just, uh tell us about that.

Glen Wood (01:46:16):

I was at the, at Darlington and uh, John Cowley out at Ford came to me and says, "How would you like to go to Indianapolis?" I said, "Wh- what d'ya mean?" He says, "To pit Jimmy Clark." And I says, "Are you kiddin'?" He said, "No, as a matter of fact, I'm not."

Glen Wood (01:46:37):

And what had happened, uh, Ford had been a part of that, it, it was the first time, uh Ford Engines had been in the r- I guess rear-engine cars and uh, they had, had trouble two years in a row in the pits. And with Ford behind it all they said, well maybe we could help 'em. So, they sent us up there and we'd never even been to a race up there. But, uh, we just did, did what we thought needed to be done and perfected some of the things, uh and it turned out we end up and won the race.

Glen Wood (01:47:24):

And we practiced all kinds of ways of changin' the tires, jackin' it up. They had these little jacks that would stick on the car and pull it down and just hand-thing to jack it up, which now they got hand...I mean, mean hydraulic lifts on 'em and uh, we practiced all of that and then it, was a knock-on hub, you'd hit it with a hammer to tighten the nut on it. And we beat up some wheels and everything, gettin' accustomed to that. We never did change a tire. We never (laughs) jacked it up. We poured gas in it twice, or alcohol rather, and won the race. And it's the least total time ever spent.

Glen Wood (01:48:13):

There was, I think the first stop was 19 seconds and the other'n maybe 23. As the fuel got lower in the tank, it was a gravity-fed and it was a little bit of a, wonderin' about pit stops because that was the first years that did, had gravity feed rather than pressure. And, we just had a ball with it. It's the biggest thing we'd ever done I reckon for what we said was a least thing we had ever done. And got the most publicity from it.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:48:47):

So, you're actually on the crew, what, what, what was your role of the pit stop? Tell me, tell me about that.

Glen Wood (01:48:52):

Well, you know they had these big hoses, about three inches, and they were probably 16 feet long or something, so you had to stop exactly where it...to reach it you, you didn't run down there with a hose, it wasn't goin'. And I know Leonard told Jimmy Clark how critical it was to stop at the right place, and he said, "You tell me where to stop and I'll stop."

Glen Wood (01:49:23):

Well, that first time he came in, looked like he was gonna run over us all. Stopped right on the button and, and, uh I think Leonard had one of the nozzles and Ralph Edwards had the other one. Then the other brothers and thing would, had to hold them up 'cause they wanted to sag down like that and, and was tryin' to hold 'em level so there would, fuel would run in good. And we had the fastest stops of all of 'em.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:49:58):

And what was your impression of Clark as a driver. I mean if, obviously he could stop, but could he, when he was not stopping how good was he really?

Glen Wood (01:50:06):

How good was his stopping? Uh-

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:50:08):

No, I mean driving. (laughs) When he was out there on the track, he was a quite a driver, wasn't he?

Glen Wood (01:50:12):

Yes, he was. He's, he was just smooth as he could be and really a nice somebody to get along with too. We, we wondered how we'd make out with him up there, but they just...it's yours, just do what you're supposed to do. And, and like Leonard said, if they hadn't been that way, it wouldn't have worked.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:50:38):

So, there was no conflict that- [crosstalk 01:50:40]

Glen Wood (01:50:39):

What they said-

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:50:40):

...reason.

Glen Wood (01:50:41):

...when we made the pit stop. We was to do the fuelin', changin' tires, whatever needed to do. Then, Chapman said. "If it stalled, what do we do?" We asked him that. And he said, well he had a disaster crew. 'Cause you had to get over with that big starter or somethin' and start the engine from the rear. But we never needed that either. He kept it runnin' and...it just... That was Ford's first race win at Indy, I think. And ours, and it was just a big thing.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:51:23):

And, and you said it was like 20 some odd seconds you were and what was the- [crosstalk]

Glen Wood (01:51:27):

Nineteen seconds for the first stop and 'bout 23 for the other, about forty, forty-two or -three seconds total time in the pits.

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Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:51:38):

And what would have been the competitors team. What were they averaging?

Glen Wood (01:51:43):

I don't know. Uh, today's pit stops they have less fuel onboard and therefore they have to stop several times. Which they can't, they can't ever beat that. (laughs) Which, there won't be no money in that but it's, it's somethin' we did.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:52:06):

Now, at the time when you were doing this, did you know what a big deal it was going to turn out to be? Th-that legendary pit stop, uh would be talked about for years and uh-

Glen Wood (01:52:15):

Never dreamed it. We just, uh almost scared to go up there, we didn't know what to expect. And it turned out okay but, goin' up there we was nervous about it, as you could be because it was uh, new to us and it was for Ford as well as Colin Chapman and, and we didn't know how we'd get along but, after a while it just like...We were a part of them.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:52:45):

What were your impressions of that, that '82 car? Do you remember?

Glen Wood (01:52:50):

No, can't say-

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:52:54):

You only saw it for 40 seconds, right? (laughs) Let's hold the tape for a second.

Glen Wood (01:52:59):

Most of it, um, most of it's accurate.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:53:03):

Is it? Okay that's good. So, the...um, are there, are there, you know, one thing we ask people, are there any like misperceptions, things that have been out there in the media that you want to correct as just not true? Some rumor or whatever and you say, "Wait, that's not how it really happened." Or anything like that?

Glen Wood (01:53:17):

Sometimes there's things like that, but I never, never went to any of 'em to, or ask 'em to change anything.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:53:25):

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Let me ask you this- You guys are known, the Wood brothers for being very innovative, inventive, and coming up with things the first time to, to improve the business, improve speed, I mean tell me about that. That process of how you stay on the cutting edge to keep the team, uh motivated to always be the best and come up with new ideas for racing?

Glen Wood (01:53:43):

Well, I guess pride is a, a big part of, of tryin' to make things better. Uh, it always has been, uh and in racin' you just wanna beat everybody and that's what the race is about. Is, is outrunning everybody else and gettin' there first. And it's just a certain bunch of pride in, in bein' there.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:54:14):

Now, before, you and Leonard were talking about how you'd drive-

Speaker 4 (01:54:17):

Nice and, nice and straight. You're kind of gettin' comfortable on me. If you could sit up a little bit for me there-[crosstalk 01:54:22]

Glen Wood (01:54:21):

Now, why didn't you tell me that before, I'm bad, I'm bad to slouchin' around anyway.

Speaker 4 (01:54:27):

(laughs)

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:54:27):

(laughs)

Speaker 4 (01:54:27):

All right, that looks great.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:54:29):

Leonard said you guys would travel many miles, have a lot of time to talk. Did you kick around ideas and- and tell me about that part.

Glen Wood (01:54:35):

Somewhat you do that, uh and Leonard did a lot of uh, staying awake at night and studyin' how to do things too, but uh...he, he was an innovator more than me and uh, I started out as a driver and basically that's what you did. And then, of course you worked on the car some. But, when it come to the, the, uh more, uh, the big parts of them gettin' that car ready to go, uh and the engine building and the tune up and all that. That was left up to him.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:55:19):

But to the business side which you handled a lot of, I mean you had to-

Glen Wood (01:55:22):

Well, I had to do that um-

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:55:23):

To stay in the cutting edge there as well. Is that true?

Glen Wood (01:55:25):

Yeah, uh, and it wasn't easy a lot of times. I know in the very beginning, it didn't cost much to race but we'd get, had a little account at Ford dealer here in town and we'd get behind three or four hundred dollars. Well, how in the world do you pay that? And all of a sudden, we'd win a race or two and we was back goin' again. And it just, sort of, somehow there was always a way. Then, there was a few people here in town that would donate a tire or just...that don't sound like much, but it was back then. A tire cost \$40 or something. And a, a tire here, a tire there, or a battery, are just things that we didn't have to buy. Helped out and we were just doin' it for fun anyway, to start with. And hoped we didn't have to get money out of our pocket to do it.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:56:27):

What about getting sponsors? Is, isn't it a constant battle to get sponsors to, uh come with ya and ride with ya every year?

Glen Wood (01:56:35):

Well, up, up until...well, it ain't been too long ago, thinkin' back that, that there wasn't any sponsors much. And it was all, what Ford would help us and they was a big sponsor to start with. And all they would have on the car was, "Ford." And lotta times they'd have a dealership close to you across the side of it, "Augusta Motors" or uh, there's one in Bristol, I forgot what the name of that one was. Then, "English Motors," that was our first one out of High Point. And they'd give us a truck and, and that was their, uh gettin' back what they put in it for, for their work and...and I don't know.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:57:46):

But I-later on, I mean how, how did you, what do you have to do to get the sponsors, I mean it's competitive right? You have to-[crosstalk]

Glen Wood (01:57:51):

Oh, it's tough to get a sponsor now, 'cause there's so many out there that different ones. Like you have a sponsor that's doin', you thinks, okay, and all of a sudden your competitor over here's got him. He bid a little cheaper than you did or, uh, "We can do a better job than they do." Or a whatever. And, uh, it's just hard to keep one and, and this day and time, it's, it's just gettin' harder with the economy the way it is. But we've been fortunate to have Ford by our side and that's made it so we can keep doin' it and we're proud of that.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:58:32):

Let me jump back to that, uh '65 race. There's a story that uh, it was unlucky to wear certain colors. So, you guys didn't want to wear the colors of the car? Or what's that story?

Glen Wood (01:58:41):

Well, there was a, I guess, I don't know what you would call it, uh, nobody wanted a green car. Or wouldn't have it. There were, some of the drivers wouldn't even except green money. And it, it all came from, back in the older days, they used to run the cross-country races. I guess it was an English car that was green, and it would outrun everybody, but it would always break down. That's the only thing I can think of that, uh, caused people not to like green. And suddenly, Elmo Langley, decided to paint his green. Now that was in the 70's, somewhere along there. And there'd never been a green car as I can remember on the track. And he said that was the best thing he ever done. Nobody wouldn't get close to it, he didn't get hit by nobody. They was afraid it'd hex 'em or somethin' if it did... but, uh...let's see...

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (01:59:56):

But in the '65 race, did they want you to wear green uniforms and you guys wouldn't do it or?

Glen Wood (02:00:02):

No, they, they didn't, they didn't suggest us do that, uh, now we did wear our own. There was, seemed like red and white shirts we had on. It had Wood Brothers on it. They didn't ask us to do that, that I remember. Now, it could've happened, but I can't think about.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:00:23):

Speaking of red, do you remember something about a watermelon during that race? Anything about watermelon strike a bell?

Glen Wood (02:00:29):

No.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:00:30):

Okay.

Glen Wood (02:00:32)":

Another "no-no," were peanuts. At, peanuts were just bad luck. Now, why was peanuts bad luck? Well, that theory came from a fact that used to run midget cars around a stadium or somethin' and the pits would be under the seats behind and they would, peanut hulls from here would drop down and get in the carburetors and hang 'em up. Maybe somebody got killed from a throttle hangin' or somethin'. So, peanuts is bad. No, they're not that bad. (laughs)

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:01:13):

Not if you're Jimmy Carter, right?

Glen Wood (02:01:16):

They're okay now.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:01:17):



Coup- just couple of final questions. Of all these things you've done, you, 60 years of racing. This big family and... Tell me some of the moments that you're most proud of? Things that you really, you know, puff up over.

Glen Wood (02:01:27):

Well, I think you'd have to say the thing you're most proud of is, is longevity to, to have been here 60 years and, and it's been family ever since it started. Still is. And my three children are the head... ones of it today. It, it, it's just a, I guess a, uh, proud moment to have your kids take over and do as well as they have with what you started with.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:02:06):

Okay, and now I'm not sure this'll mean anything but, is there a story about, uh you and Lyn St. James and a pair of shorts? That-

Glen Wood (02:02:12):

No.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:02:13):

That means nothing to you? (laughs) K, it was, one of you, we didn't know which one to ask. I guess we'll get Len with that one. (laughs)

Glen Wood (02:02:17):

Um, I know nothin' about that.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:02:20):

It's supposed to be some funny story. We'll take that off the tape obviously. Uh, let's hold the tape for one second. Do you guys have anything else, or?

Delano Wood (02:02:33):

No, but... no. I'm sorry. I've been away from it 27 years. That's-

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:02:37):

Okay.

Delano Wood (02:02:37):

But I was with him over 30 years.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:02:39):

Okay, s-s, let's, let's start from the beginning when you first beca- I mean you are one of the Wood brothers. Tell me about how you became the jack man of this legendary pit stop crew and what your technique was?

Delano Wood (02:02:48):

(laughs)

Crew (02:02:49):

Sit nice and straight for me-[crosstalk 02:02:49]

Delano Wood (02:02:49):

I, I wondered if you'd ever, I'd be asked that. (laughs) They, we started a team in Martinsville. I mean the, uh making pit stops. G-G-Glen was runnin' the 500 down there and they's round, uh well I reckon before went down there was talkin' about what this, what this person gonna do and this person gonna do. The only thing I got to around that thing was left, so this jack and it was a heavy thing. I mean it was, it wasn't no aluminum jack, and it wasn't a jack like that Leonard made for me by no means. And it was...so I was hung with the jack and so uh, it uh, it... To begin with I would, I would be kind of uneasy o-o-of friends up in the stands. If I stumbled, if I made a blunder something like that. But it didn't take me long for that to get out of me. I mean to...bein' scared of anything I mean, to- to do somethin' that uh, I just uh, if I did do something uh, a blunder. I mean I wouldn't say I was perfect all the time. But if I did, I just picked myself up and went on with it. I mean, I just, I just kept agoin'. I didn't say, "Well should I try it over and do it again?" I mean, I had to clean it up right there.

Delano Wood (02:04:03):

And so, that's what we did, and it just- and it worked. Uh, I had a lot of- lot of fun with it through the-

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:04:10):

And what was the technique you were telling me about where you keep the jack close to your body?

Delano Wood (02:04:13):

Well, see, if- if I got the jack to me right here, I'm not bumping my, uh, legs against to- to- to do this number. If it's close to me like this, then I'm on... It's- it's... I got it under control. And so, that's why- that's- that's what I wanted is to be in control of the, uh, of- of what I was doing. And so, whenever I got to the car, I wasn't gonna stumble, falling on my face or anything like that. I mean, you know, I just, uh, had it in- in my hands, uh, in a way like this right here.

Delano Wood (02:04:48):

So, whenever I turned it back to go under the car, I didn't have to place my hands or anything like that, it was just exactly at the point where I needed it to be. So, under there it went, and down like this right here, and I just went at it there. So-

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:05:03):

And- and how much quicker was it than the way the other guys were doing it?

Delano Wood (02:05:06):

Oh. Two, three or four licks sometimes. I mean, depends on who- who the guy was that, uh, doing it, it just, uh... Bobby Allison said one time, (laughs) down at Atlanta said, "Delano." Says, "I hear that you, uh, sleep with that jack." I says, "I do." (laughs) Just kidding him, you know? But in other words, I didn't

let nobody fool with it. I mean, that was, uh, Leonard fixed it for me, and I just- that's exactly what I wanted to do is take care of it, and which I did. And so-

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:05:37):

And tell, he- L- Leonard, what did he do? He built a jack that had fewer pumps to get the car, raised?

Delano Wood (02:05:41):

Yeah.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:05:41):

Tell me about that.

Delano Wood (02:05:43):

Well, he went in here, and, uh... That's a little... Right, here go. This little cylinder right here, he enlarged the cylinder right here in this thing. And just- and- and so, one of the, uh... He enlarged the thing, and, uh, and so whenever it, uh, it done that, just it put, uh, more boost in the jack and up- up it would come, so it just, uh, it worked real good. I mean, I just, uh... Well, it's- it's... I won't say it's like it's cheating, but, uh, (laughs) he fixed it for me, so I just, uh...

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:06:21):

Now, when you got the crew, and everybody's doing their job changing tire, is there some competition like you're all trying to be faster than the other guy? And does that feed upon itself and make you a better team?

Delano Wood (02:06:29):

No, I think the, uh, the, uh... I won't say it was the- was the best, but I'll say we was, I mean, just a- a great team. I mean, I won't say greater than anybody else, but, uh, to be a part of it like I was was something. I mean, it- it's almost unexplainable, I mean, to- to be on a team like that. And one thing that I see that made it so good was all brothers. I mean, the- the- the- one is, uh, was one time it was five- is- was five of us brothers, and the oldest one passed away, but it, uh, all five of us has been involved in it one time or the other.

Delano Wood (02:07:12):

It, uh... Us- and- and- and if- if Leonard made a mistake, if I made a mistake, or Glen made a mistake, we didn't run to him like you hear on- on- on the radios and stuff like that, so-and-so done this, watch this, that and the other. Uh, it was never. I mean, that was just, uh, it was- was all cool-headed, every one of us. And Len and Eddie, they fall right in the same category as I see it. I mean, of course I'm not at the races now. I mean, I'm not saying if they'd done something other, you know, but I'm- I'm what I see about them.

Delano Wood (02:07:48):

And Kim and Bernece, it just... The whole family is just a- a close-knit, uh, family, and it's just been, uh, to see... I put Leonard, even right to this day, on the top list of any mechanic that's out there. I put him right up on top, 'cause I w- worked alongside him for- for 30-some years, and I know what the man can do, and what he has done. Glen, he was one of the greatest dr... I mean, he didn't want to run the

superspeedways and stuff like that, but- but he was great driver. I mean, it was just something. He was so smooth. I remember at the, uh, Martinsville one day, Fireball Roberts. That's before he got killed.

Delano Wood (02:08:40):

He was down there, and- and he followed Glen, 'cause he seen G- Glen sit on the pole down there, he'd run good, maybe his equipment didn't hold up, and didn't get to finish a race like he- or win the race like that, but he did win it one time, and they took it away from him. But he said it. And he figured it out, it was two people could drive this Martinsville speedway. He says Glen Wood is one of 'em, and he says, "I'm the other one." That's what Fireball said. I mean, he- he... 'Cause he followed Glen, seen how Glen was doing it. Glen was so smooth with his accelerating. I mean, he didn't spin the wheel. Well...

Delano Wood (02:09:16):

You know, but anyway, he was just... And that back seat car modified he had, that was just something else. I mean, just a- just a joy to be around the whole thing.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:09:27):

T- take us to the, uh, '65 Indy race with the, uh, the 82 car and tell us your memories of that. You can set that down, yeah.

Delano Wood (02:09:36):

Well, it, uh... The- Glen and Leonard went up there first, and, uh, and wanted... Uh, Ford wanted them to help. I don't know, just exactly to help 'em with the pits work and everything, and- and of course they had the Ford engine, and they- it felt like it had the, uh, uh, the best engine to win the, uh... Chances of winning the race, best driver, best chassis. I mean, the driver was Jimmy Clark in the Colin Chapman chassis. And- and so, the Ford seeing that they- they needed a pit crew up there, I mean, to- to service the car.

Delano Wood (02:10:15):

Well, after a while, I mean, a day or so, uh, Glen and Leonard was up there, s- said the radio, I mean, call for the rest of us to come up there. Well, we did. (laughs) Well, it... The little cars, let me see, well, I'd never been around one. I never even- I never touched one. I didn't know what they was like, how they would sound really, o- other than what we heard on the, uh, on television, you know how they do. And so, we went up there a couple days ahead of time. But doing that, and we did... the- the cars would go by, and we'd have our backs turned. Them little things are screaming, you'd almost jump, you know, to where I said, "Is it gonna run over me?"

Delano Wood (02:10:54):

You know, just, "What's going on here?" Well, that- that- that kind of got used... I got a little used to that, that- that helped me a whole lot being there a day or two ahead of time and it got to have your hands on the thing a little bit, this, that and the other. And, uh, then, they, uh, worked it out, Leonard, he went and got it, uh, fixed that tank. He probably told you about all of that. I won't get into that, but that was (laughs)... That's- that's- that's what I'm talking about Leonard, that's Leonard right there what I'm talking about here. I got him up on the top shelf yet. And so, that's one of the reasons. But he, uh, we would practice there for a little bit there...

Delano Wood (02:11:31):

And, uh, my job..., Leonard was to put the nozzle on the- over on the, uh, far side of the car, and I'm in the middle there to hold that long hose up to where the wa- the fuel will flow through, and not let the thing sag down too much. And so, uh, it- it worked out real good. I mean, just, uh, to be no more practice in what we did, and to go up there and- and to- to do that, uh, it was something else. I, uh... The day of the race, I, uh... I said, You know, you had to maybe just a little bit of a butterfly in your s-stomach.

Delano Wood (02:12:17):

You'd want to do good. I mean, we went up there to help win the race, and, uh, so we was getting ready to make the first pit stop on Jimmy. Uh, and so, uh, I was just a little bit, uh, wringing my hand just a little bit. But the moment that little thing came off down pit road, it was coming down there at us to service it, I went in at 21 mode. Everything just woofed right away from me. I mean, as far as- as the butterflies or nothing, we went out there and the first stop was 17 seconds flat. Next stop and the last stop we'd done was 24.9, which I said 41.9 seconds total in the pits, and won the race. And it was just, uh, I mean, that- that... I'm not... Well, am I bragging? I mean, I'm just telling it like it what happened.

Delano Wood (02:13:14):

And, uh, that's- if it's been maybe 19 seconds on the first pit stop, it was in some areas, I mean, some, uh, papers there, but what I had down, the, uh, the- the figures, that's what it was. And it's never been run and won on the same tires, set of tires, and never been run and won on two pit stops. And so, that's- that's two things that's never happened. And so, that- that- that happened to us at Daytona one time in 1963, we won, uh, on four pit stops on the same set of tires. So, at Daytona and Indianapolis both, that's happened there. And so, it just, uh...

Delano Wood (02:13:55):

But to- to go up there and to- to accomplish that, to be a part of that, is, uh... I- I wasn't a- a... I was just a spoke in the wheel. I won't say I was, uh, the big spoke, anything like that. I always- always, kind of, backed away from the- that, uh, being in the limelight, whatever you might say. But, uh, I was there with the team, and I was just part of it, and my hands, uh, helped a little, and so, uh, I just e- enjoyed it. And I remember one time, it, uh, it- it... This is getting back to the cars at- at Darlington, they was gonna put the, uh, 21 in the museum. And this Bill Kiser was the public relation man there at, uh, at the speedway.

Delano Wood (02:14:42):

And the day of the race, he said, "Delano." He says, "I want to see you, Leonard and Glen present that thing at the start and finish line before the race." That's what they was gonna do. To the- to the museum, present it to the museum. I said, "Bill." I said, "That sound like a great idea." But I said, "Let me do one thing first." "Yeah, yeah, yeah. What is it?" I said, "Let me stand over on the other side of the wall, and let me watch it, Glen and Leonard put it in there, present it, you know." So- and- and I did, that's what I done. So, it just... And they've, uh, asked to- to come and do this, I just- I'm just grateful to, uh, for them to ask me to do it, and to go over there to, uh, Goodwood, England, that was... I can't explain that it was so great to... What- what it- it brought back so much memories of the, uh, of the Indy race. And they... "That's the little car." They said, "Is that the- is that the same car that- that r- that run up there, that won the race?" And Leonard says, "L- Let me check one thing." And where they put the ca-, uh, the cap on the, uh, on the gas of- of fuel, where they hook up right there, that cap was loose a little bit, letting some, uh, fuel, uh, spray out a little bit, bounced out some way there.

Delano Wood (02:16:04):

And Leonard went and got two springs, and put a spring on here, and a spring on there, and it's still on there. There was no question about it being the same car. I mean, it's just... So, that's one of the first things we looked at to look for when we got- when we got there. And so, it just- it's great. And, uh, then, uh, Jackie Stewart and Lord March, and it's just all the people over there was so- so great to us and everything. And so, I had a big time. (laughs)

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:16:31):

Okay. Let's hold the, uh, tape for a second.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:16:33):

That was great. I didn't even have to ask you anything.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:16:41):

Just tell us a little bit about how you fit into this whole family and what you're doing now.

Eddie Wood (02:16:46):

Um, now?

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:16:47):

Yeah.

Eddie Wood (02:16:47):

I don't do anything now. (laughs)

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:16:49):

(laughs)

Eddie Wood (02:16:49):

I was, um... I started out just like you hear everybody else starting out, sweeping the floors, cleaning bathrooms, cleaning up, cleaning cars, and that would've been when I was in high school. Uh, you know, after school I would- I would go- go to the shop as soon as I got out of high school, 'cause we- my high school was just down below. The shop was a half mile from where I went to school. And, um, I just- just started there. And then, um, when I graduated, um, I went to college for a couple years. And when I graduated from- from there, I went straight to the racetrack. Didn't go to my graduation, I went straight to Michigan, and been going to the races ever since.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:17:35):

And did you... What do you do when you go to the races? Tell us a little bit on when you got started. How did you [crosstalk]

Eddie Wood (02:17:40):

Now, um, I mean, in earlier years, I mean, my brother and I have done a little bit of everything, from painting cars to- to, uh, wiring 'em, to putting motors in. And that- that used to not be in- in the Pearson

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days, you know, in the- in the '70s, there was four of us, four or five. You know, it was my- my brother, Len, and my dad, and uncle. And that was really... You know, we had a lot of other people on the outside that would come around on race day, but so far as every day at the shop, it was just us.

Eddie Wood (02:18:09):

So, we did a little bit of everything. So- but now, I basically, um... You know, Len and I, you know, run the business, and- and we was always trying to chase down money, and, uh, which is a pretty big obstacle now, you know, nowadays, and, you know. But, um, and I- I do the spotting, uh, in practice. I don't do it for the race, I couldn't handle that. But I do spot for the- during practice. And, uh, you know, we just kind of keep up with what's going on, we're there every day, and, you know, aware of everything that- that is going on as- as- as best we can keep up with it.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:18:46):

Now, we were- we talked to, uh, Glen and Len and Delano about the, uh, famous '65 Indy race.

Eddie Wood (02:18:51):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:18:51):

When you were school age, so you weren't at the race. But tell us that story about how you kept up on the race that day.

Eddie Wood (02:18:56):

Yeah, I was in the sixth grade, and, um, and of course the race at that particular time was- was run on Monday. And, uh, and we went to school that day, we- we didn't have off. A couple of you know... In North Carolina... We're- we live in Virginia. In North Carolina, they were- they were off that day, but we weren't. But, um, I had a little, small transistor radio, which you got to remember, this was 1965 so it wasn't really that small. But I finally managed to get it hid in my pocket somehow, I don't remember, I might have taped it to my side. I can't remember how I did it. But I had a little wire run up for- with the earphone, and then put right up, you know, at the edge of my collar.

Eddie Wood (02:19:34):

And I'd sit in class like this all day, and, uh, listen to the whole race. Um, it was a 200-lap race, and, uh, and I think it started, like, at 11:00, which would have been 10:00- no, it would have been 12:00 here, which was we'd just went to lunch, 'cause I remember we had started right after we got back from lunch. And I could listen to the whole thing, I never did get caught. And I had some buddies of mine that would, kind of, shield me from the teacher. They were sat in front of me, you know, in different classes, and, uh, got away with it.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:20:03):

And do you remember, I- I think that, uh, 82 car lead a lot of that race, didn't it? [crosstalk]

Eddie Wood (02:20:07):

Yes, sir.

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Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:20:08):

[crosstalk]

Eddie Wood (02:20:08):

Yes, sir.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:20:09):

So, you w- were excited early on probably.

Eddie Wood (02:20:11):

Yeah. And, you know, it's a really big deal too for them, you know, our dads to go up there, and... 'Cause that was the first time they, you know, pitted a car or anything like that. And, um, it was all brand new. You know, it was- it was a big, big deal, 'cause Indianapolis, as, you know, Indianapolis has always been, you know, a very, very big race, and especially back then. And, uh, it was a big honor for them to be there.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:20:34):

So, when- when they won this, in essence, what was the reaction back here?

Eddie Wood (02:20:38):

It was, uh... It was, like, seemed to be worldwide, 'cause I remember people calling, and- and newspaper, people just used to send newspapers. Not just, like, articles, like, just the picture of somebody, they would send the whole newspaper. And it was just stacks and stacks of papers that just kept coming in, you know, day after day from all over the United States and the world. Uh, and, you know, we didn't ever see anything like that. And, uh, 'cause they'd, you know, they'd won Daytona and, um, things like that, but, you know, that was more of, you know, around here, the United States, but this was- seemed to be worldwide.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:21:20):

So, obviously that was one of the highlights of, uh, being a part a part of the team. What- what are some of the other highlights over the years that you remember that stick out in your head?

Eddie Wood (02:21:27):

Um, probably for me, um, '76 Daytona 500 with- when Pearson and Petty raced all day, and- and wrecked on the last lap. I was on the radio with David. There was, um... At that time, there were only two radios. There was one in the car, and then someone in the pit had one. Well, Leonard didn't wanna wear it, uh, so I would wear it, and I'd stand right beside of him. And whatever was talked about between David and me, I'd relay it, you know, to Leonard. Um, but that was probably the biggest, coolest thing that's probably I've ever been a part of, 'cause there was nobody, th- on the radio, but just- just us.

Eddie Wood (02:22:12):

And he went by under the, you know, to take the- the white flag, and, uh, I remember asking him as he went under the flag, I said, "Can you get him?" And he said, "I don't know." Just as calm. So, they go off into turn one, and off of two, and down the backstretch. And, you know, we- we couldn't see. You could



see the- the crowd. Well, the crowd began to- to get a little emotional, you know, started getting louder, and louder. And, um, he went into three, and if you've ever seen the video, he goes up, he said, "I got him."

Eddie Wood (02:22:48):

So, he comes on around, and they come on around through the middle three and four. And the next thing I... And the crowd's going nuts, you know? And we're all just dumbfounded, didn't know what to think. And then he says, "He's under me." And then he said, "He hit me." And then, all this- the- the crowd goes nuts. And then, we- we could see smoke. And then, it seemed like an eternity, but it was just a few seconds, David comes back on the radio, just- just as calm. And he says, "Where's Richard?" I said, "He, uh, uh..." You know, I was, like, all...

Eddie Wood (02:23:26):

I didn't... You know, I was all spun out. And I- I said, "He's- he's stopped. He's- he's stopped. Come on." And he said, "I'm coming." And he comes and got- he kept his car running. Richard's died, but David clutched his and kept it running, and, you know, chug-a-lug and went under the- right under the flag. But the ironic thing about it, at that time, we didn't... Or the drivers didn't have push-to-talk buttons on the steering wheel like they do now, it was right here on his shoulder harness. So, he's spinning, he's pushed the button talking to me, and he's clutched it, knocked it out of gear, and kept the car running all at the same time.

Eddie Wood (02:24:10):

And never, I'm talking- I'm telling you, his voice never had any panic, any emotion, it was just ice, just- just like us talking here. I mean, nobody knows that but me 'cause I'm the only one that heard it, but that- that is exactly how it went down, and that was probably the biggest moment in my whole career.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:24:33):

That's a pretty amazing story, isn't it? [crosstalk]

Eddie Wood (02:24:35):

Yeah.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:24:36):

What about, um, you talked about some of the things that have changed now. The modern racing, what are some of the big challenges that have been going on now? Because- opposed to the olden days.

Eddie Wood (02:24:46):

I, you know, I guess everything's relative. You know, back then, you had to have money to race. Now, you got to have a lot more money, but you still got to have money. Things cost more than- than they did then. But, you know, I think it's all relative. But there's so much more, um, emphasis on, um, technology now. And, you know, of course, there was technology then too, but most of that was just what you got from the factories. And now, the factories are in it with all the technology they can throw at it, plus all you can go buy. And, you know, it- it's just so much more technology and engineering now than it probably was then.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:25:22):

Are the drivers still as, uh, calm as Pearson was back then, or do you think they're not quite the same?

Eddie Wood (02:25:28):

Um, yeah, I think they are. I think race car drivers have... They've either got a gene extra we don't have, or they've got a gene... They're missing a gene that we don't have. But they're... I mean, through the years, you know, I've- I've known a lot of drivers, and- and they've all kind of got that calmness about 'em when they're in the race car. Once the motor, you know, the engines are fired, and they're rolling, and they're- they're- they're doing their deal, they're all... You can- you can tell. I mean, it's different.

Eddie Wood (02:26:01):

They- they've just got a- a way about 'em that, you know, they're in their deal, they're in their zone, that's what they do, they're comfortable, and there's no... I- I don't think I've ever... I mean, I've always, kind of, been the radio guy. Somehow, I got tagged with that, but like I said, Leonard didn't want to do it 'cause he and David probably got arguing about a set up, so if it was me, I didn't know anything about it to start with, so he wasn't gonna argue with me. So, we- I wound up the radio guy, and through the years, I don't think I've ever had a- a race car driver that I could ever detect fear ever, and we've had a lot of 'em.

Eddie Wood (02:26:40):

And I've listened to a lot of racer car drivers, and I've never noticed fear. That's why I think they got a- they're missing a gene, or they got an extra one.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:26:50):

Yeah, do you wanna do something?

Crew (02:26:51):

You need a new battery.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:26:53):

Oh, okay. (laughs) I need a new battery. Okay, let's hold there. I was feeling, kind of, run down.

Eddie Wood (02:26:57):

(laughs) Oh, I knew exactly what he said.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:26:59):

What'd he say?

Eddie Wood (02:27:00):

He said, "The bitch hit me." That's all he said.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:27:02):

That's all he said.

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Eddie Wood (02:27:04):

Now, he only told that years, um... We were having our 50th year anniversary up here. They had it right back here.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:27:13):

Right.

Eddie Wood (02:27:14):

And he came up, and we had a big blow out, had a bunch of people here, and, um... You familiar with Barney Hall?

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:27:21):

No, I'm not.

Eddie Wood (02:27:22):

He does the MRN. He's, like, the voice of... Like, he's like our Pat Summerall.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:27:27):

Okay, right. Right.

Eddie Wood (02:27:29):

And, uh, he was always David's buddy. Well, he did the deal, and he got to prodding him. Like, it was a live TV thing that they did here, and he got to prodding him, like, talking about that race. And finally, he's, "Okay, I'm gonna say it. This is what I said." So, he told it.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:27:44):

Oh, so it's out?

Eddie Wood (02:27:45):

Yeah, but nobody really... If you go try to look it up somewhere, you- you'd never find it. But it's... He finally said, "I never said it." Until he did.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:27:57):

There's a certain pact of silence with the radio guy, right?

Eddie Wood (02:28:00):

Well, it's just... I don't know. It was just- it was just us. It was 'cause we used to talk about all kinds of things.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:28:08):

During the race, you mean?

Eddie Wood (02:28:09):

Oh, yeah.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:28:09):

Well, what are you talk about the race, what are you talking about?

Eddie Wood (02:28:12):

Just he would see things. I just remember how he would see things. He would see people. And he'd come in, make a pit stop, and, you know, he's- he comes in, knocks it out of gear, and he's getting a drink of water or whatever, but he would see someone stand in the pits, and he'd say, "So-and-so is standing. What's- what's he doing in there?" And then he'd... It's just stuff that he was aware of that- that always just fascinated me. That, I mean, he would see people in the stands, or he would see something in the infield or something about somebody else's car that just you wouldn't notice, but he did.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:28:58)

Well, they say to the- those guys, everything's slow- goes slower for them. [crosstalk 02:29:01]

Eddie Wood (02:29:01):

I- it must. I, you know, one- they s- I think, like I said, it- once it's- it's relative. Yeah, okay. They may be running 200 miles an hour, but they're all doing that, so what they're looking at it is set in steel or, you know, just... I- it's- but they're all like that, the good ones.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:29:22):

Let me ask you, it's a little- little- maybe a tough question, but what does it feel like to be a part of this, sort of, famous family, this close-knit family, the Wood Brothers team? I mean, what's your sense of- of- of how you fit into that, and how it makes you feel?

Eddie Wood (02:29:36):

Um, I don't know, I never really thought about it. I mean, it's just always been there, and it's more of a... As you get older, you start to appreciate stuff. You know, and I'm getting old obviously, but you begin to appreciate what they did. You know, my dad and uncle, and... uncles. And you realize, "How did they..." You know, "How'd they do that?" You know, "How- what were they thinking that day they got up and want to build a race car?" You know, "How..." You know, "How'd that start?" You know, you begin to think about all those things, and, um, the relationship with Ford Motor Company.

Eddie Wood (02:30:24):

I understand that now, you know, of what loyalty and, uh, starting with one thing and sticking with it 'til, you know, forever. I- I get it. You know, when you're younger, you don't- you don't pay any attention to it, but as you get older, you begin to realize, "Hey. Yeah, I- I- That's why it's special." You know, and that's- that's what it is to me, it's just special.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:30:52):

Wh- when did you start to realize that you were, kind of, part of this special group, I guess, as, sort of, another way of asking the question?

Eddie Wood (02:30:59):

Well, now, when we were younger... Uh, in fact I was telling my daughter last night, we went to the county fair in- in 1977, we did a pit stop at the county fair, just a demonstration. And my- and my grandmother was there, my grandmother Wood. She'd never seen my dad or any of 'em race. She- she never went to a race. So, we did that, and she was there. And I was telling that story, and I said, "You know, the coolest thing was, I got to wear my Purolator uniform all around the fair." 'Cause I was carrying tires, "I got to wear my Purolator uniform that night. And I was a big guy, and I got to ride all the rides for nothing," you know? (laughs)

Eddie Wood (02:31:42):

And I always- we always kid young kids about coming to the racetrack like, "You get to wear a fire suit now. You get to be cool." You know, that's- that's... When you're young, that's kind of what you feel, but as you get older, it's the tradition, the history, the- the respect. I mean, I just- I can see my dad and Leonard walking the racetrack. And even the young guys that really don't know 'em, but they know the name. And- and, like, it's Richard Petty and Dale Inman the same way, it's just the respect, and I think that's the most important thing, respect.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:32:24):

Okay, cut. Terrific answer. I- I'm happy. You guys happy, or...

Crew (02:32:29):

Yeah.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:32:30):

(laughs)

Crew (02:32:30):

Cut. We're at speed.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:32:37):

Okay. T- tell me, how- how do you fit into the Wood Brothers operation. I mean, what are you doing now on a daily basis here?

Len Wood (02:32:44):

Uh, typically, I keep up with most of the financial stuff, like how much money's coming in or how much money's going out. Um, Kim and Eddie both help with that. Eddie's more of the- the helping get it in. Kim's more on controlling it going out. But, you know, I'm- I'm kind of the middleman for that. Um, we still... Eddie and I still chassis dyno all the cars that we use. Um, Roush Yates engines, uh, which Doug Yates, he lets us- he trusts us enough to, uh, allow us to dyno the cars. And we don't share the numbers with anybody, so it works pretty good.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:33:22):

And- and t- take me back to when you got started, you were obviously young, you were born into the family, but tell me some of those early, uh, impressions.

Len Wood (02:33:30):

Um, my first race probably in the pits was probably 1971, and it was more of, like, rolling tires or chasing lug nuts or stuff like that, going to get gas. And then, over the years, um, we started... I- I, kind of, gravitated more to the engine side, and Eddie more to the chassis side, so it worked out for both of us. Um, you know, I- I worked with Uncle Leonard for a number of years on, like, cutting heads, grinding valves, assembling engines, things like that, uh, just, kind of, coming up through the ranks.

Len Wood (02:34:04):

And then, a number of time- a lot of time we spent dynoing engines, I- I really liked that, except when, uh, the days where they pull bad, and you had to spend half the night tearing them down and trying again. Um, that wasn't so good.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:34:19):

What was it like working with, uh, with your uncle?

Len Wood (02:34:22):

Um, you know, he was always pretty quiet, and you'd just- you watch more what he was doing, and learn from that, and just, kind of, repeat what he was doing. But, you know, if you stumbled, you know he was there to help you. The same way with daddy, um, you know, there'd be a period where we would, "Okay, this week, we're gonna learn how to pack hubs." And okay, we'd go through the cleaning process and the whole thing. Uh, then it'd be, "Okay, we're gonna learn how to build a gear this week. So, you know, not that we did that a lot, but we had knowledge of it.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:34:54):

Okay, so if your first race was '71, that- those early '70s, Wood Brothers were pretty successful as a team, weren't they? Tell me what it was like to be- be in- involved in that.

Len Wood (02:35:03):

(laughs) Well, that was like, uh, let's just say '72 and '74 and '76 were probably the best years. And it was, uh, there would be periods where you'd win, uh, nine of 10 races sometimes, you know, like you'd win four in a row and then skip one, and win four, five more, you know, it's, uh, I can remember going to Rockingham at times and qualifying eighth with David Pearson, you'd kinda hang your head in shame because you knew you should have been on pole.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:35:35):

W- why do you think you won so many races during that period?

Len Wood (02:35:38):

Um, you know, Pearson was really good, uh, in, in that era. Um, everybody thought he was washed up and daddy kinda give him a second chance. And him and Leonard clicked and kinda it's like they say, the

rest is history, and he went on to win something like 45 races. I think, uh, and you know, back then we, we chose to run a limited schedule and run the, the bigger tracks in where we could do the best.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:36:08):

Now, you, what do you remember most about the '76 race? I mean, we all know the famous ending, but tell me your impression of that.

Len Wood (02:36:14):

Uh, I was there, I mean, it was a madhouse, I mean, cause we all, uh, Eddie- we only had like two radios, one in the car and Eddie wore the other one, 'cause Leonard didn't wanna wear the radio, he wanted to be where he could go run, change the tires, whatever... work on the car if needed. So, Eddie was on the radio and uh, he talked about when Pearson and Petty hit each other, you know, spinning out. And I think Pearson mashed the clutch in and kept the car running, 'cause a year before, uh, the 1975, we were going down the back stretch with, uh, coming to the white flag, leading, had a straightaway lead and, uh, I think it was Richie Panch, uh, so who Pearson passed and Cale Yarborough was the other one and he ... Cale ducked in and he had a long nose car that was new to them, at the time, and I think it just clipped the rear end and spun Pearson out.

Len Wood (02:37:09):

And it killed it and it wouldn't, it wouldn't fire. So, we sat over there, they finished the race. Benny Parsons actually won, and they finished race. I was sittin' over there and in, uh, not in the infield, but you know, down against the inside rail, couldn't go. So, like I say the next year he kept it running and that's, I mean, it was a madhouse 'cause nobody knew what was happening, you know, people running out to push Richard Petty's car and Pearson, like I say, just kept going down on the apron across start-finish line.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:37:37):

Obviously, a big highlight to be involved now. Uh, what are some other highlights over the, over the years that jumped to your mind?

Len Wood (02:37:44):

Um, you know, I mean like things like Kyle Petty at Richmond, when we got his first win for him, um, you go down into turn three, probably about five or six laps to go and Earnhardt and, uh, I believe it was Earnhardt and Darrell Waltrip, you know, wrecked each other and then along comes, uh, Geoff Bodine he gets in it and then Joe Ru- and we were running fifth when we took the, when we come back, when we, before that lap, we were running fifth and, uh, Joe Ruttman comes by, he spins out in the oil. So, then Kyle Petty, he just kinda like is tooling along easy through it and we won the race under caution, which was his first race, but that was one like, "Okay, you're running fifth and all of a sudden, hey, you're the winner." Um, you know, Dale Jarrett winning at Michigan, uh, beatin' Davey Allison, you know, they run side-by-side the last couple of laps and, uh, beat him by about two feet. You know, that was, that was pretty special. And then, uh, our last win with Elliott Sadler at, uh, Bristol, the car that we beat was the 43, which you know, so much of our history, I think there's, let's just say 30-some times probably it's been a 21 or 43 finish one way or the other. So ...

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:39:06):

It's almost like written in the stars. Isn't it? (laughs)

Len Wood (02:39:08):

(laughs) Yeah. Something like that.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:39:10):

Uh, tell ... uh, at what point did you know you were part of this sort of, uh, famous, uh, innovative team, the Wood Brothers? Does it, does it dawn on you when you're younger? Does it take a while to sink in?

Len Wood (02:39:20):

Um, I think when it kind of started sinking in was daddy started kinda giving Eddie, myself and sister Kim, like part of the company, like 5% of the company. And it's like, this was around like 1979 or '80 and it's like, "Hmm, this maybe what we're gonna be doing the rest of our lives here." You know, it's, we better get on with it 'cause we were, you know, that was back in the Pearson days and you, you raced every other week and there'd be periods of time when we would, uh, let's just say run radio controlled cars, for two or three days, and then we'd go get ready and go to the racetrack set on pole, usually win the race, it was easy. But, uh, you know, like I said, somewhere along that it's kinda where we started taking more interest in it and like say I went towards, uh, the engine stuff, Eddie the car stuff. And uh, later, you know, it was, okay, going out and trying to find sponsors, things like that. So, sports change.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:40:14):

Yeah. One of the things they always talk about the Wood Brothers, how innovative the team was and using those innovative powers, is it harder to do that now with this sort of standardization of a lot of ...

Len Wood (02:40:24):

Yeah, they've took a lot, a lot of the creativeness out of the cars. I mean, uh, you know, you, when you're measuring stuff with Faro arms or Romer arms now down to the thousandths, you know, I mean years ago you could, if you were within an inch, you were close enough, but not now. I mean, it's, it's a different time.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:40:44):

Uh, do you use a lot of computers, um...?

Len Wood (02:40:46):

Yeah, back then we didn't, uh, we didn't even have calculators back when, uh, we first started running it, we, we got an engine dyno, um, back probably like '71 or 2. And I was one 'em. I'm like, okay, I'd watch the fuel flow and read it. And then like Leonard would watch the torque and you know, it would take three people to read gauges and then you go sit down and you take a slide rule 'cause, Bud Moore showed us how to use a slide rule. Uh, people don't even know what a slide rule is now. But you know, when we got our first calculators, like, "Boy, this is neat. Saves time."

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:41:22):

Yeah. The other thing I, I was noticing, it's like your 60th anniversary and you said, this might be something you want to do the rest of my life. Ho- how are you gonna keep it going for another?



Len Wood (02:41:29):

(laughs).

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:41:30):

I'm not going to say 60 years, but-

Len Wood (02:41:31):

No, no.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:41:32):

... what are the challenges ahead?

Len Wood (02:41:33):

Um, you know, it's a tough economic time right now. I mean, like I said, we're running a limited schedule, but we're trying to get back full-time trying to find sponsorship, but, you know, I think if you get back full time, if we can get back competitive, um, and you know, we can still be a part of it.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:41:52):

But obviously money is one challenge. But if you had-

Len Wood (02:41:54):

Yeah.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:41:54):

... the money, wha- what is it, what's the, is there a formula that, that the big teams have to have now to compete at that, at that higher level to win?

Len Wood (02:42:02):

Um, a lot of it's luck. I mean, just like Jimmie Johnson, I mean, he's won four championships in a row. Uh, you would think, well, somebody, uh, Jack Roush's guys, or, or Joe Gibbs's guys, some of those teams, surely, they could beat Jimmie Johnson, but nobody has, I mean, everybody's, he's the target right now.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:42:24):

Yep. And what about ... uh, more of a philosophical question? What does it sort of mean to you to be a part of this sort of famous family, this close family and this great tradition of the Wood Brothers?

Len Wood (02:42:36):

Uh, it's really special. I think the older I get, the more I appreciate it, uh, you know, like we visited Henry Ford Museum a number of times a year and each time we find something we hadn't seen before. Um, you know, history, history is a big part of what Eddie and I think about now, um, as well as looking forward to what's, what's ahead in the future, but you know, like I say, we look back at the things that daddy and Leonard did from the beach days to the, um, first Daytona 500 to, you know, the fi- four wins they had in the Daytona 500, you know, a lot of special things that they did, uh, the Indianapolis 500

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1965 pittin' Jimmy Clark's car, you know, I mean, that's, that's stuff that, uh ... you can't repeat that again.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:43:30):

Yeah. Those days are gone, but that there might be brighter days ahead of you.

Len Wood (02:43:33):

Brighter days, but I, I told daddy one day I said we probably got more history behind us and we do ahead of us. Uh ...

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:43:40):

Okay. Finally, do you remember when you were, you went to Darlington when you were, you know, seven or eight-

Len Wood (02:43:44):

(laughs).

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:43:44):

... years old?

Len Wood (02:43:45):

Who told you that? That one.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:43:46):

You, you taught, you, um, wait, you gotta, lemme ask the question (laughs). You and your mother had a discussion in turn four about something, What's that story about the ...

Len Wood (02:43:51):

Um, must've been about 1967 or 8. Um, guy named Earl Balmer was driving our car. And, um, I think it was my first time to Darlington and there was a little family grandstand in turn four. And it wasn't, it wasn't 25, 30 people there. And we're sitting there and I'm, uh, you know, kind of, uh, a antsy little kid, you know like, waiting for some action. So, I said, uh, told mama, I said, you know, pulled on her sleeve, whatever, you know, "I sure would like to see a wreck." About that time here come the 21, just Darlington stripe, just killing the wall. She turned around and slapped the fool out of me (laughs). But I deserved it (laughs).

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:44:38):

Okay, cut. Great story. That's a great story.

Len Wood (02:44:39):

She (laughs) ...

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:44:40):

We're not allowed to laugh a lot. We don't wanna wreck the audio.

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Len Wood (02:44:42):

(laughing) She did. She, she has a different view of it.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:44:47):

They would take some of it. She has a different view why?

Len Wood (02:44:49):

Different version.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:44:50):

I'm sure (laughs). Thanks so much. That was great.

Crew (02:44:52):

Wait, wait, wait. I got another question.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:44:53):

Oh, oh, I'm sorry.

Crew (02:44:54):

Uh, I'd like, you know, we haven't asked it. We, we, we didn't ask Eddie, uh, about why the decision to move.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:45:01):

Oh, all right. Okay. Yeah. I'll ask it.

Len Wood (02:45:03):

Okay.

Crew (02:45:04):

And talk about the challenges in the business right about there-

Len Wood (02:45:05):

Okay.

Crew (02:45:07):

... to get something back [inaudible 02:45:08].

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:45:08):

All right, let's so do that follow-up question here.

Len Wood (02:45:10):

Let's do it.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:45:12):

Uh, tell us about why when you moved here from Stuart hometown up to, uh, North Carolina.

Len Wood (02:45:18):

Um, in, see, it would have been 2004. Um, we talked with, uh, some of the officials at Ford Racing and we talked about the future of our team. And, you know, Charlotte is the hub of racing, just like, uh, Nashville is country music. And, uh, Hollywood is, you know, where the movie stars go is, if you wanna race, you need to be in Charlotte. So, we looked at it as if we wanna ensure our- more time in the sport, we need to be in Charlotte. So, we moved, uh, moved down there and we moved to actually to Mooresville, North Carolina, and we're there for a couple of years. Then we moved to our current shop in Harrisburg. Uh, it wasn't easy leaving Stuart, Virginia, where we grew up and, and you know, were raised and that's, that's where all our friends were, but, uh, we felt we needed to, to, stay in racing.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:46:09):

And, so far, I mean, it's been working?

Len Wood (02:46:11):

It's been working, uh, I won't say it was a, um, overnight success or anything like that, but, you know, I'd say we, um, it's a bigger talent pool, down there. Uh, I mean, 'cause we were ... the big we, the bigger our team got here, we had to pull from farther away from Martinsville, from Mount Airy, you know, like 30 miles and 60 miles away. And we ended up and had several people from Charlotte that worked for us. But, down there, I mean, people can almost like roll their toolbox one shop to the next, you know? So ...

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:46:49):

So, it's like, as you say, you gotta be there if you're gonna compete?

Len Wood (02:46:52):

You need to be there if you're gonna compete. You know, like as far as really in particular like pit crew, stuff like that, uh, you know, and we're closer to, um, the engine shop, which makes it easier, you know, instead of picking the engine up at four o'clock in the morning and bringing it here and trying to get running and whatever, you know, it's, it makes it much easier for things like that.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:47:12):

So, so you drive back and forth three times a week or how's that work?

Len Wood (02:47:15):

Uh, actually I live in Charlotte. Um, if we're not racing, we come back to Virginia on the weekends. So, less than, less than two hours. So, it's not too far.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:47:24):

Okay. Cut. All eyes.

Len Wood (02:47:27):

Da- daddy used to do-

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:47:28):

I realize, I said up to, uh, (laughs) ... I'm turned around when-

Crew (02:47:31):

We're, we're up.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:47:31):

Yeah. Right. I got that after I said, I said.

Len Wood (02:47:33):

But, uh-

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:47:34):

Looked over everything?

Len Wood (02:47:34):

Yeah. 'Cause he, daddy used to go pick up the engines-

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:47:37):

Right.

Len Wood (02:47:37):

... um, in the '60s and '70s, you know, and, and-

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:47:40):

Watch your head here, yeah. [crosstalk] You wanna, want me to sit?

Crew (02:47:43):

Hang, hang on just one second. Let me just get a portrait.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:47:45):

Was it more like, this is just my family or I'm really going into the racing business?

Kim Wood Hall (02:47:56):

Oh, well you're talking when I was 15. Um, so back in the '70s when I started out. I just started helping mama in the office. Um, just as I was learning to type in high school, I just, you know, type her envelopes for her, or whatever. And, uh, it was in their house in mom and daddy's house on their dining room table. That was my office. And we s- um, my office actually stayed in her house until 1995 when we built this new shop here in Stuart.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:48:37):

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So, you're saying it was like early '70s you started is that you said.

Kim Wood Hall (02:48:42):

Uh, I graduated in '79.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:48:44):

Okay. So-

Kim Wood Hall (02:48:44):

So, mid, mid-seventies.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:48:47):

Mid-seventies. That's-

Kim Wood Hall (02:48:47):

That's when I started.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:48:47):

... when they were winning all those races. I mean-

Kim Wood Hall (02:48:49):

Yes.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:48:50):

... we're you, we're you even aware that, that's what you were, I mean, there was this big famous, uh, thing going on where you, you're cognizant of that or what was it like?

Kim Wood Hall (02:48:57):

I mean, that's just what, what the family did, uh, you know, back in those days, it was like an, every other weekend thing that they brought home, a checkered flag. Um, I didn't go nearly as much in the early days because I was in, I was still in school and, you know, so I didn't go to too many of those races, but after, um, after I started working, full-time after I got out of school and when I met my husband, uh, we dated for about a year and he had a racing background and the guys were like, "He gonna hang around here?" And because when we got our first tractor trailer, um, none of the guys ... see it, cause Eddie and Len, you know, drove the truck back in those days, but it was just one of those straight trucks. And so, when we got a full-blown tractor trailer, my husband, knew how to drive one. His, his dad was a long-distance truck driver. And, and so he'd been driving trucks since he was 16. So, he started, so then that's just bringing more family into the family business. It's just what you did.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:50:05):

So, I mean, by the time you're out of high school, you pretty much knew this is gonna be, this is it? This is what I'm gonna do.

Kim Wood Hall (02:50:10):

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Yeah. That's what I'm going to do. 'Cause, um, I, I did go to college, didn't get a degree or anything, but I took all the business classes, you know, to try to help me more in the business. But then there's nothing like getting in there and doing it just like Eddie and Len getting in, you know, working with the car with daddy and Leonard. There's no experience like, you know, doing, doing all the things mama did from, I mean, of course all the book work to travel planning and uniforms. I mean, you name it and it just, you know, it was a full-time job and just seemed like it got fuller and fuller (laughs).

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:50:49):

So, what, what's like a typical, I mean, you're, you're doing all those things now, plus more. Tell us sort of what currently is as on your plate when you work.

Kim Wood Hall (02:50:56):

Um, I mean, no day is, is the same. Um, you may be putting together, you know, some kind of little marketing packet or you're, uh, ordering uniforms. Um, right now we're doing a special paint scheme coming up for one of the races. And so, the design and artwork and, and I hope to order the decals and any type of special clothing and, uh, press releases and going over those, uh, website work, Facebook, Twitter, um, pay bills, just wha- whatever comes up. I don't, I don't mess with cars in any way, but anything un-car related, uh, uh, I might have my finger stuck in it somewhere.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:51:48):

Is it, is it very stressful? I mean, it seems like it might be more stressful than it sounds or is it not that stressful?

Kim Wood Hall (02:51:53):

Um, if there's something that, that I need help on, I mean, that's where you've got the family to, um, to help out, you know, doing- doing whatever because we, I mean, Eddie and Len and mom and daddy, they've, they've done all this themselves at one time. I mean, everybody's done a piece of this and a piece of that at some time and it's like, "Okay, I need a little help here." And, and okay. I mean, 'cause I mean Eddie and Len and I will sit down and we'll, um, start typing up a press release and then here you read it and then, you know, it's kinda like makes a little circle and um, that's just part of the f- the family deal.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:52:40):

Yeah. It seems like you've been able to keep the, the teamwork and the family-

Kim Wood Hall (02:52:43):

Yeah.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:52:43):

... together without either hurting you. Do you think that's unusual to have a family? It could be such a good team, professionally.

Kim Wood Hall (02:52:48):

Um, I mean, it's all we've ever known. Um, you know, multi-generational, you know, with, with Eddie, Len, and myself being the second generation and then Jon and Jordan and Keven have, you know, have

all, you know, had racing activities as well. And, um, it's just what we do. We may have a board meeting, you know, around the supper table tonight, but that's okay. And, you know, we're all together. Um, anything that goes on, every one of us is involved in some way or another and Eddie has the things that he works on, uh, Len still of course, dabbles directly with the motors and stuff. And then, you know, I'm on the, the business side, but then you all come together and, you know, uh, update each other on what's going on. And, and like I say, the more relaxed atmosphere that we've got and just everybody is always aware of what's going on and, and I guess that probably takes a lot of the pressure off because you're, you know, we're, we're it.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:53:57):

Right. Well, what do you think is something that the biggest challenges you, you folks face today looking forward to the racing business?

Kim Wood Hall (02:54:04):

Well, I mean, challenges of, um, you know, where we're the single team, um, everything has its advantages and disadvantages. Um, you know, the sponsorship issues, uh, you know, where we've had to scale back a little bit, but then on the positive side of that, I mean, that's what we, we try to look at is, is look at the positives on everything is, um, you know, to take this opportunity as we're scaling back to, scale back to, you know, certain tracks and to get your, your performance level back up and eventually work our way back and, you know, and, and we've done that. And so, you know, we're, we're still achieving our goals and, you know, been in at 60 years and we're, we're, we're not, we're not letting up yet.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:55:00):

What, what's it like working with Ford all these years? I mean, you've been doing it a few years. Have you started when you were 15? Well, tell me a little bit about how you interact with them.

Kim Wood Hall (02:55:08):

They are, they are just like family to us. Um, daddy, Eddie and Len and daddy went to, uh, to Michigan earlier this year. And daddy got to sit down in the big chair up there, um, overlooking the entire Ford compound up there and they just absolutely treated him like his last name was Ford. And I, that's-, that's the way it's always been.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:55:45):

Do you, do you sense you're a part of a family that's pretty, pretty famous family, have accomplished, innovative family. Do you sense any of that or is it you still just all a family here from a ...

Kim Wood Hall (02:55:56):

I mean, we're still from this little, small town. Um, this is home, you know, our shop is in North Carolina. That's not home, this is home. Um, I mean the people around here we're just, I mean, I'm going to the little county fair tonight and, you know, just going to see, I mean, these-, these are the, the most loyal fans that we've got right here in the county. I mean, people that, that we grew up with, I mean, 'cause there's a huge sense of, of, of loyalty, you know, that the people have here. It, it wouldn't matter who was driving our car as long as it was a Wood Brothers' car, and it was a Ford and it had 21 on the side of it. They're going to root for that car.



Kim Wood Hall (02:56:46):

There's folks that's been coming to this museum and people will, you know, a lot of the older fans will, you know, drift over, you know, to, to daddy's back seater back here and they say, "I, saw your daddy at Bowman Gray, you know, in 1955." And, you know, because he, you know, he's got lots of trophies from there and then you get the younger fans and they'll drift over and, and you know, "Is this a real CoT car?" And yeah, that's got the new spoiler on it and it, and it's, uh, you know, it's neat to see all the people that come through here. We've had people from all 50 states and, and probably about 18 or 20 countries to this little, to-, to home.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:57:30):

So that's good. I mean, you gotta feel proud of.

Kim Wood Hall (02:57:32):

Oh, we are.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:57:33):

Tell me about how that, how that feels.

Kim Wood Hall (02:57:36):

Um, I mean, I'm proud of the, the accomplishments that daddy and Leonard and, and his brothers, you know, set, set forth, um, Eddie and Len and I just, we hope to carry ourselves as good as the reputation that, that they set and, you know, they are our models, you know, to, to try to continue to keep this going, you know, just as well as they did. It's a tough act to follow (laughs).

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:58:12):

Okay. Let's hold the roll for a sec. Nice answer. Where's um, you got any follow ups gang, so, uh, I guess I can ask them before I forget them.

Kim Wood Hall (02:58:21):

(laughs).

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:58:21):

How, how, here's the family sitting around discussing business. How do you handle controversies when there's arguments or disagreements?

Kim Wood Hall (02:58:29):

Um, I mean, surprisingly there is, is very little of that because we're all on the same team and that, that's why we have these little impromptu gatherings. It, it maybe, I mean, up at our little coffee break, a restaurant uptown, we, we eat up there, the whole family, the whole clan is up there every Saturday morning about 9:00 or 9:15. And if some kind of racing something happens to come up or we're over at Eddie's having a cookout or whatever. And we get to talking and everybody just brings their ideas. Like I said, we're all on the same team. Um, you know, doing what's best and, and every one of us will chime

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in with, with some thought or answer, um, you know, try to make something better or, or do something to get some more exposure or whatever. And, and that's what we do.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:59:33):

And it works.

Kim Wood Hall (02:59:35):

And it works.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (02:59:36):

Final question, if you were, or your mother, I guess, would, would be a fair way to ask it, sense any, uh, discrimination, cause you're a female and a business and a lot of people traditionally thought of as a male dominated business.

Kim Wood Hall (02:59:48):

Well now back in, when I was younger, of course, and then in, in her days, you know, ladies weren't allowed in the pit area and it's so much different now. Um, but, you know, as for other colleagues, you know, that I work with now, um, it, like I say, it might have been more so in, in her day, but in my day, um, like I say, I mean, pe- people know that we're a package group because when we show up at things, I mean, you, you got the whole clan in tow. And like I said, the package deal. That's what you get when you get the Wood Brothers and sister.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (03:00:30):

But you've never felt any.

Kim Wood Hall (03:00:32):

No.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (03:00:34):

Okay. Well-

Kim Wood Hall (03:00:35):

Maybe the family deal has that's part of it is, is they treat, treat me just like the Wood Brothers. I mean, like say, 'cause it's, like I say the, the family bond that we have, uh, I realized that it's probably a lot different from your average family, but we're not your average family. We, we all live beside each other, we work together, we eat together, when you see one of us out, you know, the others aren't far behind. And, I know, I know we're a blessed family.

Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (03:01:13):

Do you remember though, back when they wouldn't let your mother in the pits, did she ever talk about that with you, did it bother her or?

Kim Wood Hall (03:01:17):

No. I mean, that's, that's just the way it was.

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Barry Hurd (Interviewer) (03:01:22):

Okay. Cut.