

LONG BEACH

MOTORSPORTS

WALK OF FAME

2008



GARY GABELICH

Gary Gabelich, a San Pedro native, began his racing career at 16, winning first place in the Stock Eliminator drag racing class at Santa Ana. At 19, he won the world's first jet dragster race, topping 250 mph and also traveled 356 mph at the Bonneville, UT salt flats in a jet car, probably a record for a teen-ager. He drove the Beach City Chevrolet Corvette funny car to speeds over 200 mph, a first for a Chevrolet funny car. Gabelich also was engaged in boat racing, becoming the first person to win both the American Power Boat Association Blown Fuel and Gas National Drag Boat championship in the same year. He won the American Power Boat Association fuel hydro championship and set a national Drag Boat Association record of 200.44 mph in 1969. On October 23, 1970, he drove the Blue Flame, a 37-foot, 4,950-pound vehicle powered by a liquid gas-hydrogen peroxide rocket engine, achieving an average speed of 622.287 mph, at the Bonneville Salt Flats, a land speed record that existed for 13 years.