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WAYNE LEARY
Chief Mechanic, Olsonite Eagle

They might call Wayne Leary, chief mechanic on the Olsonite Eagle, the silent Arizonan, for he seldom talks unless he has something significant to say,

So when he talks, people listen, particularly the people who build and race cars.

With 16 USAC championship victories under his tool belt, plus two seconds and a third at Indy, all while serving as chief mechanic on the Olsonite Eagle team, the quiet, young man is considered one of the most knowledgeable and competent 'chiefs' on the USAC circuit.

Since 1971, he has been top man on Bobby Unser's Olsonite Eagle, marking somewhat of a reunion for the two since he also was a member of Bobby's crew in 1964.

It was Roger McCluskey, however, who gave him his start in auto racing, in Tucson, Arizona, where both live.

After getting his feet wet in the Soap Box Derby at the foolish age of 12 and 13, Wayne turned to his real love, auto racing, shortly after graduation from high school, joining McCluskey in building and racing modified sprint cars from 1957 to 1961.

His first role in USAC racing came in 1960 when McCluskey was named to drive a car owned by Elmer George, but this career was short lived when Wayne was called into the Army.

Coming out of the Army in 1963, he rejoined McCluskey but then began a series of switches that are so common among both chief mechanics and drivers in USAC racing.

He was a member of Johnny Boyd's crew in 1964 when Boyd came in fifth at Indy, but finished out the USAC season on Unser's car.

After a short stint at building midgets in Anaheim, Calif., he got back into USAC racing in 1965, again with McCluskey, who was part of a three-driver team that also included Dan Gurney and Joe Leonard.

This team split up at the end of the 1966 season, so Wayne joined Gurney's All-American Racers, Inc., team at the Santa Ana, Calif., shop, and has been securely nestled there since.

In addition to his duties as chief mechanic on the lead car in the Olsonite Eagle team, Wayne helps build the cars at the Santa Ana shop.

He lives with his wife, Betty, and four children in Mission Viejo, Calif.

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