



For Immediate Release May 18, 2021

## ***Spirit of Viper Hall of Fame Class of 2022***

The Viper Owners Association (VOA) is pleased to announce the Class of 2022 ***Hall of Fame*** inductees as part of the ***Spirit of Viper*** program.

**Lydia Fleming**  
Executive Administrative Assistant

**Robert N. Hubbach\*\***  
Manager Advanced Product Design

**James A. Royer\***  
Engine Design Manager

**Joseph M. Gall\***  
Sr. Product Engineer, Chassis Systems

**John M. Donato**  
Sr. Engineer Powertrain & Steering  
Systems

**David W. Swietlik\***  
Procurement Manager

**Neil E. Hannemann**  
GTS-R Program Manager

**Nippanni Rao\***  
Sr. Materials Engineer

**Don Jankowski**  
Shop Supervisor

**Bill Hancock**  
Founder & Former owner - Arrow Racing  
Engines, Inc.

Roy Sjoberg, Team Viper Chief Executive Engineer and ***Spirit of Viper Legend***, said, "The Class of 2022 continues to represent the "spirit" it took to make the Viper a reality. I congratulate and welcome each new member and the families of those posthumously inducted."



## Inductee Reactions

Robert “Bob” – “I am honored to be remembered for the things I accomplished on Viper and to have worked with a great team of people.”

Pat Gall, Wife – “Joe never shied away from a challenge; in fact, that seemed to be a driving factor in his career path and his definition of success as an engineer and as a person. Viper certainly fit that bill, and he felt blessed to be part of a great team all working toward an amazing goal. I know he would be thrilled and honored to be included in this group of outstanding car builders, all of whom he respected and admired.”

John – “It is a huge honor to be recognized for my part as a member of Team Viper by the VOA. The main objective we were told at the beginning of the program was “do what’s best for the car” and I think the test of time has proven we did.”

Eric & Jeff Swietlik, Sons – “Any honor, recognition, and certainly this induction into the Spirit of Viper Hall of Fame is something our late father would cherish and hold with the highest regard. Being part of Team Viper was the pinnacle of his career. With it, came lifelong friendships, one-of-a-kind experiences navigating the challenges of development and launch as well as innumerable encounters with the VOA as an owner. Viper was engrained in his personality. For over three decades, the mere mention of Viper brought a smile to his face. Jeff and I thank the VOA and Hall of Fame members for this recognition on our father's behalf and, with it, another chance to reflect on all the meaningful experiences it provided.”

Neil - "This was a total surprise, even to the extent that a "surprise" call was arranged between the induction team and my girlfriend, Lana Saal, to inform me that I was inducted into this great Hall of Fame. It was like the modern equivalent of a surprise birthday party except better! After traveling the world, literally, during my post Viper career with Saleen, Ford, and McLaren, this really feels like coming home to a close family. Nothing beats the Viper Team and Viper owners."

Joan, Eric, & Stephen Rao – “We are so excited and so proud of this recognition for Nippani. The Viper was his pride and joy and the highlight of his long career in the automotive industry. Every chance he had, he would tell people great things about the Viper. Thank you to the Viper Owners Association and the Hall of Fame members for this recognition!”

Don – “Team Viper was made up of a group of all-stars, so it is a great honor to be selected by my peers, to be inducted into the Viper Hall of Fame.”

Bill – “It is truly an honor to be recognized and included in this group. Team Viper embodies the concept of a small, hand-picked group of passionate individuals who were willing to apply their racetrack skills to creating and delivering a truly unique production car. At its inception, we all had high hopes for the car, and today we continue to be amazed at the enduring success the Viper enjoys.”



## Founding inductees of the *Spirit of Viper*

### ***Legends***

**Robert A. Lutz, Chrysler President & Chief Executive Officer**

Viper “Four Father” and concept visionary

**Thomas C. Gale, Chrysler Vice President of Design**

Viper “Four Father” and design visionary

**Francois J. Castaing, Vice President of Engineering**

Viper “Four Father” and engineering visionary

**Carroll H. Shelby, Shelby America**

Viper “Four Father” and valued consultant

**Roy H. Sjoberg, Executive Chief Engineer**

“Father Viper” and production visionary

“Four Father” was the description of the first photo of Mr. Lutz, Mr. Gale, Mr. Castaing, and Mr. Shelby with the 1989 Viper Concept.

### ***Hall of Fame***

Herbert J. Helbig, Vehicle Synthesis Mgr

Peter M. Gladysz, Chassis Sys & Design Mgr

James L. Sayen, Program Manager

Sandy J. Emerling, Int & Ext Design Mgr

Richard H. Winkles, Powertrain Dev Specialist

Charles H. Brown III, Engine Design Engineer

Kenneth C. Nowak, Vehicle Build Supervisor

William F. Adams, Engineering Lead Mechanic

Michael Cipponeri, Mgr Electrical &

Electronic Systems

Dan Pearlman, Supervisor - Body Engineer

David Buchesky, Suspension & Brakes

Design Engineer

Craig Belmonte, Chassis Engineer

The VOA, along with Team Viper, would like to posthumously recognize the contributions of the following Team Viper members.

James Royer - Engine Design Manager\*

Ira Fisher – Financial Analyst

Frank VanWulfen – Electrical Engineer

Frederick Krupic – Sr Stockroom Mechanic

Albert Bederka – Design Room Supervisor

Daniel Knott – Director of SRT

Kenneth O'Donnell – New Mack Manager

Robert Kane – Plant Craftsperson

Jeffrey Jax – Interior Design Engineer

Joseph Gall – Sr Prod Engineer, Chassis Sys\*

Lawrence Rathgeb – Suspension Design Eng.

James Vermeersch – Lead Designer

Ralph Youngdale – Chassis Designer

David Swietlik – Procurement & Supply Manager\*

#### **2021**

Nippani Rao – Materials & Body Engineer\*

David Ironside – Plant Craftsperson

John Hinckley – CAAP Plant Manager

Joseph Dapsi – Chief Plant Engineer

#### **2022**

Jerry Mallicoat – GTS-R Development Engineer

Robert Hubbach\*\* - Mgr. Adv. Product Design

\* Posthumously selected to Hall of Fame

\*\* Bob Hubbach was notified of his selection on April 20<sup>th</sup> by Tom Gale, Roy Sjoberg, Herb Helbig, Sandy Emerling, and Brian Willey prior to passing away on May 12, 2022.



The VOA would like to acknowledge the ***Friends of Viper*** who graciously contributed to fund the Spirit of Viper initiative.

Bill Blewett & Kerrie Peterson '21 & '22

Moyer Collection '21 & '22

Steve Thorne '21 & '22

Temple Performance '21 & '22

David Hood Collection '21 & '22

Kenny Naill '21 & '22

D'Ann & Wayne Rauh '21

Brian & Laura Willey '21 & '22

Mark & Tetiana Pieloch '22

Kurt & Chanis Wadsworth '22

Wes & Naomi Angelotti '22

Matthew & Melissa Durish '22

Madison & Shawn Hurst '22

Kim & Alan Weakley '22

Shannon & Sandee Whitehead '22

For more information about ***Spirit of Viper***, contact Brian Willey, Spirit of Viper Coordinator, on [Brian.Willey@driveviper.com](mailto:Brian.Willey@driveviper.com).

The Viper Owners Association (VOA), launched in 2013, is the premier organization for the Dodge/SRT Viper. With thirty-seven world-wide regions representing over 7,000 members and enthusiasts, the VOA is the organization to enjoy, admire, gather, and discuss all things Viper. On a given year, hundreds of events take place. Members enjoy virtual discussions with Team Viper, drives, autocross & track events, parties, and overnight adventures. These regional, multiregional, and national events foster the car culture, connect the Viper Nation, and infuse everyone with the "Spirit of Viper."

Michael Kuchavik



National President

Viper Owners Association



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