



Lou Sipolt, Sr.

January 9, 1934 - March 10, 2025

Louis John Sipolt, Sr. was 91 years old when he passed that final checkered flag, on March 10, 2025 at his home in Chicago, where he was born and raised his family. Born on January 9, 1934, to Louis and Angela, (who immigrated from Czechoslovakia in 1922). Fun Fact: his first language was Slovak. In First Grade, he learned English and made a group friends who all kept in touch until the very end. Friends were always very important to him.

Big Lou, as he was known in the racing world, lived his life surrounded by cars. His father opened the door when he allowed Lou to drive to school when he was in 8th grade. While in High School he ended up knowing more than the Auto Shop teacher and says he basically taught the class. At 18 he worked as an auto mechanic at Nelson-Hirschberg Ford, where he soon became the resident expert, mentor and even the shop steward to his beloved Local 701 Union. He worked there until the dealership closed in 1982. While barely in his 20's, local racers recognized Lou's exceptional skills fine-tuning automobiles. He entered the racing world at *Soldier Field race track in Chicago in the late 50's before being picked up by Ford Motor Company's Stock Car division of Holman-Moody Incorporated.

In February 1960 he married the vibrant Alexandra "Sandy" Kolaski. The very next day they drove to Daytona (for the 500), as he was working with Tiger Tom Pistone for the big race! Lou and Sandy had 5 children: Lou Jr, Mike,

Michele, Marc (Sparky) and Melisa. Interestingly, the house had 3 bedrooms, 1 bathroom and a MIGHTY BIG GARAGE (priorities). Sadly, Sandy passed away in 1989.

His job with Holman-Moody was a big one. His first assignment was for driver John Rostek from Colorado and Big Lou's expertise continued to explode. He quickly became known as "Lightning Lou", the fastest tire changer in the pits. To this day, NASCAR competitors still use Lou's innovative method of gluing lug nuts onto the wheel for quicker installation back on the hub when changing tires on a pit stop, thus getting cars back on the track faster. Legends started with Lou. He was involved as a crew chief or crew member of Ford Stock Cars for the likes of "Tiger" Tom Pistone, Dan Gurney, AJ Foyt, Jack Bowsher, Parnelli Jones, Fred Lorenzen, Jerry Unser, Bobby Unser, Mario Andretti and more.

Big Lou shared his passion for cars with his boys from a very (VERY) young age. In 1964, Big Lou taught them (then ages 3 & 4) how to drive go-carts. Little Lou and Mike were quite talented and were naturals behind the wheel. (Fun Fact: he put blocks of wood on the pedals so the boys could reach). Doing spin outs and racing each other in their Chicago Alley was a regular occurrence. This attracted the attention of promoter Joie Chitwood Sr. with the then famed Auto Thrill Show. Thus, "The Sipolt Brothers - World's Youngest Daredevils" was born. Big Lou managed his "performers" in the 60s and 70s by booking them at racing events across the nation as well as many TV shows. In 1970, Sparky, the youngest brother joined the team. The sponsorships, secured by Big Lou, included names like Andy Granatelli & STP, Thermo-King, Goodyear, and MG Midget.

He also worked with Richard Petty, Ralph Salvino & STP with their promotional appearances, and even landing a cameo in the movie "3", about Dale Earnhardt where he played that role.

In the 90's Big Lou relocated to the center of motorsports with ECC Motorsports in Mooresville, North Carolina. He became known as "The Mayor of the Mooresville Mile" among the many NASCAR, ARCA, and Truck Series teams in the area. Lou's huge personality, combined with 7 decades of experience in motorsports, made him an icon in the community. Many would say Big Lou knew everyone.

There is something to be said for never fully retiring. Big Lou spent the last 10 years 'semi-retired': still going into the shop regularly and checking on everything and everyone. Running for parts, problem solving, telling stories and finding a deal were all on his daily agenda.

Lou is survived by his children: Lou Jr (Kathy), Mike (Patti), Michele (Ron), Marc "Sparky" (Deanna), and Melisa (Alex) and 12 grandchildren. He also leaves behind his longtime companion, Cherry Russell.

No story of his life would be complete without mentioning the things that came out of his mouth. Unfiltered would be an understatement. But, sometimes there was a nugget of wisdom. Sometimes. Join us in sharing your favorite Big Lou story.

As Big Lou said... "nothin's easy anymore"... "I remember it like it was yesterday"... "grab ahold of your a## with both your hands" ... "what's the good word"... "everyone's honest until you catch'em"... "it is what it is".

So, let's remember him "like it was yesterday"... Never Forgetting the Legend of "Big Lou" Sipolt... "Please excuse the iron grip..." and "We'll See You in Church!"

A Celebration of Life will be held on Tuesday, May 27 from 5:00-8:00 PM with a time of reflection at 6:00 PM at Heritage House of Cavin-Cook Funeral Home. For those who are unable to attend the service, you may go to the following link for the live stream

<https://view.oneroomstreaming.com/index.php?data=MTc0ODI3MTY0OTM2NDE3NSZvbmVyb29tLWFKbWluJmNvcHlfbGluaw==>

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

MAY 27. 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Heritage House of Cavin-Cook Funeral Home
494 E. Plaza Drive
 Mooresville, NC 28115

Other

MAY 27. 6:00 PM - 6:45 PM (ET)

Heritage House of Cavin-Cook Funeral Home
494 E. Plaza Drive
 Mooresville, NC 28115

Tribute Wall

MM

“ Hey Mike Mennella here,, your father and my father worked at nelson hirsberge together

Michael Mennella - December 02, 2025 at 08:32 PM

MT

“ I became Lou's neighbor in 1985 when I moved four doors down from him. He quickly became my Mercury's doctor as well as my friend. I always enjoyed seeing him and I'm ashamed that I am only now hearing of his passing. My heart goes out to his family. Maurice Terenzio

Maurice Terenzio - July 17, 2025 at 04:58 AM

TF

“ The Bonilla Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Lou Sipolt, Sr..

The Bonilla Family - May 27, 2025 at 08:32 AM

TF

“ The Bonilla Family purchased the Beautiful Dreams for the family of Lou Sipolt, Sr..



The Bonilla Family - May 27, 2025 at 08:32 AM

MM

“ I was his Concord TV repair man, always enjoyed him coming by the shop. I have a 1930 ford and a 1973 Lincoln Continental Towncar so we talked CARS. He came by in a Lincoln some time ago he had picked up at a Bargan price and was fixing up. Never a dull visit! With fond memories and Love Mike McLain!

Mike McLain - May 26, 2025 at 03:23 PM

TF

“ The Henriksen Family purchased the Sentiments of Serenity Spray for the family of Lou Sipolt, Sr..



The Henriksen Family - May 26, 2025 at 01:39 PM

LB

“ Lynda Rumble, aka "Little Bit" purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of Lou Sipolt, Sr..



Lynda Rumble, aka "Little Bit" - May 26, 2025 at 11:02 AM