

2007 PWA Pioneer Award

The Finalists Are...



Ralph Accinno / RACER'S EQUIPMENT WAREHOUSE As President of Racer's Equipment Warehouse, Ralph's experience goes back 30 years. He is involved in the everyday aspect of Racer's and as the sole surviving high performance warehouse in New England, Ralph knows first hand the many problems facing the industry. An area of particular concern to him is the evolution of the distribution system from the manufacturer to the retail consumer. "It seems that both the retailer and the distributor continue to be the hardest hit during this evolution. I want us, the retailers / distributors, to continue to be a viable part of the system."



Ron Coppaken / ARROW SPEED WAREHOUSE Thirty-six years ago, Ron Coppaken made his entry into the automotive aftermarket, working part-time in his uncle's retail parts store, Arrow Speed Shop, located on Independence Avenue in Kansas City. After four years of learning the business literally from the bottom up, Ron joined the company full time in 1973 to concentrate his efforts on building Arrow Speed's first concentrated wholesale effort. Armed with unbridled energy, enthusiasm, and Leonard's brand new 1973 Corvette company car, he hit the road in search of wholesale business. By 1977, Arrow had successfully made the transition to a 100% "wholesale only" business with Ron serving as the General Manager and heading up the expanding sales effort. After several years of breakneck growth, including the addition of three branch warehouses, Ron acquired ownership of the company in 1985. That same year, he co-founded "Performance Corner" the industry's most comprehensive jobber affiliate program. Over the years, Ron served the industry on the SEMA board of directors for two terms, and most importantly, has pioneered a strong, cooperative style in nurturing relationships between the WDs and manufacturers. "Partnership" is a favorite philosophy of Ron's and is practiced daily in his friendly and fair approach to doing business. This dedication has helped earn Arrow Speed the "SEMA WD of the Year Award" an unprecedented four times in 1992, 1995, 2001 and 2002.



Brad Blue / WAREHOUSE WEST President and owner of Warehouse West, a wholesale automotive performance parts distributor serving the Pacific Northwest area, Brad began his career in the performance industry in 1976 by commuting in his 1965 Mustang 2+2, sweeping floors and pulling orders at Warehouse West. As Brad's enthusiasm for the industry and interest in sales grew, he moved up in the company. Brad was promoted to phone sales, became an outside salesman, a general manager and eventually purchased the company in 1994, increasing the inventory as well as sales. Currently his duties include overseeing the management of the growing operation and ever changing inventory of Warehouse West as well as continuing to visit jobbers on a regular basis to stay abreast of current trends, customer needs and the public's general impression about the performance automotive business. You may catch him setting up a display in a local store, cruising a car show or attending a racing event. Brad has always been and continues to be a strong advocate for the 3 step distribution program. For five years Brad coordinated a fifty foot booth at The Seattle Roadster show packed with performance parts to promote exposure for local jobbers. He has served on the Board of Directors for PWA for twelve years, is a member of SEMA, served on some of their committees, sits on the board of directors for the US Performance Buying Group, is a member of Washington Automotive Wholesalers Association and takes his role seriously in promoting the performance automotive industry.