

Class of 2019
RICKY CRAVEN

Charting a course and working hard to attain goals has been the mindset of Ricky Craven since he was a youngster. It's a philosophy that has worked well for him throughout his journey in racing, starting in 1982 when he strapped in for his first race in the six-cylinder Charger division at Unity Raceway at the age of 16.

He hasn't looked back or slowed down since winning his first championship in 1983. Ricky moved up to Late Models, then the ACT tour in 1985, and on to the Busch Grand National North Series in 1989 with much success. He had a dominant season in 1991, winning a Series record 10 races including the Oxford 250 and NHIS Chevy Dealers 250, as well as the BGNN championship. In 1992 he was crowned the New Hampshire International Speedway Champion as he was making his way south to race full time in the Busch Grand National Series for Dick Moroso, establishing himself by winning the Rookie of the Year title that season.

Over the next 2 years Ricky finished 2nd in the BGN point standings and took home 2 wins in 1994 before making the jump up the Winston Cup in 1995. He once again earned Rookie of the Year honors, qualified for all 31 events that season and had four top-10 finishes. Over the next several years Ricky drove for a few different teams, most notably Hendrick Motorsports, where in 1997 he finished third in the Daytona 500, completing an all-Hendrick podium finish.

Moving to PPI Motorsport's #32 in 2001, Ricky held off a last-lap charge from Dale Jarrett for his first Winston Cup Series win at the Old Dominion 500 at Martinsville Speedway. The following season he won 2 poles, had nine top-10 finishes and ended the season with a career-high 15th place in Winston Cup points. In the 2003 Dodge Dealers 400 at Darlington, Ricky set the record for NASCAR's closest win margin at .002 seconds, beating Kurt Busch in what was voted the "Finish of the 2000s". With that win Ricky became the last driver to ever win a Cup Series race in a Pontiac.

After competing a number of Truck Series and select Busch Series events, Ricky retired his driver's suit for a position as a NASCAR analyst for ESPN where he remained for 11 years before making the move to FOX earlier this year.

