

## Ed Knowles

### *Track Builder/Owner/Promoter*

Ed Knowles is often referred to as the “father of Unity Raceway”. His interest in auto racing was fueled from the winter months he spent in Florida, attending racing events at places like Hialeah Speedway. With a belief auto racing would be popular in Maine, Ed planned to build a racetrack (the first in the state) on land he owned on the outskirts of Portland in 1948. Instead of building a racetrack for stock cars, he thought midget car races would be extremely popular. But the plan to build the track was quickly cancelled when he heard a track in Scarborough was going to be built by Jim McConnell. Undaunted, Ed looked further north. In 1949, he purchased the Waldo County Fairgrounds in Unity. Renamed Unity Raceway, the half-mile dirt track opened for stock car races ‘officially’ on June 17, 1950. History, however, will show Mr. Knowles attempted to open his new track the previous fall on October 22, 1949 but the race program was never completed due to weather. The track was shortened to a one-third mile oval in 1957 and three years later, Mr. Knowles turned over the daily operations of the track to son Bob.

