



MEDIA ALERT – 6/23/16

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THE BIG FRESNO FAIR TO HONOR RACING LEGEND BLACKIE GEJEIAN ON JUNE 24 WITH A 90TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION AND THE UNVEILING OF HIS BUST STATUE *Statue to go on display in his dedicated area of the new Fresno County Historical Museum*

Fresno, California... June 23, 2016

WHO: Racing legend Blackie Gejeian; The Big Fresno Fair CEO, John Alkire; Big Fresno Fair Board Members; Gejeian Family Members; along with members of the racing community.

WHAT: In celebration of Blackie Gejeian's 90th birthday and his incredible contributions to the racing industry in Fresno, The Big Fresno Fair will be holding a special birthday celebration in which a custom bust statue of Blackie will be revealed that will go on to be showcased in the Blackie Gejeian section of the new Fresno County Historical Museum. The statue was sculpted by local artist, Debbie Stevenson, the same artist who completed the bust statue of William Saroyan, as well as an oil painting of California Chrome – both on display in the Museum.

City of Fresno councilmembers Paul Caprioglio and Sal Quintero will present a special proclamation from the City of Fresno and Mayor Swearingin to Blackie. The presentation will be followed by birthday cake, coffee and conversations about Blackie's interesting life, contributions to the racing industry as a whole and especially in Fresno.

WHEN: Friday, June 24, 2016 at 2:00 p.m.

WHERE: The Fresno County Historical Museum at the Fresno Fairgrounds
1121 S. Chance Avenue, Fresno, CA 93702
NOTE: Enter the Fairgrounds from Gate 2, south of the Administration Office off of Chance Avenue and then drive to the Fresno County Historical Museum

WHY: The Big Fresno Fair is dedicated to preserving and showcasing the rich history of Fresno County, which is why the new Fresno County Historical Museum was created. While there are many hot rod and racing legends in Fresno, Blackie Gejeian was a pivotal part of putting Fresno on the map of the national racing industry. Born in Easton, Blackie would go on to be a famous race car driver, race car builder and hot rod enthusiast.

Dubbed an "Industry Legend," Blackie was a five-time NASCAR winning dirt track champion, longtime promoter at the Clovis Speedway from 1960 to 1980, and then owner and promoter at the Fresno Dragway for more than 18 years. Blackie also began the famed Autorama car show in 1958, which would go on to earn the title as one of the best car shows in the nation. The

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Autorama drew some of the finest examples of automotive ingenuity; each car would be personally selected by Blackie to be featured. The Autorama was held annually for 51 years, the last show being held in 2010.

On this milestone birthday, his 90th, The Big Fresno Fair and attendees will honor Blackie once again for his achievements and contributions. The commissioned bust statue of Blackie will be revealed to him for the first time, after which it will go on display in the section of the new Fresno County Historical Museum dedicated to his career and obvious love of racing over the last 60 years – including photos, trophies and a replica of his 1926 Purple Hot Rod. Blackie will also be honored with a special proclamation from the City of Fresno and Mayor Swearingin.

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