Porsche congratulates Kurt Ahrens on his 85th birthday

19/04/2025 In 1969, Kurt Ahrens won the 1000-kilometer race on the Österreichring for Porsche, which is considered a milestone in the history of the sports car manufacturer. Today he celebrates his 85th birthday.

Kurt Ahrens is considered a down-to-earth, honest team player with a keen flair for the technical. In the 1960s, he was one of the most talented German drivers of his generation. He celebrates his 85th birthday on 19 April 2025. “Kurt Ahrens has achieved a great deal for Porsche. His victories, especially with the Porsche 917, are among the milestones in our history,” says Michael Steiner, Member of the Executive Board for Research and Development. “We thank him for his dedication and wish him all the best for his 85th birthday.”

Great talent for Formula racing

Kurt Ahrens was born in Braunschweig on 19 April 1940. He grew up in a family that loved motorsport;

his father, Kurt Ahrens senior, was a racing driver who laid the foundation for his son's career. Later, both lined up to start in the same race. In 1958, as an 18-year-old, Kurt junior competed in his first Formula 3 race. In 1961, 1963 and 1965, he became German Formula Junior Champion. He also proved his talent in Formula 2, where he competed against such greats as Jochen Rindt, Jackie Stewart and Graham Hill. In 1968, alongside Jack Brabham and Jochen Rindt, he took the wheel of the Brabham-Repco at the German Grand Prix at the Nürburgring – his first and last participation in Formula 1.

The first overall victory of a Porsche 917

Ahrens became particularly famous for his work for Porsche during long-distance races in the late 1960s. One highlight of his career was his overall victory in the 1000-kilometer race at the Nürburgring in 1970, when he triumphed in a Porsche 908 together with Vic Elford. He later had another success to celebrate: the first overall victory of a Porsche 917 in the 1000-kilometer race on the Österreichring. This was a moment that marked the beginning of the dominance of this racing car and paid particular tribute to the testing and development work of the previous months.

For the then Head of Development Ferdinand Piëch and the entire team, this success by Ahrens and Siffert was of crucial importance, because the 917 was able to show its full potential in Austria after the setback in Le Mans. In 1970, Ahrens and Vic Elford won the 1000-km race at the Nürburgring in the Porsche 908/03. At the 24 Hours of Le Mans race in the same year, Ahrens shared the cockpit of the Porsche 917 long-tail with Vic Elford. While he was still concerned about the handling of the 917 the previous year, Ahrens felt safe in the further developed model. In 1969, the car had seemed unsteady at high speeds. One year later, he secured pole position with Elford – with a lap time of 3:19.08 minutes. The two took the lead for a long time during the race but had to give up due to a technical defect.

A role model for future generations

Ahrens' ability to adapt quickly to new tracks and cars makes him a valued works driver for Porsche. He is a fast driver and a reliable team player, who plays a key role in the further development of Porsche racing cars. Throughout his career, Ahrens shows at weekends that he not only drives fast lap times, but also has the strategic flair for big races. At the age of just 30, he decides to end his career in 1970 and retires. For him, racing has always been a balance to his everyday life as a father of four and an employee in his parents' company.

Even now that his career has come to an end, he likes to share his extensive knowledge and his many years of memories at historic motorsport events.

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Image Sublines

Path: Porsche congratulates Kurt Ahrens on his 85th birthday/Images/img_1.jpg
Title: 908/03, Kurt Ahrens, Nürburgring, Germany, 1970, Porsche AG
Subline: Kurt Ahrens in the 908/03

Path: Porsche congratulates Kurt Ahrens on his 85th birthday/Images/img_2.jpg
Title: 917 KH, Kurt Ahrens (in car), Jo Siffert, Ferdinand Piëch (both behind the car), Zeltweg, Austria, 1969, Porsche AG
Subline: Kurt Ahrens in the 917 during the 1000-km race at the Österreichring 1969

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