

Porsche mourns the loss of Hans Herrmann

09/01/2026 Hans Herrmann's career was marked by numerous victories and unforgettable moments at Le Mans, the Mille Miglia, and the Targa Florio. His technical expertise and ability to perform under the toughest conditions made him one of the most successful drivers of his time. He passed away on January 9, 2026, at the age of 97.

Dr. Ing. h.c. F. Porsche AG mourns the loss of Hans Herrmann. The former racing driver passed away on January 9, 2026, at the age of 97. During his motorsport career, he achieved more than 80 overall and class victories, the vast majority of them for Porsche. Herrmann not only competed in all major endurance races and European hill climb championship events, but also conducted countless test drives at the Weissach Development Center. "The passing of Hans Herrmann has deeply affected us all," says Thomas Laudenbach, Head of Porsche Motorsport. "He was one of Porsche AG's most successful factory racing drivers. With the victory at the 24 Hours of Le Mans in 1970 in the Porsche 917, Richard Attwood and he made history." The sports car manufacturer from Zuffenhausen owes him not only many triumphs but also the historic milestone he set, making Porsche a serious competitor in endurance racing.

Hans Herrmann was born on February 23, 1928. He completed training as a confectioner, intending to later take over his mother's café. However, this did not come to pass, as his talent and passion lay in motorsport. In 1952, the Stuttgart native started his first circuit race at the Nürburgring in a Porsche 356 – and won. The following year, he achieved a class victory at the 24 Hours of Le Mans in a Porsche 550 Coupé. Also in 1953, Herrmann claimed the title of German Sports Car Champion. Mercedes-Benz then recruited him into their factory team, making him a colleague of Juan Manuel Fangio, Stirling Moss, and Karl Kling. In 1954, Herrmann continued to race for Porsche in smaller displacement classes and won class victories in the 550 Spyder at the Carrera Panamericana and the Mille Miglia. The latter race is remembered for a particularly spectacular moment: Herrmann drove the open mid-engine sports car under a closing railway barrier. He later captioned the image as a postcard with the words: "You have to be lucky."

Herrmann repeatedly returned to Porsche

Luck would remain a constant companion throughout his career. After Daimler-Benz withdrew from motorsport, he spent years with Maserati, B.R.M., Borgward, and repeatedly Porsche.

In 1960, Olivier Gendebien and Herrmann triumphed with a 718 RS 60 Spyder at the 12 Hours of Sebring – Porsche's first overall victory in a World Sportscar Championship race. Shortly afterwards, Herrmann and Joakim Bonnier won the Targa Florio in the Porsche 718 RS 60 Spyder, and in the same year, he was celebrated as Formula 2 European Champion with the Porsche 718/2. In 1962, he switched to Carlo Abarth to become a factory driver for the Viennese constructor from 1963. In 1966, he returned to the Porsche factory team alongside drivers Jo Siffert, Vic Elford, Rolf Stommelen, Udo Schütz, and Gerhard Mitter.

A victory for the history books

In 1970, Herrmann faced the toughest race of his life in the Porsche 917 at the 24 Hours of Le Mans. "In 1969, I narrowly lost the victory to Jacky Ickx after we overtook each other several times in the last hour and a half of the race. In 1970, Ferdinand Piëch ensured we had a stronger engine and a real chance of winning. Winning exactly one year after the narrowly missed victory at Le Mans was, of course, special. It was also Porsche's first overall victory – and it was my last race," Herrmann recalled. He had already lost too many friends by that June day; his wife was worried, and Herrmann himself was clear: "It can't be that I'm so lucky, and at some point, this phase might end."

The endurance and single-seater specialist has become one of the most reliable and consistent racers of all time in motorsport history. During his career, Herrmann raced for many manufacturers, but his closest and most formative connection was always with Porsche. He accompanied the Porsche Museum for decades after retiring from active racing at the age of 42, participating in driving events at renowned classic car events worldwide. Hans Herrmann leaves behind his wife, Magdalena, two sons and a grandson.

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Subline: Hans Herrmann and Richard Attwood won the 1970 24 Hours of Le Mans in a 917 K

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