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PRESS RELEASE

A TRIBUTE TO A GREAT MAN, RACER AND FRIEND The 10th Annual Coronado Speed Festival Honors Richard “Rug” Cunningham

SAN DIEGO, July 19, 2007 - Richard, known as “Rug” to his fellow friends and family, Cunningham was one of the co-founders of the Coronado Speed Festival and it can be said that he was a man who loved life. As a native San Diegan, Rug enjoyed the wonderful weather and the many activities that are available to those who live in Southern California. His most loved and cherished activity was racing, especially racing BMW’s, and until his untimely death in February of 2007, was co-owner of Cunningham BMW with his wife of 18 years, Gina Cunningham.

As a young boy, his nickname, “Rug” derived from the simple fact that his sister could not pronounce his given name “Richard” or even the other derivative “Ricky”, which came out as “Wuggy” and ultimately “Rug”. Even as a young boy growing up in La Mesa, a community of San Diego, he had a passion for racing every kind of vehicle and a desire to participate in every race possible. He entered his first race in Tecate, where he raced 100 miles in a go-kart through the streets of Mexico.

No stranger to hard work, he worked his way to the top of the automotive industry, and got his first “job” at eight years old after visiting the Drew Ford dealership in La Mesa, where his father worked, after he “sold” a woman on buying a 1955 Falcon with his extensive knowledge of the car. Over the years, he not only worked for Drew Ford, but for Cunningham Chrysler Plymouth doing odd jobs such as dusting cars and transporting vehicles, but in 1972 his hard work paid off when he was named Vice President of Cunningham Chrysler Plymouth.

One of his most notable professional accomplishments included owning and operating Cunningham BMW in El Cajon, a community of San Diego, as the President. The dealership boasted award winning accomplishments such as one of the oldest BMW retailers in the United States, one of only a couple BMW retailers who race their product and one of the top retailers in the United States for customer satisfaction. In fact, Cunningham BMW won several awards for customer satisfaction, including a 2006 *Time* Magazine award as quality dealer for Southern California.

An avid racer, not only on land but on the sea and in air as well – he enjoyed sailing and flying - and in the mid-1970’s, Rug was the five-time Southern California regional champion for the Sports Car Club America. He raced at major tracks such as Daytona and Riverside, and participated in the Baja 500 and Baja 1000 off-road races. He also enjoyed collecting vintage automobiles, so many his wife, Gina, couldn’t keep track of how many he had. His collection included a pair of 1968 BMW Trans Ams, and his favorite car, a 1959 Porsche convertible.

His untimely death in February of this year caught many by surprise, but he will not be forgotten. His passion for automobiles throughout his life and his dedication to the military, a retired Coast Guard himself, drove him to be involved in the co-founding of the Coronado Speed Festival in 1997. The 2007 event is in 10th year of celebration, and this year's event will not only pay tribute to the military, but the community, the attendees and the committee will pay tribute to Rug's dedication by dedicating the event in his honor.

The Coronado Speed Festival is produced by San Diego Fleet Week Foundation and hosted by the Naval Base Coronado and the Morale, Welfare and Recreation Program (MWR) which benefits military personnel and their families. They in turn provide positive support for the active duty military community and their families through Quality of Life Programs including single Sailor Recreation Centers, Fitness and Aquatic Facilities and the Base Theatre Free Movies. The Southern California community is given this unbelievable opportunity to thank the men and women defending our freedom in person.

Advance purchase general admission tickets are available on the Fleet Week Website (www.fleetweeksandiego.org) - \$25 one day and \$30 for both days. Tickets will also be available at the venue (\$30 for one day and \$40 for both days). Children 12 and under are free with paid adult admission.

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