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## AUTOS: Gwynn Dragster Hits \$1 Million

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Darryl Gwynn crossed another personal threshold Friday, selling his 1990 Coors extra Gold replica dragster for the sixth time at Barrett-Jackson with a total exceeding \$1 million.

All the proceeds from the sale benefit the Darrell Gwynn Foundation, which supplies wheelchairs to young people in need. Bidding \$210,000 to put the total over the million-dollar mark was Barrett-Jackson regular Tom Day.

Gwynn, a former drag-racing star confined to a wheelchair after crippling injuries from the crash, was on stage with the latest recipient of an electric wheelchair from the foundation.

"It's a great feeling to do that," Gwynn said earlier. "We give approximately 50 wheelchairs away a year. They cost between \$10,000 and \$36,000 each."

The dragster, which is authentic except for its dummy engine, was sold three times in a row at last year's Barrett-Jackson Scottsdale auction, with each buyer donating it back to the foundation. It later sold one time each at two other Barrett-Jackson auctions, with the buyers again donating it back.

The previous purchasers were Ron Pratte of Chandler, Ariz., a noted collector and regular Barrett-Jackson bidder, and a couple of other well-known auction supporters, Bill Gannon and Joe Riley. Pratte bought the car four different times. All the sale proceeds go to charity, with no auction fees.

During the auction, Pratte engaged in a mock bidding war with NASCAR team owner Rick Hendrick, who was sitting next to him in the first row in front of the auction stage.

Before the sale of the dragster, another Gwynn Foundation car stirred up quite a bit of excitement. It was a custom-built street version of the famed 1974 Mercury Montego Wood Brothers race car that won the 1976 Daytona 500 in spectacular fashion by driver David Pearson, recently inducted to the NASCAR Hall of Fame.

That car sold for \$90,000, with all the proceeds going to the Darryl Gwynn Foundation. A special attraction of the sale was the presence on stage of Leonard Wood, architect of the original racing effort as well as the street replica, which was built by Gateway Classic Mustang.

"I'm very proud that Darryl Gwynn chose this replica to auction for his foundation," Wood said.

The Daytona 500 win "was the most exciting finish I've ever seen," he added, recalling the "last lap shootout" that ended with a skidding spinout by both Pearson and Richard Petty in which Pearson recovered and won. "This car went on to win the triplecrown and about 10 more races that year."

Gwynn noted that the confluence between Barrett-Jackson's 40th anniversary, the 35th anniversary of the

Daytona win and Pearson's Hall of Fame induction.

"It's an iconic moment in Daytona 500 history that we're replicating today," he said. "With Dave Pearson being elected to the Hall of Fame, all the pieces really came together."

**Bob Golfen, Automotive** Editor for **SPEED.com**, is a veteran auto writer based in Phoenix, Arizona, who has driven and evaluated essentially every new vehicle sold in the United States. A lifelong car enthusiast with a passion for collector cars, car culture and the **automotive lifestyle**, he annually attends and writes about Arizona's famous January collector-car auctions, focusing on Scottsdale's monumental *Barrett-Jackson Collector Car Event* and other *Barrett-Jackson auctions*. **SPEED.com fans email Automotive Editor Bob Golfen at [bgolfen@gmail.com](mailto:bgolfen@gmail.com)**



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