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For Immediate Release

## **Bill and Happy Rands Named Hydrofest Gold Cup Honorary Race Chairpersons**

DETROIT—Bill and Happy Rands, two of the most critical individuals in keeping the century-long tradition of Unlimited Hydroplane Racing alive in Detroit, have been named Honorary Race Chairpersons for the 2018 Metro Detroit Chevy Dealers Hydrofest Gold Cup weekend, August 24-26.

"Bill and Happy have been an integral part of the Detroit boat racing culture," said DREI President Mark Weber. "This year marks the 102nd anniversary of this race, and the entire sport needs to know what this family has contributed to this sport, and they have never ask for recognition or even a thank you. They deserve to be honored and thanked for everything they have done to keep race teams and the sport alive in the City of Detroit."

Boat racing has been a love affair for the Rands family, going back five generations when Bill's grandfather William hung out with the legendary Gar Wood in the 1920's.

"We have a picture of my grandfather with Gar Wood at the NYC, preparing to go on a fishing trip," said Bill. "Many years later I found a piece of 1960's letterhead from the Spirit of Detroit Association (the organization that ran the hydroplane races until the 1990's), and there was my father's name, Bill Rands, at the top of the stationary when he was the Rear Commodore of SODA. In the 1980's our kids worked in the U-7 pit, and two of our grandchildren have had Unlimited boats named for them for the Detroit race."

For Bill himself, the trip into the hierarchy of Detroit's hydroplane leaders started when he and Happy attended the boat races as fans, sitting in the grandstands and sneaking into the pits to see the boats up close. During their third year in the Commodore's Club, Executive Director Eilene Hamel had run out of Commodore jacket badges and had to give Bill a badge that said Advisory Board on it instead. Hamel then said to Bill, why don't you join us as an Advisory Board member. Then, their interest just heated up.

Bill and Happy partnered with Jerry Hopp and his son, Greg, with the UL-15 Happy Go Lucky Racing Team. In 1981, Jerry got his first Unlimited ride in a low-budget Seattle boat, the U-52 Design 360. In 1986, he teamed with veteran Unlimited crew chief Al Thoreson and formed the popular U-7 Thor Racing Team. Al and Jerry toured the circuit every year through 1992, running on a meager budget, and

relying on friends to keep the finances flush. The Rands were there to help at every turn, each and every year. During this time, their son William and daughter Barbara helped worked with the boat teams supported by the Rands' family.

The couple became even more involved in the races by aiding Fred Leland and his top-notch unlimited teams in the 1990's.

The Rands' have helped the hydroplane world with their support and have been rewarded with the U-100 team's APBA Gold Cup wins in 1996 and 1999. In 2004-2006, the Grand Prix boat driven by the Hopp's rewarded the Rands with a "3peat" on the Detroit Yacht Club's O. J. Mulford Silver Cup when the Mike's Hard Lemonade/Happy Go Lucky burned a hot yellow path down the Detroit River as Jerry won the Silver Cup in a roaring Sweepstakes race. Greg followed suit in 2005 as the UL-I swept the Sweepstakes again while Greg made it three in a row in 2006. Jerry is still collecting victories with the same boat, now GP-10, winning the Grand Prix West National Championship in 2013.

In 2005 and 2006, Fred Leland's U-100 team, formerly Miss Pico, came to Detroit without a name. Bill and Happy sponsored the boat with the names "Miss Rebecca" and "Little Will," their first grandchildren. The following year the boat carried a decal showing all the grandchildren, Rebecca, Will, 'Jumpin' J.J., and Charlie.

"While the Rands' family supported these teams, it was the City of Detroit was rewarded even more when Bill took over the reins of the Detroit River Regatta Association in 2005," added Weber. "As President and Chairmen of the DRRA, his business acumen and financial support kept the sport afloat in the Motor City for more than a decade."

Today, Bill, the Yale graduate, entrepreneur, pilot, and his family still commit themselves to help community organizations and causes. Bill is a Board Member of the Yankee Air Museum located at the Willow Run Airport in Ypsilanti.

The 2018 Metro Detroit Chevy Dealers HydroFest Gold Cup takes place Friday through Sunday, Aug. 24-26. Single and weekend tickets are on sale now. To purchase tickets or for sponsorship opportunities, call Detroit Riverfront Events Inc. at 313-329-8047 or visit [www.detroitboatraces.com](http://www.detroitboatraces.com).