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## **M1 Concourse Honors Ford Performance and Corvette Driver Johnny O'Connell with Masters of Motorsports Awards at 2023 Checkered Flag Ball**

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**PONTIAC, MI** – The 2023 Checkered Flag Ball marked not only the culmination of two exhilarating days of on-track action at the American Speed Festival but also a gala event that commemorated the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 24 Hours of Le Mans. Two Masters of Motorsports Awards were presented this year, both recognizing achievements at the famed French endurance classic.

Ford Performance received an award in recognition of their accomplishments at Le Mans during the 1960s with the Ford GT40 when they won the race four years in succession – 1966 through 1969. They returned in 2016 to take the class win with the Ford GT on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of their first, second, and third place historic finish in 1966. The award to Ford Performance was accepted by Jim Owens, Mustang GTD Brand Manager.

American Speed Festival also honored former Corvette and Cadillac factory driver Johnny O'Connell for his accomplishments at the 24 Hours of Le Mans. Johnny is the most successful GM factory driver and on 10 occasions at Le Mans, achieved 8 podium finishes with 3 class victories in 2001, 2002, & 2009 driving the legendary Corvette. Helping with the presentation of the Masters of Motorsports award to Johnny was former head of GM Racing and the person responsible for launching the Corvette Racing program, Herb Fishel.

"We are thrilled to have celebrated the rich history of motorsports and recognized the incredible contributions of Johnny O'Connell and Ford Performance," said Tim McGrane, CEO of M1 Concourse. "The Checkered Flag Ball was a fantastic event, and we are grateful to all those who joined us to support M1 Mobility and the Pontiac Community Foundation."

The Checkered Flag Ball, emceed by Emmy award-winning TV anchor and journalist Christy McDonald, is also a fundraiser for the M1 Mobility, a collaborative initiative with the Pontiac Community Foundation, striving to connect Pontiac residents with crucial community services and programs.

Separate, embeddable videos for reference or use: [Johnny O'Connell](#) and [Ford Performance](#).

### **About M1 Concourse**

Located on the iconic Woodward Avenue in Pontiac, M1 Concourse serves as a testament to automotive excellence. Spanning 87 acres, it houses a vibrant motorsports community, state-of-the-art performance car service center, and a majestic event center, all overlooking the 1.5-mile M1 Circuit. Situated less than 35 miles from Detroit's Metropolitan International Airport, it remains a prime destination for global automotive aficionados.

### **About American Speed Festival**

This event combines some of the most renowned brands in automotive performance history, in everything from Vintage Indy cars and historic stock cars to modern-day supercars. It's a rare opportunity to see race cars from every era perform on the 1.5-mile M1 Concourse Speed Ring. American Speed Festival celebrated three significant automotive anniversaries, 100 years of Americans at Le Mans, 70 years of Corvette, and 50 years of International Race of Champions (IROC) Series.