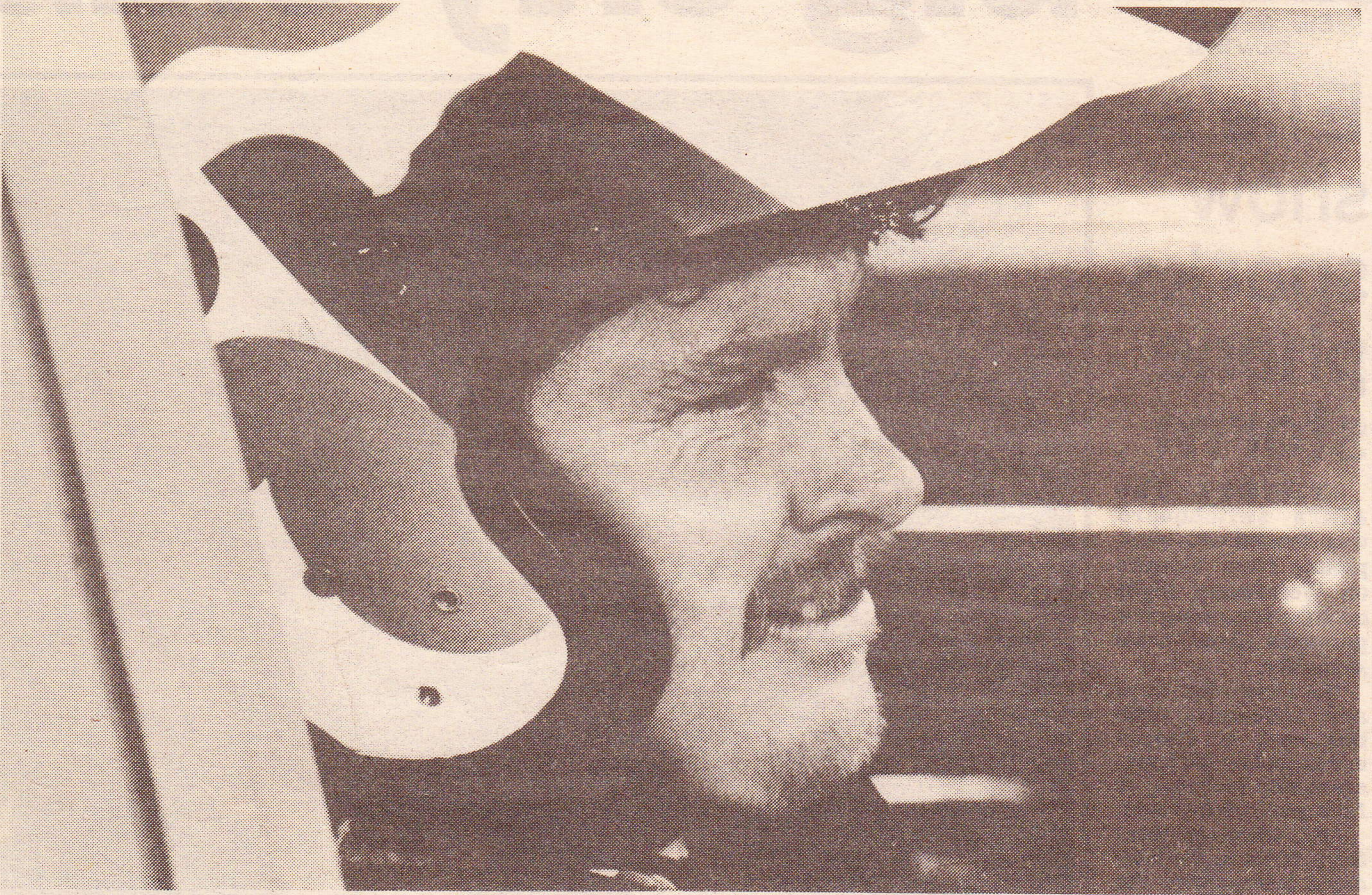


Race car school dream lives on



Mr Pritchard...
killed in the
Cannonball
Run tragedy

Keith Pritchard, a Darwin official who died in last month's tragic Cannonball Run crash, dreamed of establishing the Territory's first car racing school.

Keith's dream will live on through the work of fellow driver, Gary Pendlebury who specialises in teaching defensive driving but has decided to branch into training potential racing car drivers.

Mr Pendlebury was head of the NT Police driving school for six years before retiring last year.

Darwin Motor Sports Council general manager Rees Van Der Molen welcomed the creation of a specialist driving school and said Keith Pritchard had firmly believed in specially training people to compete on the race track.

Driving technique the 'key' to control

Mr Van Der Molen said Keith was one of the most qualified drivers in the Territory.

He was the only Territory driver with a racing licence from the Confederation of Australian Motor Sports.

He had competed at Bathurst 1000 in an event supporting the main race.

Mr Pritchard was one of four people killed in the Cannonball Run tragedy last month.

He had been working as an official about 95 km south of Alice Springs when a Ferrari driven by Japanese dentist

Akihiro Kabe spun out of control at high speed, crashing into a checkpoint.

Mr Pritchard did not believe Kabe had the experience to drive the powerful sports car at high speeds.

Mr Pendlebury said in teaching car racing he would not encourage people to drive faster but look at improving driving technique, which ultimately would enable people to drive faster but be in control of the car.

He said: "You have to know your own limitations and the limits of the vehicle."

● **Editor's note:** The NT News does not have a Page 3 "girlie" feature, so V Forscutt's letter has no basis in fact.

As regular readers know, pictures on a wide range of subjects appear on Page 3.

Run not race

I REFER to "Collins: Stop Cannonball", in which he yet again refers to the "run" as a "race".

This type of grandstanding obviously causes concern among your readers which as a competitor I may be able to put to rest.

● The "run" was just that and was never intended to be a race.

It was a time trial with set speeds for all competitors for each section.

Double points would be lost for arriving too early.

Points could only be made during the flying mile each day when the highway was closed and each car scored individually on speed achievements.

● Concerning other road users such as slow moving caravans etc — these vehicles were given plenty of forewarning and free choice to enter the highway or wait until the run had passed.

Surely an hour is not too much to ask on our roads once a year?

I certainly don't approve of unsupervised "high speeds" on our roads but as a competitor have never felt safer than during the run.

It was a brilliant experience which I recommend to anyone with a suitable vehicle and adequate driving experience.

The organisation of the run was a world-class achievement.

Let's hope for the good of the Territory that it continues.



If the south can have its Redex trials — long live the Cannonball.

Mary Groves,
Berry Springs.