

# First Negro Editor-Auto Writers In Economy Run



TWO UNOFFICIAL participants in the annual 3,000-mile Mobil Gas Economy Run take a breather after completing the grueling trip from Los Angeles to Detroit. Gil Anderson (left) and Junius Chambers finished the run ahead of most of the official drivers. Not only were they the first Negroes in the economy run, but it was the first time that editor-auto writers from Negro newspapers participated in the event. The pair clocked 15.6 miles per gallon, compared to the approximately 19 (18.9898) miles per gallon for the winning car. Both agreed "the time saved (in leading the official drivers) is as important to us as the gas saving." (NPI Photo)

By JOSEPH GRAHAM

DETROIT - (NPI)--How does it feel to wheel a vehicle in the annual 3,000-mile Mobil Gas Economy Run, and keep ahead of almost all the other drivers participating in the event?

Ask Junius Chambers and Gil Anderson, who are the first Negroes to drive in the economy run, and incidentally are the first editor-auto writers of Negro newspapers to participate in the annual gas-mileage test. Chambers, 29, is auto editor of the New York Amsterdam News. His co-driver, Anderson, also 29, is a freelance auto writer for the Westchester Observer, Mt. Vernon, N.Y.

STARTING FROM Los Angeles, the pair drove a 1967 Dodge Coronet into Detroit hours ahead of the other drivers. Their gas mileage was clocked at 15.6 per gallon. The winning official car posted approximately 19 (actually 18.9898) miles per gallon, but the two neophytes agreed that "the time saved was as important to us as the gas saving."

Both New Yorkers, the two had entered the grueling Los Angeles-to-Detroit six-day gas economy run as unofficial contestants, and were part of a representative cross-section of American drivers.

Since they were not an official entry, they were permitted to go as fast as state laws permitted. They were about two hours ahead of the entry cars at the end of each day, Chambers said. Both agreed it had been a "tiring trip." The car they were driving was forced to go through climatic changes that included blinding snowstorms and high altitudes.

Leaving Los Angeles, they travelled and stopped at Lake Tahoe, Salt Lake City, Denver,

Omaha and Chicago before arriving in Detroit. They drove an average of about eight hours a day.

LEADING THE four official and one unofficial Dodge teams was veteran driver Robert J. Cahill, 51, of Royal Oak, Mich., manager of special performance events for Chrysler Corporation. Cahill drove a six-cylinder Dodge Dart.

Anderson, general manager of Kinney Rent-A-Car System, New York City, is a graduate of Hunter College. He resides with his wife, Anita and children, Jason and Nicole, in White Plains, N. Y.

Chambers, a former paratrooper with the U.S. 101st Airborne, and a graduate of New York University, lives with his wife, Dr. Gita Chambers, and son, Tara, in the Bronx.

Although classified as an unofficial entry, their car was regulated and checked by United States Auto Club officials in the same manner as all the other entrants.

Included in the Dodge driving contingent were a drag-racing mother of three, a woman sports car enthusiast, several automotive engineers, and professional drivers.

UPON COMPLETING the race, Anderson and Chambers checked their 1967 Dodge Coronet (a practice car used by the official drivers prior to the test run) and considered the idea of driving in the 1968 economy run. However, both men observed, "After driving more than 3,000 miles, it's hard to think about next year."

There were six classes of cars in the test run. Classes A and B for compact cars, six and eight cylinder; Classes C and D for intermediate size six and eight cylinder cars; Classes E and F for standard sized eight cylinder, medium and low priced; and Class G for luxury cars.

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