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**2017 METRO DETROIT CHEVY DEALERS SPIRIT OF DETROIT HYDROFEST ANNOUNCE
PAUL W. SMITH, WJR AM 760 MORNING HOST, GRAND MARSHAL
AND SANDY ROSS, RETIRED HYDROPLANE RACER, HONORARY RACE CHAIRMAN**

DETROIT – June 8, 2017 – The board of directors and planning committee for the [2017 Metro Detroit Chevy Dealers Spirit of Detroit HydroFest](#) (August 25-27) are pleased to announce Paul W. Smith as the grand marshal and Sandy Ross as honorary race chairman of this year's race. The announcement was made by Detroit Riverfront Events Inc. President, Mark Weber.

As one of the most recognized voices in radio, Smith's career spans 45 years with 20 of those as the morning host for WJR AM 760. He was named best morning show broadcast personality by the Michigan Association of Broadcasters and inducted into the National Radio Hall of Fame. The Wall Street Journal dubbed Smith as "*the king of talk radio in Detroit.*"

"As a fan of the sport and regular spectator for many years, I am extremely honored to serve as the grand marshal for the 101st year of powerboat racing on the Detroit River," said Smith. "HydroFest is a quintessential part of Detroit's sports legacy and I would extend a special invitation to anyone who has yet to experience the thrill and excitement of hydroplane racing to be part of the action and attend."

In his role of grand marshal, Smith will preside over pre and post race festivities, greet the drivers, sponsors and dignitaries along with other symbolic duties.

Retired hydroplane racer, Ross, 88, was drawn to the water at an early age having grown up on Detroit's lower eastside and involved in powerboat racing in a variety of capacities for most of his life. He got his start in 1948 building and driving limited in-board hydroplanes and went on to serve as a crewman for the Mariner II and Miss Lapeer among others. A highlight of his illustrious hydroplane racing career was winning the APBA Gold Cup and National Championship in 1972 with the Atlas Van Lines team. In 2003, he and another hydroplane legend, 'Fearless' Fred Alter acquired a kit boat and spent the next five years rebuilding Miss Vernors Unlimited replica exhibiting and running it in vintage hydroplane races.

"Even though the sport is based on technical know-how, the biggest takeaway for me is the friendships and bonds created over decades," said Ross. "Hydroplane racing has been my avocation for over 60 years, my alter ego really, and it brings me a great deal of joy and satisfaction to see generations of racers and fans alike enjoy it as much as I do."

Today, Ross carries on the racing tradition as an historian, sharing the sport through thousands of photos he's amassed. For the past 10 years, he's hosted an annual luncheon and presentation at Sinbad's to showcase the pioneers of powerboat racing and reflect on the history of racing on the Detroit River to kick off HydroFest weekend.

"Both these gentlemen are highly regarded in their industries and communities, Paul W. as a respected and trusted broadcaster and champion for the city and Sandy as a legend in the Unlimited racing circuit who continues to support the sport," said Weber. "We are privileged to have them represent the 2017 Metro Detroit Chevy Dealers Spirit of Detroit HydroFest."

This year marks the 101st race along the Detroit River, one of the Motor City's longest-standing sports traditions and the longest continuously running hydroplane race on the H1 Unlimited circuit. The 2017 Metro Detroit Chevy Dealers Spirit of Detroit HydroFest takes place Fri., Aug. 25 – Sun., Aug. 27 and will feature an updated format this year with two sets of preliminary heats on Aug. 26 and a winner-take-all final for the President's Cup, followed by three sets of preliminary heats on Aug. 27 with a winner-take-all final for the prestigious APBA Gold Cup, the oldest active trophy in all of the motorsports.

Single and weekend tickets are on sale now. To purchase tickets or for sponsorship opportunities, call the office of the Detroit Riverfront Events Inc. at 313-329-8047. Visit www.detroitboatracess.com for complete details.

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