

Gahanna Jefferson Education Foundation
2014 ALUMNI HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE

Michael Shank

Graduated...1985

Resides...Buckeye Lake, Ohio

Michael Shank, a 1985 Gahanna graduate, started racing professionally in 1989 - just four years out of high school. He was quickly named the SCCA-Ohio Valley Regional Novice Drive of the Year. He continued to climb the racing ladder, taking the 1996 Toyota Atlantic C2 Championship and then moved up to race in the Indy Racing League.

He gained both winning experience and knowledge in the car, which he put to work as his team expanded to run other drivers. Shank eventually retired as a driver to focus on running and growing Michael Shank Racing, which employs between 12 to 20 employees. He was named Team Owner of the Year twice in four years before deciding to move his team in a new direction with the Rolex Sports Car Series in 2004.

Fred Paul, business and industry partnership coordinator at Career and Technology Education Centers in Licking County, said Shank has a keen interest in working with local schools and helping students see the value in education and work ethic.

"Michael has brought his race cars to C-TEC for demonstration and emphasizes how the skills acquired at C-TEC flow into manufacturing, teamwork and learning to solve real-world problems by communicating and demonstrating respect," Paul said.

Michael Shank Racing has formed an internship program with CTEC, bringing students from Newark into the business to showcase what a future in racing might look like. One intern in particular who studied computer machine trades is still employed with the company after an apprenticeship.

Giving back is important to Shank's company. Groups of boy and girl scouts come through the business and workshop throughout the year for tours and information. The company also donates race weekends to various local charities throughout central Ohio.