

Robin Braig, former president of Daytona International Speedway, dies at 64

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The Daytona Beach News-Journal

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- Braig headed Anheuser-Busch's sports marketing division before joining International Speedway Corp.
- His beloved dog, "Schrader," was named after Braig's favorite NASCAR driver.
- His Speedway tenure included the 2008 50th running of the Daytona 500.

Robin Braig, president of Daytona International Speedway from 2002-2010, has died at 64.

NASCAR Chairman Jim France and Executive Vice Chair Lesa Kennedy issued a joint statement Thursday morning.

“Robin Braig used his creativity and passion for the sport and our fans to grow Daytona International Speedway to unprecedeted heights. His warmth, infectious laugh and welcoming presence were trademarks of a man who made a lasting impression on all those he encountered. We are deeply saddened by his passing, and our thoughts are with his family and friends as we share this loss.”

More: Robin Braig, Jim France team up on new Daytona Beach marina project.

No cause of death was released, only that it was sudden and unexpected. According to close friends, Braig had a stroke last September from which he had largely recovered.



“We’re all shocked and heartbroken,” Jim France added separate from the official release.

Braig had spent the past four years as harbor master at the France-owned Coquina Marina, near the west side of the Seabreeze bridge. The marina was also home for Braig, who lived on his 70-foot boat docked there.



Braig grew up in Buckeye Lake, Ohio — and *on* the lake, where a lifelong love of boating took root. His father was a boat builder and renovator who also served as the town's postmaster and fire chief; his mother was a school teacher and the town's mayor.

Braig played basketball in high school and later earned a Master's Degree in sports administration from Ohio University.

He would eventually spend 15 years heading Anheuser-Busch's sports marketing division, but one of his earliest jobs was with the Vero Beach Dodgers of the Class A Florida State League — he made cotton candy, steamed hot dogs, washed uniforms and even drove the team bus.

He marketed Budweiser — and other A-B products — to the sports world from 1983-98, and it was during that time he first met NASCAR racer Kenny Schrader, who began driving a Budweiser-sponsored car in 1995. The business

arrangement became a longtime friendship, to the point that Braig's adopted dog — a small rescue mix — was named "Schrader."



"Just a great friend," said Schrader, who marveled at Braig's sports-themed career but also noted his friend's large personality and attraction to good times.

"You knew you were gonna have some fun when you went out with Robin," said Schrader, himself no stranger to fun and laughter. "You didn't know what was gonna happen, but you knew it was gonna be fun."

Braig's NASCAR career began in 1998 and included stints as head of Phoenix Raceway and in marketing for NASCAR's former track-ownership arm, International Speedway Corp. He always suggested his auto-racing years might have been pre-ordained — his middle name was Darlington.

His eight-year run as DIS president included the total renovation of the Speedway's paddock, the new Turn 1 tunnel, and perhaps his crowning single-event achievement, the splashy 50th running of the Daytona 500 in 2008.

"Robin was probably Daytona's greatest marketing and promotional president since Bill France Sr.," said Godwin Kelly, the News-Journal's recently retired

motorsports editor. “He had a lot of media savvy. I give him a lot of credit for his open-door style of management when it came to dealing with the press. He always made himself available even when the subject matter was unfavorable to the Speedway.

“He had a gregarious, fun-loving personality and had a wonderful standing in the racing community.”



Braig tried retired life on the water after leaving the Speedway but learned he needed a bit of structure, which led to him running a Delray Beach marina before Jim France lured him back to Daytona Beach.

“I sold my house, threw Schrader on the boat, headed down to Fort Lauderdale,” he said in 2017. “I had a base of friends down there. I thought it would be great. Before long, I was washing the dog four times a week, washing the boat four times a week.

"I'd call my friends and say, 'Let's go have a drink tonight.' They'd say, 'Well, Robin, it's Tuesday.' So I'd go by myself. I quickly realized I had to find something to do."

Kenny Kane, Braig's former Speedway vice president and longtime close friend, said Thursday that a local service is pending, though Braig's remains will return to his native Ohio.

"I was always impressed by his unique style of making everyone feel as if they were as important as the rest, from the bottom to the top," Kane said. "I will truly miss my best friend, but I find comfort in knowing that he had so many great friends. He called me his 'wing man' and I will always treasure that endearing title."

Braig was married — once and briefly — during his Anheuser-Busch years in St. Louis and had no children. A sister in Ohio is his lone survivor.