

PATRICK HEAD CO-FOUNDER

Having decided against a career in the Royal Navy, Patrick Head graduated from University College London in 1970 with a degree in Mechanical Engineering. He immediately joined the chassis manufacturer, Lola, in Huntingdon and it was during this period that Patrick and Frank Williams first met.

In 1976 Patrick was approached by Williams to spearhead the design department of what became, the following year, Williams Grand Prix Engineering. The team raced a customer March chassis but, in 1978, the Patrick Head-designed FW06 made its race debut.

The ground effect FW07 came next and the car took the first of the team's 113 wins at the 1979 British Grand Prix. Four more victories followed that season, resulting in Williams finishing 9th in the Constructors' Championship.

Patrick's 1980 car took Alan Jones and the team to both world titles, securing Williams as a front-runner. As more success followed in the '80s, Patrick moved away from designing the cars himself and created the role of Technical Director. He oversaw the processes of design, construction, racing and testing, bringing together all of the different disciplines.

It was during the '80s that Patrick was credited with many revolutionary concepts, including a six-wheeler, which tested in '82, and continuously variable transmission, which replaced the car's conventional gearbox. However, neither of these systems made it onto the grid due to rule changes.

In 1986, following Frank Williams' road car accident, Patrick was forced to assume control of the team. Under his temporary stewardship, the team secured the Constructors' titles in 1986 and both the Constructors' and Drivers' title (with Nelson Piquet) in '87.

In 1990 Williams hired engineer Adrian Newey. Both he and Patrick rapidly formed the outstanding design partnership of the decade with their cars achieving a level of dominance never previously seen, and not repeated until the Ferrari/Schumacher era a decade later. In the seven-year period between 1991 and '97, Williams took 59 race wins, five Constructors' titles and four Drivers' titles.

The company continued to expand over the following years and Patrick changed his role from Technical Director to Director of Engineering and on 31 December 2011 he stepped down from the WGPB Board of Directors. He continues in his role as a Board Director of Williams Hybrid Power Limited, a subsidiary of the F1 team that develops and produces hybrid technologies.