

**MEDIA INFORMATION For immediate release**

**Hazel Chapman (1927-2021)**

**(Hethel, UK – 14 December 2021)** – The global Lotus community is saddened to learn that Hazel Chapman, the wife of Colin Chapman and co-founder of Lotus, has died aged 94.

Her contribution to motorsport and the motor industry in the latter half of the 20th century should not be under-estimated. She was a successful racing driver, a shrewd businesswoman and the rock upon which the Lotus foundations – since 1948, when the very first Lotus car was made – were built. Her involvement in the development of the Lotus business was almost without equal at the time, in a world where women so often played second fiddle to their husbands.

Matt Windle, Managing Director, Lotus Cars, commented: “This is a very sad day for everyone around the world associated with Lotus. Without Hazel Chapman there would be no Lotus. The entire Hethel team, and those working at our facilities around the world, send their sincere condolences and best wishes to the Chapman family.”

Hazel Williams was born on the 21 May 1927 in North London. She met Colin Chapman at a dance in 1944 when he was just 16 and she a few months older. As the couple’s relationship developed, Hazel’s parents allowed Colin to a build what became the first Lotus – the Mark 1 – in the lock-up garage at the back of their house in Hornsey.

Colin gained a commission into the Royal Air Force, so Hazel continued with the building of the Lotus Mark 1 and then the Mark 2. Competition success in races entered by Hazel and Colin resulted in new commissions for their automotive services. With Hazel’s commercial acumen, their first Lotus business was formed on 1 January 1952. It became a limited company later in the year, funded by payment of £25 from Hazel herself.

Hazel and Colin married in 1954 and as the business grew Hazel took a seat on the board of a number of their companies, including Lotus Cars, Team Lotus and Lotus Components.

She was not only an astute businesswoman but took on a matriarchal role within the organisation, the epitome of the phrase ‘Behind every strong man is a stronger woman’. She prided herself of working with almost every Lotus Formula 1 driver including iconic motorsport names such as Jim Clark, Graham Hill, Jochen Rindt, Emerson Fittipaldi, Mario Andretti, Nigel Mansell and Ayrton Senna. She was also a founder of The Dog House women’s motorsport club.

Widowed in 1982, Hazel recognised that Lotus Cars needed new ownership to secure its future and played an instrumental role in its sale. She became a Director of Classic Team Lotus, the Chapman family business which preserves the cars and legacy of the brand’s global racing success.

Hazel maintained a close interest in all things Lotus, for example, she ‘signed off’ the 100,000th Lotus road car in 2018. Tradition dictated that Hazel was always shown the latest Lotus road car prior to it being unveiled to the public. That wonderful custom continued into the modern era, and she viewed the Lotus Evija with her son Clive Chapman two weeks before its debut in July 2019.

Ends

**Notes to Editors**

For more information please contact the Lotus Communications team:

**James Andrew, Executive Director, PR and Communications**

[**jandrew@lotuscars.com**](mailto:jandrew@lotuscars.com)

**+44 (0) 7384 830903**

**Rob Borrett, Manager, PR Content and Launch Programmes**

[**rborrett@lotuscars.com**](mailto:rborrett@lotuscars.com)

**+44 (0) 7718 560789**

**Alastair Florance, Group PR Manager**

[**aflorance@lotuscars.co.uk**](mailto:aflorance@lotuscars.co.uk)

**+44 (0) 7802 918662**

**Samantha Thomas, PR Officer, Product Press & Digital Media**

[**SThomas2@lotuscars.com**](mailto:SThomas2@lotuscars.com)

**+44 (0) 7909 813785**

**Richard Yarrow, PR Manager, News and Technology**

[**ryarrow@lotuscars.com**](mailto:ryarrow@lotuscars.com)

**+44 (0) 7471 994525**

The Lotus media site – <https://media.lotuscars.com> – contains news, images, specifications and full details of current models, as well as heritage cars and engineering technology.

For the latest news and information from the Lotus PR Team please follow:

<https://twitter.com/LotusCarsPR>

<https://www.instagram.com/LotusCars>PR

For Lotus Cars social media please follow:

<https://www.facebook.com/LotusCars>

<https://twitter.com/lotuscars>

<https://www.instagram.com/lotuscars/>

<https://www.youtube.com/grouplotus>

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/group-lotus>

**About Lotus**

**Lotus Cars** is based in Hethel, Norfolk, UK, and is the global HQ for sports car and hypercar manufacturing operations, the Lotus Advanced Performance Centre and the iconic 2.2-mile test track. Lotus Cars builds world-class high-performance cars, born out of legendary success on the racetrack including 13 FIA Formula 1 world titles and many other championship honours. In July 2021 Lotus unveiled the all-new Lotus Emira, its last and best-of-breed petrol-powered sports car. The first customer cars will be delivered in 2022. In July 2019 it launched the Evija, the world’s first all-electric British hypercar. Customer deliveries will begin during 2021.

**Lotus Engineering** provides comprehensive consultancy services to many of the world's OEMs and Tier 1 suppliers. It is internationally recognised for its long-standing contribution to ground-breaking engineering and innovative vehicle development. Its expertise extends beyond automotive; in August 2021 a Lotus Engineering-developed track bike helped Team GB’s cyclists win seven medals, including three golds, at the Tokyo Olympics. An international consultancy with offices around the world, Lotus Engineering is headquartered at the Lotus Advanced Technology Centre on the University of Warwick’s Wellesbourne Campus in the UK.

**Lotus Technology** is the global ‘intelligent technology’ division based in Wuhan, China. Its role is to accelerate innovation in the fields of batteries and energy management, electric motors, electronic control systems, intelligent driving, intelligent manufacturing and many more. It will oversee the manufacture of a range of premium Lotus lifestyle electric vehicles in Wuhan starting in 2022.

**Lotus Group** is the parent company of the above subsidiaries and others. It is part of Geely Automotive, the fastest-growing automotive group in the world. Geely has a 51% controlling stake, with 49% owned by Etika Automotive, a Malaysian conglomerate.