

## Keiko Ihara



### **Member of FIA Women in Motorsports Commission and FIA Drivers Commission**

Keiko Ihara is a race car driver and member of FIA Women in Motorsports Commission and FIA Drivers Commission. She was a former race queen before becoming a racing driver. She is one of the few Japanese women nationals to race internationally at a high level.

When she was a second year of University student and needed to earn money to pay for a Mogul skiing event camp. As part of her modelling work Keiko was chosen to be a 'F1 Benetton Image girl'. Visiting race circuits changed her destiny. With no knowledge whatever of motorsport she was shocked by the exhaust roar and speed of racing cars and fascinated by their overwhelming power and vibrancy. She thought 'One way, no pedestrians, flat out in a racing car...me too!!' At this stage she did not even have a driving license so she started going to a driving school. Shortly after obtaining a driving license she competed in a Ferrari.

She entered at the 9th race in the AF2000 Series in Thailand. She made 'pole to win' many times. Also Keiko became the first female driver to get a podium finish 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 50 years history of the international championship Macau Grand Prix. She has participated of the World endurance championship as sole female driver since 2012. She also competed in several championships including Asian Formula BMW series, Asian Formula 2000, Formula 3 and British Formula Renault series. She got the top result as a female driver and she is at Driver's ranking of 22nd in the 2013 FIA WEC. She finished the Le Mans 24h race as the 1<sup>st</sup> Asian female driver in 2014. She travelled in more than 50 countries around the world to participate in International racing. While working on her race career, Keiko is making efforts to improve social and environmental education and transportation. She is participating in social contribution activities as a delegate of the US-Japan Leadership Program.

Keiko is graduated with a Bachelor of Economics at Husei University in Tokyo. She is also English teacher.