

# Member Spotlight

## David Baker

By Monica Ledwon

The Gateway Gazette features a very new member this month of November, David Baker. He owns five Buicks and a passel of other classic vehicles running the gamut of motor car badges.

David was born and raised in Fort Wayne, Indiana and stuck close to his roots during his early years. He says that his interest in cars was passed down to him from family DNA saying, “it’s a genetic thing”. His father and grandfather owned a diesel repair shop.



As a teenager, David’s dad procured his first car, a ’65 Impala SS with a humble 6 cylinder under the hood and a cracked block. His dad, being a super mechanic, assisted him in transplanting an 8-cylinder Chevy powerplant into the car. That project, David says, was his indoctrination into car mechanics.

David graduated from his hometown Carroll High School and then went on to Indiana University for his Bachelors in Business Administration and followed up with an MBA from University of St. Francis. He has spent his entire professional life in water company utilities starting as a billing supervisor and working his way up to President of American Waters Works which is the parent corporation of local utility groups such as our own local Missouri American Water. This aqueous career precipitated him moving fourteen times throughout seven states.

Car collecting was not a priority in his frenetic life with American Water Works. But retiring in 2013, let the car collecting begin! Starting in first grade, he fondly remembers going to Auburn, Indiana to visit his uncle who collected British stock--Bentley and Rolls Royce. There, he experienced the annual Auburn, Cord Duesenberg Festival which was truly eye opening and further enhanced his future interest in collecting classic antique cars.

A first early find, in 2008, was a ’77 Seville Cadillac bought from the proverbial little old lady next door with 30K miles on the odometer. Then after retirement, David did not hesitate to jump on a plane the next day to go on the hunt for a set of vintage wheels. The chase is the most

fun. Rivas are especially favored, and he owns superb examples of the years of '65, '66, and '71 along with bringing home an '89 Estate Wagon. The cream of his Buick crop, though,



winning 3<sup>rd</sup> in his class at the club's recent Regional, is a copper toned 1957 Roadmaster 75.

David and his partner, Craig, who shares his old car enthusiasm do light maintenance along with interior and exterior upkeep on all the motor pool tallying up to 22. This includes BMW, Cadillac, Mercedes Benz, Oldsmobile, Pontiac, Chrysler and the Brits: Rolls, and Bentley. David relies on the Buick expertise of Adam Martin, the previous owner of the copper '57, for heavy duty engine repair work on his rolling stock.

He's settled down now near the Imperial, Missouri area in a house that overlooks the Mississippi River. In 2018 he and Craig found some property south of Kimmswick and contracted out a commercial building to be constructed. It would serve as a car



garage/clubhouse/office and a heated and airconditioned hang out area for their car nut friends.

David has already hosted the Cadillac Club to a gathering at his lux garage. He thought since he owned five Buicks, he should join the BCA. Then later realized there must be a local Buick club too and found the Gateway Chapter. After he put in his membership application, he

received five welcoming emails from our club officers, picking up the vibe that the "red carpet" was being rolled out for him. The camaraderie he felt was remarkable.

Hosting our club to his place is an event he looks forward to having. And, as a newfound Buick enthusiast, David is a welcome addition to our roster of Buick Motor Division followers. The Gateway Buick Club will always "roll out the red carpet" for new members like David!