



Gateway Gazette Special Edition

In Memory of Dave Smith

12/10/1932 - 08/31/2020

Director's Letter

September 2020

Greetings,

Special Edition of the STL Gateway Gazette

I'm pleased to share with you a Special Edition of the STL Gateway Gazette, dedicated to our beloved friend Dave Smith.

While attending Dave's visitation, funeral, and our club meeting that followed on Saturday, all memories shared of Dave included; he was a "car guy", a "people person", "he will be missed", and "play ball".

A car-guy, for sure. The short time I knew Dave, he had somewhat of an eclectic taste for cars, everything from a VW Bug named Herbie to a Jaguar. On the GM side of the family, he owned an Oldsmobile and for our Love of Buick, he owned a couple of Riviera's and finally a LaCrosse. He loved Ford products as well; Model-A's to his Lincoln Continental, with a few Mustangs in between. But all in all, I think if you could nail him down, the Model A was probably his first love.

I have a little bit of a problem simply thinking of Dave as a car guy. I've known "Car-Guys" who put their car in front of God, family, friends, and all else. I've often said, "as much as I like cars, the people I like the least, are people who like cars." In that sense, Dave may have been passionate about cars, but he was way more than just a car guy.

People-Person, most definitely. With every make of car he owned, it gave him an excuse to join another club. So, car-guy or people-person? Did he buy a car for the love of the car, or did he buy a car so he could join another club and make new friends? I think his love of friends far exceeded his passion for cars...

Dave will be missed, Absolutely...!!! Club meetings, both Buick and Oldsmobile, Dave was the official greeter, he sat next to the front door and was the first to greet everyone who entered, with either a handshake or a hug, but always a with a smile.

Play ball; The STL Gateway Chapter – BCA, now has two traditions to Memorialize members past; **The Pledge of Allegiance** of the United States which is said at the beginning of all meetings and started by Paul Meyer, and now “Play ball” as signaled by Dave Smith, to start the meeting.

And finally: There’s a very shallow saying among car guys; “He who dies with the most toys wins.” Yes, Dave had his share of toys in life, but they were not his primary passion. Dave’s passion was the friends he made connected to the cars he owned. If the real saying was “He who dies with the most friends wins” then we all would agree: **Dave’s the winner...!!!**

All for now
Enjoy!

Chet

David D. Smith - Obituary

December 10, 1932 - August 31, 2020

David was predeceased by his parents, three sisters, son Gary and grandson Jerry Flynn. Born in Kansas City, he came to St. Louis in 1966 to work for McDonnell-Douglas as a Spacecraft Electronics Engineer on Apollo 9, 10, 11, 12 and Gemini projects. Later he worked 20 years in audio-visual repair for the Hazelwood School District. Just before he was set to deploy to Korea, orders changed; and he was assigned stateside during the Korean War at Dugway Proving Ground where testing of chemical and biological weapons were taking place. He served as a cook, also worked in the motor pool, and kept the theater running.

David loved his family, his dogs, old cars, and club functions—especially when food and friends were involved. He loved being the official greeter at his car club activities and was never at a loss for words. He could always be depended on to figure out how something worked and how to fix it – old cars, electronics, or just about anything. Up to his last breath, he was even trying to fix himself.

He is survived by his wife Louise, of 56 years of marriage, sons Steven and Larry (Glenda), daughters Pamela (Ken) Kuschwara, Angela Lee, many grandchildren and great-grandchildren – including one boy who just turned one-year-old. David was greatly loved, will be greatly missed and never forgotten.

Just like after reciting the pledge of allegiance at his car club meetings, in Dave’s own words, “PLAY BALL!”

Member Spotlight

Dave Smith

By Ted Becker



Have you ever wondered the true definition of a “car guy”? Well, look no further than this month’s member spotlight, Dave Smith. When asked how many cars Dave has owned over his life, he said there have been so many he could not begin to count. Was it 100? “Oh heavens, more than that.”

Dave was born and raised in Kansas City where he went to Paseo High School. While in his senior year, he participated in a class project to take large rocks and spell out “Paseo” on the hillside in front of the school. It took the better parts of a couple months to complete since some of the rocks were more like boulders.

After high school, he began his longtime career as a TV and radio repairman. This business, either on a full or part time basis, lasted over 40 years.

Dave met and married his first wife Victoria Ann Kennedy a few years after high school. This union produced 3 sons. Tragically, Victoria succumbed to cancer in 1961, leaving Dave a very young widower with 3 young sons.

Prior to the birth of their boys, Dave enlisted in the Army Reserves. After a year of service, he was called to active duty just as the Korea War was breaking out. He was assigned to the Chemical Warfare Division at Dugway Proving Grounds in Utah, prior to what he assumed was to be an overseas assignment. As fate would have it, the company cook was injured in training and was going to be out of action for 6 months. Somehow, Corporal Dave was able to convince his company commander that his culinary skills would equal that of any of the finest chefs in the country. Either his line worked or out of pure desperation, he was assigned cook duties that would last until his discharge 3 years later.

A few years after Victoria’s passing, his youngest son, Gary, had a very cute young teacher by the name of Louise. Dave attended a school open house of which Louise was the master of ceremonies. During her presentation, the microphone went dead. Dave sprang into action by going out to his truck, getting his electronics tool kit, coming back into the school and fixing the

mic. Giving it back to Louise, she must have been smitten with this fine young and handsome talented guy.

They began seeing each other socially and the romance blossomed. At the end of the school year, she went back to her original home on Long Island, NY. Dave knew he could not be without this fine lady and proposed via mail. She accepted, they were married at the courthouse and honeymooned in Estes Park, Colorado. They have now recently celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary. Dave and Louise had 2 daughters and their blended family has 7 grandchildren and 5 great grandchildren.



DAVE AND LOUISE WITH STEVE DODSON AT THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY PICNIC

Dave began a life thereafter of burning the candle at both ends, the middle and the next one over. He maintained his TV repair business, he worked for the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC), went to night school at Central Technical Institute (eventually receiving an Electrical Engineering degree) and coached his son's baseball team. Sleep was a pretty rare commodity for Dave in those years.

He was a Senior Design Engineer at the AEC working on the Thor missile program. His immediate supervisor announced that he was leaving AEC and going to work for McDonnell Aircraft Company in St Louis and wanted Dave to join him there. He took a day off work and went to St Louis for a job interview. While on his interview, he was able to spend time with James McDonnell (also known as Mr. Mac) in his office. During their conversation, a janitor happened to come by the office. Mr. Mac went out and spoke to the janitor inquiring about his wife who was in the hospital at the time. The man thanked Mr. Mac for stopping by the hospital to visit his wife, giving her a bouquet of flowers and a box of candy. Any man who would pay that amount of attention to the family of a janitor was the kind of man that Dave wanted to work for, so he accepted the offer.

His time at McDonnell was spent working with a team of 7 doing astronaut training on the Gemini program. During one of the training sessions, he heard a loud bang that shook the

building. Tragically, a F101 Voodoo fighter jet was being piloted by two of the astronauts who were making a landing during overcast conditions and hit the top of Dave's building. The ensuing fireball hit about 50 feet from Dave's desk. Had he been at his desk instead of on a training session, who knows how that could have turned out.

Dave very much enjoyed his time at McDonnell and decided in 1994 that his 28 years in their employ was enough and it was time to join the "every day is Saturday" club.

So how did Dave develop his love of cars? His dad was a master mechanic on the Police Department in Kansas City and a 3-time Missouri state motorcycle racing champion. He drove motorcycles with reckless abandon which earned him the nickname of "Daredevil Smith".

Dave was fascinated with his father's passion and knowledge of all things mechanical and tried to absorb as much from him as a young boy could.

At the tender age of 14, Dave figured it was time to buy his first car. He found a pretty decent 1934 Chevrolet that was for sale for \$35 but would only move a foot in either direction. Telling his dad the problem, he diagnosed the problem as a key coming out of the differential gear shaft and lodging between the ring and pinion gears. At his dad's direction, Dave got a new woodruff key and fixed the car in the owner's driveway completing the transaction.

From that time on, he was hooked on cars. He has owned cars of most manufacturers, but Buicks hold a special place in his heart. While in high school, he bought a 32 Buick Roadster for \$37.50 that had a large hole in the water jacket manifold along the side of the block. He made a new manifold in shop class and fitted it to his prized Buick. Shortly thereafter, he sold that Buick for \$300 and moved on to more and more cars. All told, he figures he has owned around a half dozen Buicks.

Dave also has had a passion for Model A Fords. He figures that he has owned about 30 of them through the years. His most recent Model A was a 1930 Deluxe coupe with dual side-mounts and a rumble seat. Over the course of his 20 years of ownership, he drove the car about 100,000 miles. His longest distance was to a national meet in Breckenridge, Colorado. He only sold that car about 3 years ago to one of his brother Shiners who uses it mostly for parades.

At one time, Dave owned 15 cars. One day, Louise told Dave, "Dave, you have got to sell some of those cars." Her idea of an ideal fleet size and Dave's, differed substantially, but he did pare it down to 7. He now has his 2013 Buick LaCrosse as his daily driver, a 1994 Lincoln Town Car with 17,000 original miles and a very cool 1998 Jaguar XJ8 roadster.

Dave's interest in life extends far beyond cars. He belongs to over a dozen clubs of various interests. The variety of clubs includes: Jazz music, radio, railroad, cars and fraternal. He has

been a 60-year Mason and a recently joined Shriner. His car clubs include: Archway Oldsmobile, Volkswagen, Show Me, Fords Unlimited, V8 Ford, Mustang, 3 separate Model A clubs along with our Gateway Buick club.

He joined our club after attending the National Meet that our club sponsored in 1997. Dave would probably not state his favorite club, but I'm sure the Gateway Buick Club is at the top of his list. He has been an "At large" board member for quite some time and is present at most club events. He attends each and every club meeting at Sports Café and is the first person there. He sits at the front table and greets each member as they arrive. We all turn to Dave at the conclusion of the Pledge of Allegiance as he loudly proclaims, "Play Ball!!".

We are so very fortunate to have Dave in our midst, a man who has a wonderful and charming personality and who has never met a stranger. A true car guy and a very good friend to all.



Member Spotlight -Dave Smith from 2012

By Steve Dodson

Dave Smith This month's "Member Spotlight" is on Dave Smith, who is a 12-year member of the Gateway Chapter, BCA. He's been married for 43 years, has five children, eight grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. Dave currently owns a 1930 Ford Model A; a 1963 VW Bug (Herbie); a 1983 Buick Riviera Convertible; a 1994 Lincoln Town Car; and a 1996 Ford Mustang GT. In addition to our club, he is a member of numerous other area car clubs. Dave is a very active member of our club and enjoys driving his Buick to



most local club outings, and when available, he is always willing to volunteer to do the cooking at these events. When asked what his favorite car EVER was, he said his 1930 Model A. When asked why, Dave said well, he has owned it for 27 years and just enjoys driving it the most! Dave is retired after 20 years with the McDonnell Douglas Corporation working as a space craft engineer. He worked with astronauts in ground support operations (Dave met several astronauts through the years). Before that, he worked 13 years as a radar engineer for the “THOR” missile operation in Kansas City, MO. Dave served our country for three years in the U.S. Army as a cook. In addition to all this, somehow, he found time to run his own business as a TV repairman for 40 years. In addition to working on his old cars, he enjoys woodworking and making things.

Remembrance of Dave Smith

By Ted Becker

Dave Smith was my friend. Not just any friend, but a very special friend. How did it all start? I moved to the St Louis area in 2007. Although I was passionate about my Buicks, I was not real active in the Gateway Buick club. Over the years, I got more involved and started to feel like I was “one of the guys”.

My engineering career was as an engine design and development engineer. Feeling the desire to share some of my knowledge, I wrote several technical articles for the Gazette and made a few presentations at the club meeting. Dave was all eyes and ears for those tidbits of knowledge that I shared with the club. He would always ask questions during and after my presentations or call me at a later time for more knowledge. I could tell this was a guy I could really get to enjoy talking to.

Over the years, our phone conversations became more frequent and more in-depth. As I took over the editorship of the Gazette, Dave would religiously call me after reading it to tell me how much he enjoyed it and ask for further details about something that was in the Gazette. As time went on, either Dave would call me or vice versa about once a week and we’d talk for at least a half hour. Let me correct a bit of that, I would *listen* to Dave for about a half hour trying to get in a word edgewise. Man, that guy could talk!!

One year, Mary and I took Dave with us to the Holiday party at CJ Muggs in Webster Groves. On the way back, Dave was telling some of his stories in great detail. I am not that familiar with that part of town and was having trouble hearing the GPS on the car and trying to get on the right track. Dave was talking and I had trouble concentrating and hearing what Miss GPS was telling me. I knew I had to have Dave tone it down, but I didn’t know how to tactfully tell him that. I said “Dave, I need to concentrate here.” Dave replied, “Oh, I guess I just need to shut up.”

As the years piled up on Dave, he became less mobile and had trouble getting around and doing all the things he used to enjoy doing. As a means of helping out my friend, I would take him with me to various events. Sometimes I'd go over to his house prior to club meetings and we'd talk or play a game of pool. Game of pool – now that was a spectacle. I'm not sure how long a typical game of pool lasts, but ours would go on for at least an hour making fools of ourselves in the process. We'd then go the meeting together and Dave would take his usual seat just to the left of the entry door. Always, Dave was the first to arrive at the meetings. Regardless of who our waitress would be, he'd manage to get a nice hug from her and give us all a wink.



Dave (in the white shirt) can be seen sitting with Monica at his usual spot just to the right of the doorway. Picture taken at the August 2013 meeting.

One of Dave's standards at all functions was his Korean War Vet hat. He was very proud of his service during that awful event in world history. Thank you, Dave, for your service!



Dave front and center at a Veteran's Day recognition meeting.

Dave owned who knows how many cars over his lifetime. He reached a point where he just needed to pare down his collection. He wanted to sell his '83 Riviera, but it needed some mechanical work and a detailing. I more than gladly stepped up to do that for him and he was able to send it on to a new owner. Then he had a VW Beetle that was painted in the "Herbie the Love Bug" scheme. It also needed some TLC, which I gladly provided. I even drove the car in the Wentzville Car Cruise, which was a really fun event. Trying unsuccessfully to sell it on his

own, he took it to Fast Lane to get them to buy it. His clutch leg about gave out on him as he pulled it into the lot and almost crashed it into one of the cars on their lot. He knew he would be a hazard driving it home again, so he made a deal with them on the spot.

We went to the Hazelwood Baptist Church car show together that same year and spent the day burning our brains out in the hot sun. He drove the Riviera and I drove the VW. Great day we had together that I will always remember.



Dave and his '83 Riviera at that cold and blustery 2018 Easter Show

I had surgery on my big toe last year just about this time and was off my feet for 6 very long weeks. Dave let me borrow his scooter so I could have some sense of mobility. I really looked forward to going out to the

mailbox each day in that scooter and managed to drive it up and down the street before I got the mail. It gave me a great sense of freedom. Thank you, Dave.

My grandfather, Gustave Adolphus Becker, was a very prominent man in my hometown of Belleville, Illinois. My cousin nicknamed him BooPoo, so that is what we all called him. He died when I was 5, so my recollections of him are minimal. One day, when I was in high school, my dad was telling me about the kind of man BooPoo was and how I should try to emulate him in any way that I could. He told me that, when BooPoo died, there were 500 people who came to his funeral and/or visitation. I've thought about that often over the years and thought who I would ever know that would have a similar stature in the community to duplicate that. Well, the short answer is, Dave Smith. I have been amazed over the years the number of people I have run into in various venues who also knew Dave. I'd mention in conversation my love of Buicks and they'd say, "Oh, I know a guy in that club, his name is Dave Smith".

Dave loved lots of things. He loved his beloved wife Louise. He loved his Yorkie dogs. He loved his family. He loved cars. Most importantly, however, Dave loved people. He would self-assign himself the task of greeter at car shows, sitting in his scooter at the entrance and greet each car as it entered the show. More often than not, the response would be "Hey, good morning Dave." He would often tell me that he belonged to 11 different clubs and organizations. He belonged to the Masons, the Shriners, a railroad club, the Model A club, the VW club, the Oldsmobile club, the Early Ford V8 club, Fords Unlimited and the Gateway

Buick club. There are others as well, but I don't remember them all. He would never tell me his favorite club, but I got the distinct impression it was the Gateway Buick club. He rarely missed a club function and always seemed to be the center of attention. He is one of those rare people who everyone seemed to like and be comfortable in his presence.

He was really good and knowledgeable about all things mechanical and electrical. Computers – not so much, that was Louise's task. She'd print out the Gazette for him each month so he could read it. He never had an email address or even wanted to be around those new-fangled computers. His basement was full of his many projects that he was either in the process of completing or one of his past accomplishments. He had several juke boxes that he had restored. He had wood working tools. He had cabinets full of vacuum tubes, resistors, and capacitors. Though he could no longer do the tedious work that he used to be able to do, his mind was still as bright and fresh as it ever was. I loved hearing him tell of his projects and how he did the work he needed to do.

As far as cars, I think his true love was Model A Fords. He owned many of them over the years and regularly attended national and regional events. When Dave and I would be talking about cars, the conversation always seemed to get back to Model A Fords. He really liked cars, but the Model A seemed to hold a special spot in his heart.

As we all say our sad farewells to Dave, we will always carry on his Pledge of Allegiance ritual. At the end of the Pledge, it would get quiet for a few seconds and Dave would say "Play Ball". I'm sure it is a tradition we will all carry on in his remembrance. So, Dave, just look down on us the first Monday in the month and lead us in the saying of "Play Ball". We will miss you, Dave, but your spirit will live on in our hearts.

Member Memories of Dave Smith

Bruce Kunz - I'm sorry to hear about the loss of Dave. He was always a gentleman, friendly, always with a smile on his face enjoying his Buicks at club picnics at the Plantation House. My wife Kathy and I always enjoyed hosting the summer picnics for the Gateway Chapter BCA and friends! Dave will be dearly missed by many friends, family, and club members.

Monica Ledwon - This is indeed a sorrowful time losing Dave Smith. Here is my memory.

In my heart, Dave Smith will never be forgotten. He was always so happy to see me and asked how I was doing in retirement. Dave told me he knew how to enjoy retirement. Get your cup of coffee in the morning, go out on the front porch and wave to every neighbor going to work. Do this in the wintertime and it's especially fun!

His boundless enthusiasm for the multiple car clubs he belonged to amazed me. And he always had a word of mechanical advice for my Regal when I needed it. I was lucky to have the pleasure of knowing this man.

John Midkiff - Sad news indeed! I will really miss him. Play Ball Dave.

Kitty Lasinski - We will miss Dave so much. ❤️

Gene Bossaller - I loved Dave Smith. Tears come in my eyes. " Play Ball Dave"

Mark Kistner - Always enjoyed talking to Dave, remember him sitting at the entrance tent at the Shriners shows and greeting me with a big hello and a smile. Will truly be missed

John Lasinski - Will really miss that guy. Sorry to hear.

Al Tornabeni - Very sad to hear - Dave was one of those guys you would always enjoy being around and havin' a beer with. Play Ball!

Geoff Lockett –

Geoff Lockett is a pretty special person!

At least that was the way Dave made me feel whenever we talked, and I had to snap out of it. Just a very easy guy to be around, socialize with and visit with. When the movie Midway was in theaters a few months ago Dave and I went to see it at the B&B in Wentzville since at the B&B you can buy a meal (cheeseburgers & fries this time!) and take it to your reserved powered recliner to watch the movie. We were in for a great time, and there were no disappointments! I drove & covered admission and Dave insisted on paying for dinner. He got the bigger bill and would have no part of me chipping in the difference. Dave wore a 'Korean Veteran' ball cap and after the movie, several people thanked him for his service. I really enjoyed seeing that and Dave's earnest response of thanks.

There was no shortage of conversation during the drive both ways, and conversation ranged across so many subjects I can't recall them all, but it was fun and I learned a few things. Did you know that the lane nearest the median is the "outside lane"? I didn't!

Dave related to me the loss of his first wife and how he met Louise. What a great story - his children's schoolteacher became personally involved in their lives, eventually marrying Dave. I heard about his Army service, his crash off the I 270 bridge at I 64, about Herbie, about a (mouthwatering) very low mileage 80's or 90's Lincoln we saw at Country Classic Cars in Staunton last year, about how he appreciated his neighborhood and neighbors, about the Christmas lawn ornaments he made out of plywood, about how he purchased homes for his children - just about a lot of stuff that in every case was uplifting. Even the story about the

crash, as Dave was grateful for his recovery and even though it angered him, he harbored no bitterness toward the careless driver who caused it. He relayed it like a serious adventure, but an adventure regardless.

When someone treats you with deference and respect, as Dave always did, it's important to remind yourself that it isn't a testament about you at all, but about him.

I miss Dave and will never forget him.

Jeff Johnson - When I moved to St Louis over 20 years ago, I came with my 1930 Model A and 1951 Buick and decided that I should join the respective local car clubs to advance my learning and get some help when needed. At my first meeting of the Missouri Valley Model A Restorers Club, all the new members introduced themselves and Dave Smith made a point of coming over and introducing himself and welcoming me to the club. Everyone there was very nice, but Dave seemed to go out of his way to meet me and make me feel welcome. He let me know about the local Buick Club and it was sometime later, possibly over 10 years ago, I drove my 51 Buick to attend the Paul Meyer Oil Spill on a cold, rainy, spring morning at Paul's shop. I had not met anyone in the club as yet, but Dave was there and immediately made the connection and welcomed me to the group of Buick club members that had assembled. I got a lot of advice that day about my car, but what I remember most was Dave's kindness and the fact that he made the extra effort to make me feel part of the group. From what I have learned from the emails about Dave, from both the Model A group and our Buick club members, was that he was just that kind of a guy with everyone.....a real ambassador of the old car hobby.



After being cooped up in the hospital for an extended period of time, Dave was able to come home for a weekend to see his dogs and enjoy his home.

Funeral Procession and Burial at Jefferson Barracks Cemetery





A Note from Louise Smith

I would like to say thank you to each and every one of you who helped our family cope with our loss of David. We all know he was a “people person”. He’s never known a stranger. He’s probably in Heaven even now greeting the newcomers. The calls, cards, flowers, and presence at visitation were comforting. We’re sure he loved all the cars in the procession to Jefferson Barracks and thank you all so much. Thank you for your prayers and presence on his journey.

Louise