

Member Spotlight

Richard and Vera Self



This month we feature Richard and Vera Self. We met Richard at the Regionals here in St Louis back in 2012 when he was still in progress on his 57 Buick projects. Pictured above is his 2 door sedan as taken at the Love's Park picnic in 2016.

Richard and Vera are faithful attenders at most club events and rarely miss a meeting. That is quite a feat since they live in Bonne Terre and it is a 65 mile drive from their house to Sports Café in Bridgeton. We don't have a long distance award, but, if we did, they would get it every time.

Richard was born and raised in Festus, Missouri and attended high school there. After high school, Richard regularly attended a dance hall in Herculaneum where he met Vera. He was working at a hamburger stand where Vera and her friends would come to eat and visit with Richard. After a courtship, they were married on February 16, 1962. If my math is correct, that means they will be celebrating their

58th anniversary this month.

Their marriage has produced 2 sons, Richard Jr and Michael. If you attended this past Shriner's Car Show, you will remember them helping out with parking cars and working the raffle tables. They also have a granddaughter who is a Junior at Truman State University and a grandson who just graduated from high school.

Richard has been a lifelong car fan, as were many young men of that age group. His first car was a 1939 Plymouth business coupe that had previously been owned by his 2nd grade teacher. A friend of his bought the car from the teacher and upgraded the car to a later model engine and other goodies. Richard then bought the car from his friend.

Richard stepped up the career ladder from the hamburger stand to begin what turned into a 40 year career at the Chrysler assembly plant in Fenton. He began on the vehicle assembly line and progressed up to a line inspector and repairman. Cars he owned from there on out were primarily Chrysler product cars. His all time favorite car was a 1966 Dodge Polara 2 door hardtop. The car was really sharp with yellow paint, light colored interior, bucket seats and a console. A 318 engine powered the car through a Chrysler A727 Torqueflight transmission. This was the first car he owned that turned over 100,000 miles on the odometer. Unfortunately, he was driving home late from work one evening and feel asleep at the wheel. He then learned that trying to use a guardrail as a blocking dummy only results in a lot of bent sheet metal and a few bumps and bruises. So much for that car!!

So, what ever possessed him to get into Buicks, you might ask? Well, we can thank Vera for that. She saw this "project car" 1957 Buick 2 door hardtop in a used car lot and suggested that Richard might want to take that on as a retirement project. He bought the car and embarked upon a 7 year "frame off" restoration project. The car is now complete and he won a trophy with the car at this past year's Shriner's Car Show. Good for you Richard!! And a better "good for you" to Vera for turning Richard into one of our own.



The “Self Boys” with their trophy at the Shriners’ Show