

READY, SET, GO!

My Life at General Motors, Cadillac,
Oldsmobile, Opel, and Isuzu



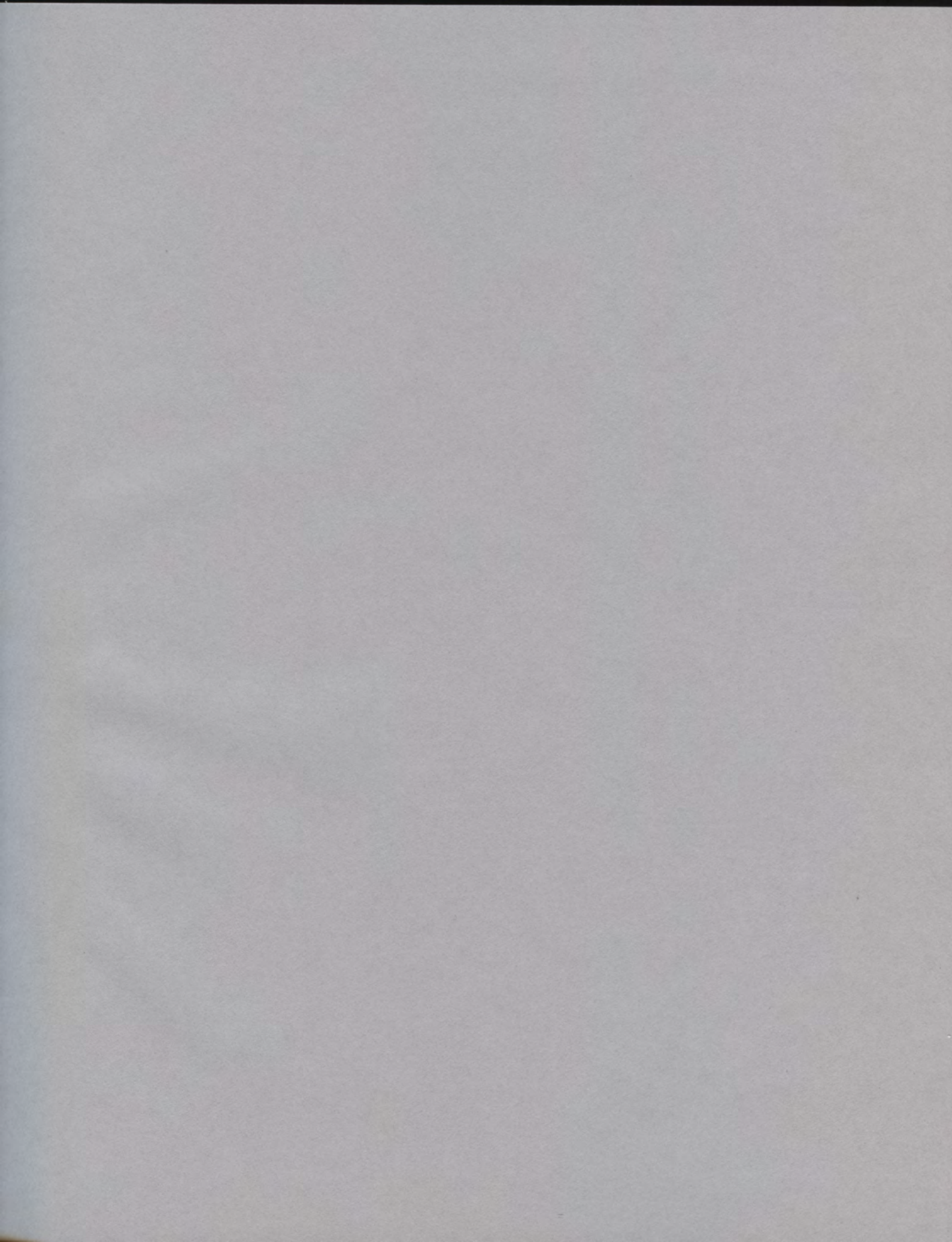
JOHN O. GRETTEMBERGER



Jane & Krista

John, Ann & Krista



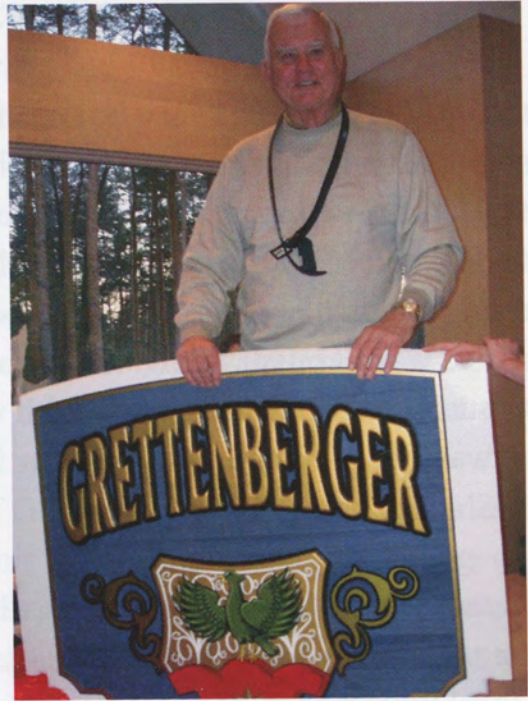
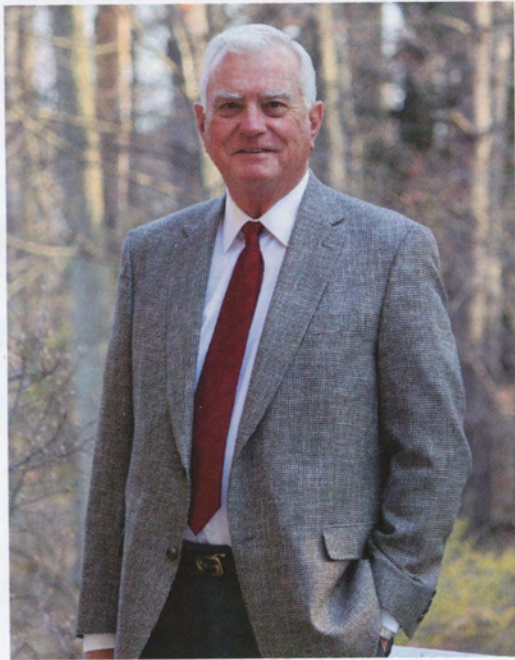


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By John O. Grettenberger

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FORWARD

I thought Dad should title the book “My Life On The Move”, but maybe that was just the perspective of everyone else in the family. While I had moved a mere 13 times before attending college, Mom, Dad & Sister Ann had already had a few career moves under their belt before I even came onto the scene. There is no doubt about it, Dad was (and remains) constantly on the move. When he wasn't busy with work he was always busy with the family. Sure, that usually had something to do with work around the house and chores, but there was also a good deal of time for family fun and travel – both throughout the US and Internationally.

Even today, now that Dad is supposedly “retired”, he can't just kick back and relax. And while Mom does like to sit down and read a book once in a while, she is really just as busy as Dad. They seem to be enjoying retirement, but it still looks a lot like work to me.

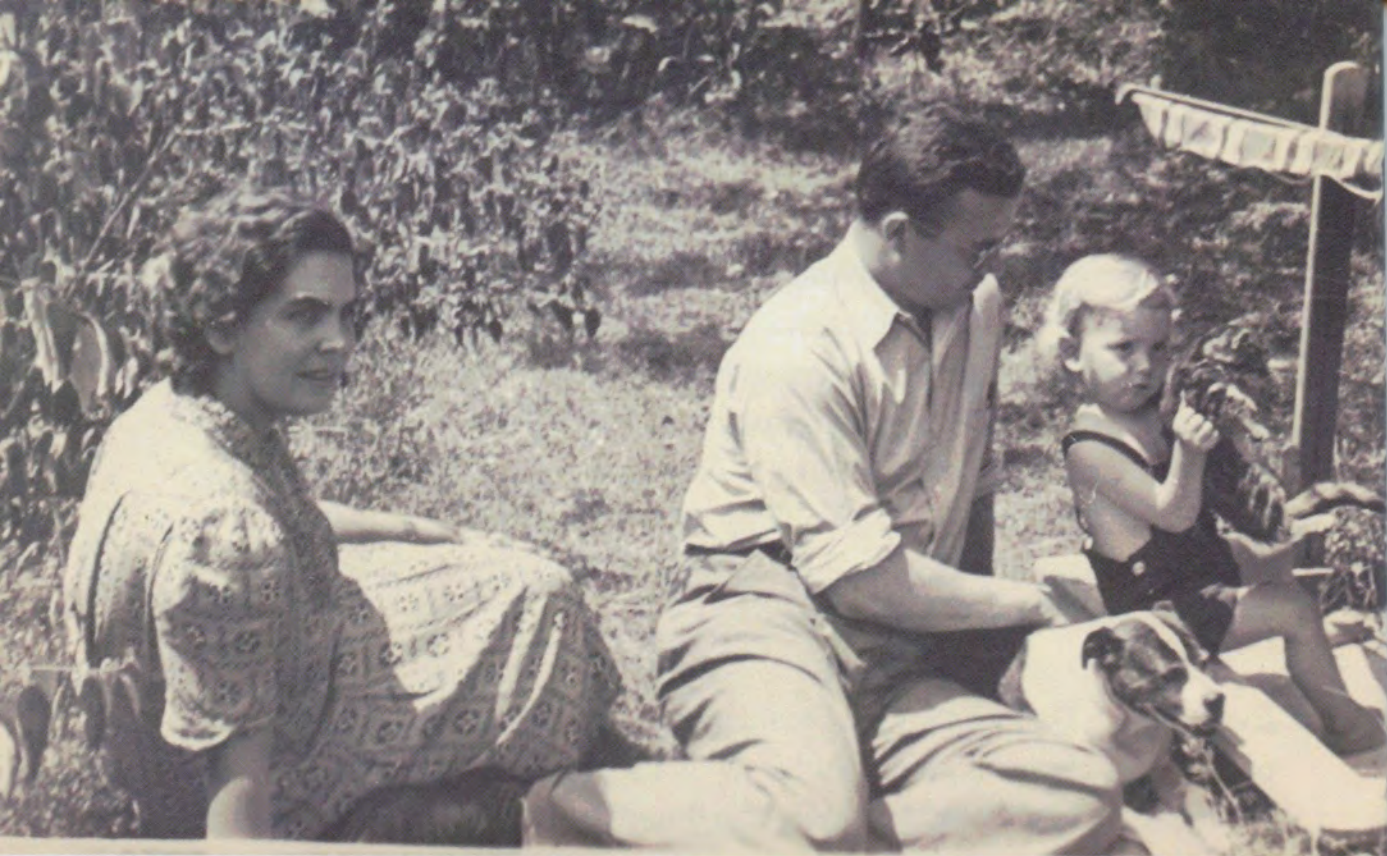
I was all set to try to follow in Dad's footsteps with a career in General Motors, but in 1993, while I was working in Chicago as a District Sales Manager for Pontiac, Dad suggested a career change for me. LorAnn Oils, the flavorings business founded by Gramps (O.K. Grettenberger), was in need of new management and he convinced both me and my cousin Beth's husband Carl Thelen to leave the adventures of GM for a solid, but somewhat sedentary life as small business operators back in Lansing. It's truly a family business, with cousins Beth and Laura, my wife, Sandy, and a slew of grandkids all working toward bringing Gramps' vision to its full potential. Dad, and his dog, Sam, come in almost every day to lend guidance, support, solid sales and marketing advice, and he even sweeps the floors on occasion. We are all very lucky to be able to work together well. There are many family businesses that live a different story!

Since that move back to LorAnn, Ann, Krista and I have settled down to be permanent residents in Michigan – no more moving for us. However, there was a lot to like about all that travel growing up. Mom and Dad have continued the tradition by organizing (and footing the bill!) for some twelve amazing family trips over the years, to places like Hawaii, the Caribbean, Italy, and Eastern Europe. The eight grandkids are seasoned travelers, although their standards (thanks to Mom and Dad) run a bit too high for their parents' pocketbooks!

Even though Dad was a Vice President of General Motors and General Manager of Cadillac, his most important legacy is his family. Our bonds are strong, and we actually enjoy being together! Of course, much of the credit for who we are as brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, aunts and uncles, goes straight to Mom-- "Saint Jane"—as she's been called many times. Mom is the kindest, most loving person you'll ever meet; an outstanding role model for us and an amazing partner for our father. We are truly blessed.

I suppose I've said enough, and it's time to turn this story over to Dad, now. He's getting antsy, I'm sure. Are you Ready? Set? Go!

John O. Grettenberger, Jr.



Laura & Orin Grettenberger with ME and dog Pat!

THE EARLY YEARS

I wonder how many people are convinced that they have lived in the very best of times? I have a feeling that the older you get the more you think about these things, and that the answer to this question is more likely to be “yes”. I know it is in my case. From 1937 on, I’ve experienced what life was like before television, putting men on the moon and bringing them back, and what it was like to witness World War II, the Korean War, Viet Nam, Iraq 1 and 2, and now, Afghanistan. I flew many times on old-time twin-engine commercial planes and later on the supersonic Concorde. I’ve gone from an antique Marchant calculator and an “adding machine” to an Apple I-Pad. Jane and I survived for a time on \$222.30 per month with bank balances that never got above three figures. My first communications other than mail were with dial telephones on “party” lines with the number of rings indicating whether or not an incoming call was for you or someone else. Now I can stay in contact with anyone I wish, or conduct business at ease, with personal computers at the

speed of light. There's no need for sets of encyclopedias; I can find out whatever I want to know in an instant.

What I am saying is that while I started life in a much different era, I have had the opportunity to witness progress at an astounding pace. I can't say that the old days were best, even though I loved them, but I am glad that I was privileged to be a part of all that happened during the last 70-odd years. For me, taken as a whole, this period of time was the "best of times".

Unlike what I created for my children, I have very deep roots. I regret this because "where I came from" has been very important to me and I never had to think about where I got my start...something I'm sure Ann, John, and Krista have had to think about when asked that question. I was born in Okemos, Michigan, in a brick house at 4707 North Okemos Road. No hospital for my sister Ann and me...just an experienced practical nurse and a local doctor who came when called.

Our great-great-grandfather (ur-ur-grossvater) came to the United States in the mid-1840's from Afalterbach, in the German Kingdom of Wirttemberg. He first settled in Ann Arbor where he learned of "school land" being offered at a low price in the area surrounding the little community of Okemos. Being a Swabian from southwest Germany, who are known to this day as being the "Scotsmen" of Germany, Johann Georg, with his oldest son, walked the 60 miles to Okemos and made a purchase. He became the first Grettenberger to settle in Okemos. Since that day the family has grown with a number of descendants still in central Michigan as a result of each generation having had more than one or two children. His home, built in 1854, still stands as an attraction in the Meridian Historic Village, since it represents that period's architecture in country home construction.

My father, Orin K. Grettenberger was a pharmacist and owned the town's only drug store. He was also the postmaster of Okemos and possessed an entrepreneurial spirit that resulted in him building a number of buildings which were to house new businesses in the town. "OK" was a "Jeffersonian Democrat", and became a close friend of Governor G. Mennen "Soapy"

Williams. Williams appointed him Director of the Michigan Board of Pharmacy, a position he held for eleven years. In that role, Dad was an early pioneer in support of the use of generic drugs in lieu of name brands and testified before the U. S. Senate (Kefauver Committee) to seek recognition of generic drug advantages for public use. He also founded Lorann Oils, a flavoring and essential oil business which became quite successful and is owned and managed by the family today. Equal shares are owned by sister Ann's family and mine, and since 1993, Ann's son-in-law, Carl Thelen, and my son, John, work closely together, sharing management responsibility.

My mother, Laura Ann (Woodworth) Grettenberger, was a close friend of my father in their school years, became sweethearts in high school, and they married shortly after they graduated from college. She was a wonderfully devoted mother, active in the community, and a real partner with my father, working with him in the drug store for many years. Following my father, she was also named Postmaster of Okemos and held that position for a number of years. She provided the strong guidance, character, and loving presence that my sister Ann and I needed as we grew up together.

Both our mother and father loved horses...especially harness horses. Trotters and Pacers. They not only owned race horses most of their lives, they achieved many important awards for their efforts, and Dad was head of the Michigan Harness Association for a number of years. He was successful in helping to sponsor legislation to reward the industry for breeding and racing Michigan bred and born horses, improving the lives of horsemen throughout the state and increasing revenue to Michigan.

Ann and I were fortunate to have outstanding grandparents on both sides of our parent's family. Our mother's parents, Philo and Nettie Woodworth, were successful farmers in the area, having first started on land that was later acquired by Michigan State University, and then re-located to east Hamilton road in Okemos. Grandpa Philo was a Republican, and Grandma Nettie was a Socialist...leading to many spirited discussions between them. On our father's side, John O. and Minnie C. Grettenberger were apothecary and general store owners and operators in Okemos from the turn of the century until 1935, when

Grandpa turned the business over to son Orin, who moved it to the main four corners of Okemos soon thereafter. Grandpa John was a successful businessman, and Grandma Minnie taught school in Okemos (in German, for some time). Coincidentally, she once taught Nettie Spross (Woodworth), later to become her sister-in-law!

I attended elementary (kindergarten through 2nd grade) at a historic wooden school building that was located on the site of today's Okemos fire station. It had been in that location since the late 1800's and one thing I remember most about it was that it had a big metal tube as a fire escape for the second floor. It was fun to slide down it and made a great racket when you threw stones up it as hard as you could. The other thing I remember most was a big oak tree that grew near the corner of the schoolyard, and that tree is even larger today. It was a great spot to play marbles under its big limbs and all of us kids could gather under it.

We had a total of 43 classmates when we moved to the "big" school at the foot of Mt. Hope Road at Okemos Road. This was the consolidated school, grades three through twelve, resulting from us "townies" and all the other children bussed in daily from area school houses, many of which were the "one room" kind. We were a very tight group...and truly cared for each other. There was never a hint of bullying or mean or demeaning tricks. We had one boy that had a serious learning problem and we all knew he was special. We watched over him together, and he was with us every day of every year until the tenth grade when his parents pulled him out. He never lacked for attention or caring love. Not sure that would be the case today.

Being such a small high school, there was never such a thing as competition to make a team! We needed all the boys (there were no active girls sports, sad to say) to field our teams. Also there was no such thing as "organized" boys sports until high school. We played together on our own, choosing up sides for whatever game or sport we were playing. As we got older, we knew which kids were the athletes and which were not.

I played three sports all four years of high school...football (I was pretty slow,

but big, so they made me a tackle)...basketball (I later saw our basketball coach's evaluation of me ("he's pretty clumsy, but he tries hard"), and baseball...where I seemed to be best suited (I threw a no-hitter against Fowlerville one season).

I'll never forget that in 1953 lighted football fields were beginning to show up where schools were big enough to support them. Of course Okemos was not. We really wanted to play under the lights...so, with the help and blessing of George Richards our Superintendent and other of our school officials, we decided to raise the money ourselves to finance a lighted football field. We developed a bond program to generate capital for the job. I forget what the interest rate was that we quoted, but we all got together (all the students, not just the players) and sold five and ten year bonds to everyone and anyone we could. There were bonds for as little as \$25, but the \$100 dollar denomination was the one we really concentrated on. And a hundred dollars was a lot of money in 1953!

Long story short, we did it! What a thrill it was to run out on the field under Okemos High School's first lighted field. Even though the light wasn't anywhere near as good as those seen today, I'll never forget it.

We didn't have to pay extra to play high school sports back then, but we did contribute in other ways. The football lights were a good example. We also took it upon ourselves to care for the fields, tracks, equipment, uniforms, and supplies. We built our own football scoreboard. We raked, limed and prepared the baseball field and mound. We swept the basketball gym and cleaned it up daily...it was, you should know, our cafeteria during the day. We had a little of that "pride of ownership" in what we participated in.

I owe a great deal to one of my favorite and most respected teachers, Mrs. Thelma Lamb. We had a great relationship, from her being so upset with me that she threw a blackboard eraser, I ducked and it hit the boy in back of me in the head, to being my closest confidant in school! We may have been a small high school, but we had an exceptional teaching staff that really cared about their students. Mrs. Lamb was a government and civics teacher, along with

being an advisor to students in general, and she started helping me to begin to apply for a NROTC scholarship early in my junior year. It was very competitive, requiring a high grade point average, excellent physical exam results, a significant number of recommendations, and two interviews with senior navy officers. It provided me with full tuition, all books, and fees for special requirements, a fifty dollar per month stipend, and active duty pay at one-half of an Ensign's pay each summer. I had to take one additional course each semester to the required bachelor degree program, and attend a drill each week during the school year. I went on active duty each summer following about a week between end of school and the reporting date. This active duty period ended approximately one week before classes started in the fall.

Basically, all my father had to pay was my room and board, and as it turned out, my fraternity expenses. The summer "cruises" were hugely interesting and helpful in preparing for a navy commission. Between my freshman and sophomore year I went to Europe on the USS Albany CA-123, a heavy cruiser. Between my sophomore and junior year I went through the Marine Corps amphibious program at Virginia Beach, Virginia, and then to the Naval Air Station in Corpus Christi, Texas, for indoctrination to naval air, and specifically, anti-submarine seaplane operations. The final summer duty between my junior and senior year was on board the USS Kearsarge CVA- 33, an attack aircraft carrier in the Pacific. In return for the scholarship, I was required to remain on active duty a minimum of three years after graduation (it turned out to be nearly four years since I was extended at the time of the Cuban missile crisis). More about my Navy days later.

World War II year's made a strong impression on me. Even though I was only four and a half on December 7, 1941, I have some clear memories, even now, about our family receiving the first word from Pearl Harbor. It was a Sunday, of course, and we were about six hours ahead of Hawaii time zones. We had had a dinner that day with some of our relatives when the big console radio started to tell the story in horrifying terms. You could tell how excited the announcer was by the tone and speed of his voice. We huddled around the radio until we had heard the report over and over. There was no mistake. A little later the relatives went home and everything was quiet at our house.

It didn't take long before every boy I knew and every grown-up my parents knew became committed to the war effort. There were no exceptions. Every citizen, young and old, rallied to our President (Roosevelt), our Congressional leaders, our military, and our country. Volunteers for the armed services clamored to the recruiting stations. Shortly thereafter all major industries were committed to do their part towards the war effort. There was something that every American could do. The whole country was united.

My father tried to enlist in every service. Frustrated, he found that he was too old to be accepted. He was crushed, but still was determined to do his part in every way possible. I had an uncle who joined the navy and served on the USS Whale (SS-239), one of the war's most decorated submarines in the Pacific with eleven battle stars. Another uncle joined the Seabees and landed on Okinawa towards the end of the war witnessing the unbelievable fighting on that island that claimed the lives of 12,000 sailors alone. While there, he survived attacks by Kamakazi suicide planes that caused fearful destruction. My boyhood Okemos "hero" was Don Wilson, a B-17 pilot who was shot down three times over Germany, making it back twice...the third time he was killed. Our little town of Okemos was not different from other places, large or small. Blue stars hung in the windows of homes everywhere, and they were too often changed to gold ones as the war progressed.

There were a number of ways for us boys to help, too. Every week I took my wagon around my route and collected cans of cooking fat that had been saved by housewives to give to the war effort. I would then turn them over to one of the local grocers who would deliver the grease to centers for pick-up by munitions manufacturers. My friends and I would collect tin cans, cut the tops and bottoms out, smash them, and carry them off to salvage yards for all sorts of uses. We all bought savings bonds. Every school class sold twenty-five cent stamps to fill individual war bond "books" that when filled, at \$18.75, would be converted to a \$25.00 war bond, and then we would start another. Everything helped, and everyone contributed.

My grandmother Grettenberger was a knitter. All through the war years, she,

and thousands of women like her, knitted woolen khaki sweaters, scarves, hats, gloves, and socks for the soldiers who needed them. It was amazing to see her fingers and her needles moving so fast on this project. She gained real personal satisfaction for doing her part in helping some lucky soldiers stay dry and warm.

After the war when the men came home, things really started to perk up. There was tremendous demand for nearly everything, not just here in the United States but everywhere the war had left its mark. Returning military personnel were eager to use their "G.I. Bill" to enter college or trade schools. Factories were converting to production of much needed commercial goods, and, in Michigan, the auto plants re-started auto production from building airplanes, military goods and vehicles, and weapons. Many of the women who had been doing "men's work" in all sorts of areas, returned home to marry and start families. It was a happy time. The economy was on the move.

My family's drug store and other businesses in Okemos got better and better. "OK" was an innovator and actively sought new ways to generate business. A number of marketing actions were started by him, such as pick-up and delivery of prescriptions, and initiating an automatic system of keeping track of each customer's annual medicine expenditures to give to them free of charge at tax time. One of his "fun" things that really worked was to offer free movies at a long, sloping lawn that adjoined our drug store property. Keep in mind, no one had a television set...that came along about 1950 and it was years before people could afford it. Besides, early TV only appeared on one or two channels, in black and white, on small screens, and the programming left a lot to be desired when it did get underway.

Every Tuesday night, from late spring until fall, a traveling movie company would come by to start showing movies at dusk. We always had a serial to show first which ended at an exciting scene to encourage audiences to come back for the next week's installment. That would be followed by a full-length movie...two and sometime three "reelers", with short intermissions every time one reel ended and the operators needed to change reels. During the whole movie evening, I had my first real "job". Dad built a nice popcorn stand where

I made and sold popcorn by the box, and pop by the bottle. I made two cents on every ten-cent box and the same on pop. Some nights I made pretty good money. There was a catch, however. I had to clean up the lawn the next morning after viewers (my customers) had thrown away all those popcorn boxes and other stuff, too.

I remember we had a guy we called "Speed" who would come to the movies and sing and play an electric guitar before the movie and during the intermissions. He was a dishwasher at the Poplars (a nearby chicken restaurant), who always hoped he would be "discovered" and be offered a job in Hollywood. It never happened. A couple of friends and I saw that if Speed plugged his guitar a certain way into the electric outlet, it would shock him! We had a great time changing his plug when he wasn't looking and he would get a real poke when he slid the steel bar over his guitar strings!

Anyway, hundreds of folks from quite a radius of Okemos would come to town on "free" movie night. Some would bring folding chairs, others would spread blankets on the ground and lie back on them. Still more would stand or mill around all during the show. Everyone came into our drug store and had a variety of ice cream cones, dishes, milk shakes, or sodas. It was a big deal.

It was about that time (starting in the seventh grade), that I was given another (not so nice) job. For several years it was my duty to sweep and mop the drug store, and empty and burn all the previous day's trash before school! We had terrazzo floors in the store that my father was very proud of, and he was a stickler that they be clean...really clean. I can't remember him ever complimenting me on a good job. It was always, "there are streaks", or, "you didn't change the water enough!" Anyway, it was a discipline I learned to handle...it took quite a lot of time before I could head for school, and that meant an early start to my day.

Okemos had its share of characters for a small town. A couple who come to mind were Walter "Doc" Heathman and "Mart" Martin. They lived in the same house about a mile from the drug store and could be counted upon to show up every day a little after lunch-time, drunker than skunks. They were harmless,

good natured old guys that could be seen weaving back and forth across the sidewalk on their way to Grettenberger's liquor department. They really needed their CVC or Thunderbird wine by then and would each pick up a bottle for less than a dollar.

Another character was Dick LaBounte, a Spanish-American war veteran who lived next to the Okemos (Delind's) hardware. He would come in each day as well, and I can still hear his growly voice cry out "three and one". That always meant three cans of beer and one bottle of wine! His "house" was only a tarpaper shack with a tin roof, and he lived with at least four or five dogs. He only had a thumb and index finger on his left hand. Lost the three other fingers in the war, they say. My friend Gordie Piper and I would occasionally stand on the side of a hill across the street from Dick's place and arc walnuts up in the air to land on his tin roof. You can imagine the sound it made when the walnuts hit the tin. The dogs would all bark like hell, and LaBounte would come outside and yell at the dogs and us. One time he came boiling out with the biggest, long-barreled pistol I'd ever seen and started firing it up in the air. Needless to say we ran pretty fast to get away. Gordie and I still reminisce about it.

The final character I'll talk about was Herbie Dickman. The poor fellow was born with a deformed roof in his mouth that in those days could not be corrected in any way. His only family was his father, and he died before I became acquainted with Herbie. This defect obviously affected his ability to speak clearly. It also forced him to kind of "throw" his food to the back of his mouth in order to chew and swallow it. His speech problem and his eating presented an offensive sight to people who didn't know him, but nevertheless he was welcome in the community with understanding and open arms. My father and I, along with other close friends could understand him pretty well. Jim Korrey, owner of the Sip and Snack restaurant, allowed him to eat there free whenever he chose. If people objected to having him there in plain sight, Jim would explain why he was welcome, and if they still objected he would literally walk them out the door. No one ever fooled around with Jim Korrey...those that did ended up on their backs.

Herbie made his own way, no charities, by doing odd jobs, lawn work, and by selling vegetables he grew in his garden. My Dad, Jim Korrey, and Dee Delind (hardware owner) made sure Herbie had what he needed. Our town had four corners (Okemos and Hamilton Road crossing), but no stoplight, and only cars on Okemos Road had to stop. One day, a little girl who lived above the town post office was hit by a car in that intersection, hurt, but not life threatening. For days following that accident, Herbie stood in the center of the intersection directing traffic to make sure it didn't happen again. What a sight. I will never forget it. He cared so much for children. I'm not sure, but his actions may have had an influence on the county's decision to install our first traffic light at that location. I don't know, but it surely didn't hurt.

We had two churches in Okemos. Back at the turn of the century we had Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist churches, but the Presbyterian failed. Our family attended the Methodist, and as far back as I can remember, so did all our relatives. That's where my sister and I were baptized. When I was about ten or twelve, a terrible thing happened. Our family – Mom, Dad, Ann and me – were asked to leave the church. We lived just kitty-corner across the road from it, and it was only a long block from our family drug store. The “problem” was this. We sold alcoholic beverages in our store...it was a major part of our store's ability to make a profit. My Dad was given two choices...give up the liquor license, or leave the church. No matter that some of our best customers were members of the church! No matter that our store was only a few feet closer to the church than allowed by Methodist rules at that time! We left and started going to the Baptist church, but it was never the same again. Later, when my grandmother Grettenberger died, and my Dad was her executor, he found several letters from the then minister of our church chastising her about what a terrible thing it was to have a son who sold alcohol. Incredibly, as her executor, my father also had to transfer title to a sizeable piece of land adjoining the church property from her estate to the church, as her will instructed. As a condition of the transfer, Dad had some of those letters read at the church board meeting, before signing over his mother's gift to them.

The church resignation story and the gifting of land to that same church by my

grandparents was (and is) an interesting story. So was the Houghton Lake story, only this one concerns our maternal grandparents.

During the summer of 1937, Nettie and Philo Woodworth were visiting Houghton Lake, Michigan. They had been there before, liked it, and were hopeful of having a cabin there someday. Although it is Michigan's largest inland lake, at that time only the south and west sides were populated, and had roads to allow easy access to the little towns of Prudenville, Houghton Lake, and The Heights. There were no roads on the north shore, especially around North Bay.

After inquiries and consulting with their son (my uncle) Phillip, Nettie and Philo went by boat from The Heights with someone (either the land owner, or a realtor) into North Bay to look at a large piece of land that had not been occupied since the turn of the century when it was a part of a very large logging concern. Nettie got out of the boat and waded along the shoreline. She liked the wildness of it and recognized some potential for it. Philo was not so sure! He saw the need for a terrific amount of work! The property included approximately 700 feet of shoreline and was shaped like a flatiron, widening dramatically back from the lake to include approximately 25 acres. They bought it. I am told the price was about \$15 dollars a front foot, or \$10,000.00.

It would take some time before a road was gradually extended to meet one corner of the property where it stopped. At that point a long "driveway" (about 800 feet in length) was cut through the forest down to a point near the lake. It was about that point in time that my Grandfather died. As his estate was being processed, Nettie decided to divide the property into four equal parts and deed them to each of their four children: Phillip, Edna, Ruth, and my mother, Laura. Nettie would keep an interest in Ruth's share, and they would build a cabin together.

The land along the shoreline, and back a considerable way, was nothing but a swampy, un-cleared mixture of dead and living trees, stumps, and pools of water. Nevertheless, Nettie would live to see her cabin with daughter Ruth and

her husband Roland Howes.

It was just at the end of the war, 1945, I think, that my father and mother decided to build our cottage. They had the building spot cleared, stumped, and filled...most of it by hand with axes and shovels since no power tools existed to help. Sand was carried from the lake by wheelbarrow or pails to fill the holes, and to start seeding the "soil". Building materials were almost impossible to find. I can remember riding up there from Okemos with my father in a 1929 Reo, pulling a trailer with boards, cement and cinder blocks, windows and insulation, and who knows what else, to the site. Many times, we went. It seemed to take forever before the cottage was started, and even longer to finish. No electricity until my Dad purchased a small Delco plant that provided enough juice to power the pump and refrigerator, and a few light bulbs, too. Whenever we began to overload the Delco, and it began to stop, we would quickly turn things off before it would stop to keep it generating. All this considered, it was still our "heaven on earth" in this wild and at the same time, beautiful place.

Over time, my Dad acquired all of the property. Uncle Phillip died early, and his portion was allocated to the remaining three siblings. Aunt Edna, and her husband Redmond Cotter, traded their land to my father in exchange for a 23' inboard cruiser. It was shipped to where they lived in Sacramento, California, since they had no plans to return to Michigan. And finally, Dad purchased Aunt Ruth's land because it was not being used much, and they wanted the proceeds for other purposes.

We truly enjoyed Houghton Lake, and in my case (and later, Jane's too), it provided real roots when we were moving all over the United States and the world. The lake and the cottage were always there.

When my father and mother passed away, my sister Ann and I inherited the property and the cottage, which had aged to become pretty cranky by that time (1991). Dad had sold lots on either end of our shoreline, but most of the property was left intact. Sister Ann and her husband, Sy Shaver, let it be known that they wanted to sell their half to go seriously into the raising, racing, and selling of standard bred trotters and pacers, a love that they actually acquired

from our mother and father who were active in that industry most of their lives. We came to terms, and I bought Ann's half.

In 1994, Jane and I decided that we'd had enough of the old cottage with all its idiosyncrasies. We would build a new one! And that's what we did. Our children, Ann, John, and Krista were in favor of that, too. Over the years each of them had grown to feel comfortable with the lake and our heritage there. It had provided them with some of the "roots" it also had given Jane and me. Our new "cottage", built on the same spot as the old one, became a showplace on the north shore. We all use it year-round and delight in having friends and others of our family there to enjoy it, too.

But now I must step back a bit so that I don't get ahead of my story. In 1955, I graduated from Okemos High School and was soon off to the University of Michigan with my NROTC scholarship in hand. I did not intend to be a pharmacist as my father was, or to spend my life dispensing pills and other medicines to customers in my father's drug store. I settled on what I thought might "satisfy" my dad, and the navy too, since the navy favored that I study some sort of engineering. I would major in chemical engineering!

That lasted less than half of the first semester at Michigan. I knew chemical engineering was not for me, and that I was already over my head. I had to get out! I switched to "pre-business" as quickly as I could, and by the end of the first semester I felt relieved and ready to move on.

I had been dating a few new acquaintances at the "U" that first fall and tried to carry on with a girl I really liked but had left behind in Lansing, where she was a junior at Everett High School. That just wouldn't work; my life was already changing. And then, at the first session of an eight o'clock English class of the second semester I saw a great looking co-ed come through the door just as class was about to begin. Next to me was the only open seat left...she had to take it, and she did! Wow!

We introduced ourselves at the end of that first class. Her name was Jane Wilson, and she was from Butler, Pennsylvania. I didn't have the slightest idea

where that was; besides, I could barely wait for the next class meeting to see if she would return to that same seat. She did...and for the next couple of weeks we had a little small talk before and after class, but that was all. Finally, I mustered enough courage to ask her out. She said "sorry" and gave a reason. I waited a week and it was the same thing. I asked her out, she gave me the same answer. I was beginning to think that something must be terribly wrong with me. I waited a while longer, and asked again...this time, however, I added that "this is the third time I have asked you out, and "if you turn me down again, it will be the last time I ask"! Pretty brash of me, but it worked!

We went to a movie – Helen of Troy – that very weekend, and a very strange thing happened. As we were walking to her dorm (no car until you were a senior), we were talking about our parents, and I had remarked that my dad had just purchased a new Oldsmobile. Jane responded that her father had a green Cadillac, just like the one over there...and she pointed at a green Cadillac, driving along North University. OMG...it was her mom and dad! Her folks had decided to drive up for a visit and had not told her about their coming. Fortunately, first impressions were good from both sides. They even asked me to join them the next evening for dinner, but this time it was me who said "no". I had another date...true story!

Jane was a Sigma Kappa; I was a Delta Upsilon. It wasn't long until we were not seeing anyone else. We had a great time enjoying the University and all that it had to offer. I visited her home a number of times and met her family including her brother, Johnny, and sister, Mary Margaret. I especially liked her dad, John Wilson, and enjoyed being with him and talking with him. He was a successful attorney and University of Michigan grad.

Jane spent a lot of time at my home in Okemos and also at Houghton Lake. In fact, it was there, right after a fishing trip that I proposed and gave her an engagement ring. Small by today's standards, but the stone was perfect. She was happy and so was I.

As we neared our senior year and graduation, I had a big decision to make. Active duty in the United States Navy awaited. I had done well in my navy

courses and in drills and on the three summer active duty stints. I would soon receive my commission. My NROTC program allowed me to choose the branch of the service, Navy or Marine Corps, that I wanted most. Besides, if I chose Navy, I could go “line” or “supply”. Line was steered toward command, and supply was the business arm of the navy. My progression over the four years at Michigan had resulted in me being named Midshipman Battalion Commander, the highest ranking midshipman, a post normally assigned to a Marine Corps candidate. I liked the marines, too. In fact, I probably would have chosen the marines if it had not been for Jane.

Our commissioning ceremony was held in Ann Arbor on the afternoon of graduation day. We were honored to have Admiral Arleigh Burke in charge of the proceedings, and to speak, swear us in, and give us our commissions. He was a hero of the Pacific campaign where he received the nickname of “31 knot Burke”, resulting from a message he transmitted from his destroyer squadron to his superiors that said, “Proceeding to meet the enemy at 31 knots”. The maximum flank speed of his destroyers was 30 knots!

Much to the chagrin of the major in charge of the program’s marine contingent, I made my decision on the choice of service that appeared to be the most logical to me. My serious choices seemed to have always been the “logical” ones throughout my business career! This time I chose navy and, surprisingly, the Supply Corps of the navy! It was the obvious choice; my bachelor’s degree was in business, a BBA. I probably had the most to offer that segment of the service, and from Jane’s point of view, wives of Marine Corps officers rarely were able to live with their husbands on deployment.

In retrospect, the decision we reached may have saved my life. During the time I served (1959-1962) Viet Nam was heating up, and at the time of my discharge President Kennedy had blockaded Cuba due to Russian missile deployment, and in Nam, troops (largely marines), were no longer “advisors” but combat participants. No one can tell. But to this day, I have the highest respect for the marines, and there remains a little regret in my heart for not becoming one.

My active duty tour was a good one, much of it spent at sea. My first

assignment was as supply officer of the USS Picket, AGR-7. We were home ported on Treasure Island in the middle of San Francisco Bay. Our squadron's mission was to form a continuous line of surface and air radar coverage approximately 300 miles out in the Pacific from the tip of the Aleutians to below Baja California in the south. Beyond our location, converted constellation airplanes provided a similar chain of radar coverage as a first alert to incoming unidentified aircraft or missiles. At best, we could have alerted high command about 30 minutes before aircraft could reach our shore and only minutes warning in the case of missiles. Enough time, however, for retaliatory missiles of our own to be fired. The cold war was not so cold!

Our ship was not sexy to look at, but it was perfect for our job. It was a converted C-3 freighter hull, for those of you who know your ships, providing a stable platform for all the radar and communication devices on board. It could stay at sea for extended periods. We called our on-station deployments "cruises", and they usually lasted 30 to 35 days before returning to port for no more than 10 days to replenish and to provide us some liberty. Lots of sea time...stations near the Aleutians were accompanied by high winds, rough seas, and cold weather. The southern ones were much smoother and sunny!

I had responsibility for not only the ship's supply of everything from food to spare parts and hard currency to pay the crew, but for the discipline and well-being of 25 to 30 men, depending on whether we were at full force or not. A new and entertaining experience for me at 22 years of age! I also stood regular watches in our Combat Information Center where all our radio and radar experts and controllers were located. Another learning experience! Our Captain, LCDR E. P. Hoskinson was a "mustang" officer (meaning he came up through the ranks from seaman to chief before receiving a commission). He was a tough and demanding Captain, and you did not want to disappoint him. We got along fine...I was scared at first, and after a year or so I could tell that he liked me, and I was given a little slack.

While at sea there was little opportunity to contact Jane. No mail left the ship, and the only mail we would receive would come from a mail sack thrown overboard from a low flying AWAC (early warning) plane that was tied to a

float. Weather permitting! Rarely, our radio center would contact a ham radio operator on shore who might be willing to create a “phone patch” with a relative for you! A far cry from our service men and women today who have e-mail and skype.

I was on the Picket two and a half years. Jane was teaching school in Oakland, California, and having our first baby of whom I was (and still am) so very proud. We named her Ann Catherine. She was born at the Oak Knoll Naval Hospital after her mother suffered a long protracted period of labor! Jane luckily timed it all to when I was in port for one of our brief stays, but I was getting pretty worried as the labor stretched on endlessly. I remember the night before Ann’s birth, I was sitting on my “regular” stool in the Oak Knoll Officers Club bar drinking with a navy chaplain. I knew it was time to quit when the chaplain fell backward off of his stool and passed out on the floor!

Ann came along a short time later and all was well. Even after the long labor and wait to be born, she was perfect in every respect. She was a constant source of joy from her first day and always has been. Bright and smart from the get go. Jane and I admired her together for a while, and then I returned to the ship. It was the 15th, payday, and I had to pay the crew.

Soon after I was transferred to shore duty right there on Treasure Island. I was assigned to the staff of Admiral Goldthwaite, Commander, Western Sea Frontier. I would stay on his staff until my release from active duty about a year later and was active on the Admiral’s Inspector General staff. One of my most exciting duties while in that assignment was to meet and escort Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz at a change of command ceremony. No question, the most famous admiral from WWII. He had gold all the way from his cuff to his elbow. He was 77 years old at the time, but very sharp, and I was impressed.

After my release from active duty, I returned home to what I had hoped to be a promising career working with my father, in Okemos, to build and further develop the businesses there. Instead, as you will read in the following chapter, I joined Oldsmobile, and before long was back in California on my first GM assignment.

During that first West Coast tour Jane and I had our second child, a son, John Jr., at the Glendale Sanatorium Hospital in Glendale, California. I could have jumped off the roof. I didn't care that it was a Seventh Day Advent hospital! We had a son! Jane and I were so proud...in fact, come to think of it, the most proud we've ever been has always been on the birth of each of our three children. And the third child didn't wait that long to come around either. We were transferred to Phoenix, Arizona, for about a year and a half and then back to Los Angeles a second time. This time it was Krista – our beautiful Krista – who came quickly and a little early, at a hospital in Orange, California. All three of our kids are native Californians! Krista was small, but everything was there...she did have to spend a few days in an incubator, though, and we had to wait a while to get our hands on her.

That pretty much wraps up the early years. While I'm ending this chapter at only 29 years of age, my life has been great to this point, and there's a whole lot more coming...stay tuned.



My Dad (OKG) and mother Laura with Jane and the kids 1966.



Krista, John, Jane (great hair) and Ann, 1967



Jane and John,
LTJG, USN
San Francisco
1962



Ann, John, Krista and
Jane with Friend

Wedding Day
June 20, 1959



John and Nell Wilson, Jane and me,
Laura and Orin Grettenberger



Midshipman JOG
University of Michigan
1958



Ann, John Jr, Krista - MIT Graduation

OLDSMOBILE AND M.I.T.

In 1962, after nearly four years of active duty service, Jane and I decided that we would leave the Navy and return to the family roots in Okemos, Michigan. We did our best to make it a rational decision, putting all the plusses and minuses down comparing continuing naval service to what we expected civilian life would be. We really did like the Navy and considered it a good career opportunity ... exciting, challenging, prestigious, and rewarding if senior rank could result. What stood out as a potential weakness was that there would be frequent and unsettling moves every few years, with periods of deployment causing extra separation.

After about a year in Michigan working with my father, Orin K. Grettenberger, it became apparent that what I had thought would be a great experience – working with my father in the family business – was not turning out that way. Dad was not ready to work towards a joint business career together. He was either unwilling or too young to give me any real responsibilities, so I was

relegated to tasks far from the “partnership” I had envisioned. I decided to look elsewhere.

I had always been impressed with Oldsmobile. After all, it was headquartered in Lansing, Michigan, had an outstanding reputation for its products, and was a good place to work. I knew many people who were employed at Oldsmobile, and they had only positive things to say about the company. The problem was that they weren't hiring at that time!

I began to search elsewhere for alternative opportunities. A few weeks went by and I had an attractive offer from the Kellogg cereal company in Battle Creek. Just as I was about to accept, I received a request for interview at Olds. The rest is history. Although the Oldsmobile offer (\$550 per month) was less than what Kellogg had offered, I decided to take it. Jane and I were both happy!

I started work almost immediately in the product distribution department at the Oldsmobile home office. Basically I was a trainee working to learn the system of allocating cars to individual dealers across the country. In less than a month, I was called in and told I was to be transferred to Oldsmobile's Los Angeles Zone as a “specialized clerk” in the zone's distribution department.

So much for the reason we didn't stay Navy! One month after leaving the family business for a new job at Olds I was being moved all across the country to a new assignment! Actually I loved it...and even though LA was smog infested, and it was more expensive to live there than I had imagined it would be...I was determined to get ahead.

Oldsmobile philosophy, so far as personnel development was considered at that time, was to give an employee all he could handle until he became proficient, and then move him/her to a new assignment with greater responsibility. And so on. And so on.

This is exactly what happened to my family and me. I started in LA and in about 21 months I was given my first field assignment headquartered in Phoenix, Arizona. What follows is a list of the jobs and locations I worked in

for the balance of my Oldsmobile career covering my first 17 years with General Motors:

Specialized Clerk – Los Angeles
District Manager – Phoenix
District Manager – Southern half, Los Angeles
Office Manager, Car Distributor – Oklahoma City
Assistant Zone Manager – Milwaukee
Assistant Zone Manager – Detroit
Merchandising Director – Lansing
M.I.T. Sloan Fellow – Boston
Zone Manager – Newark
Zone Manager – Houston
Regional Manager – Chicago
Isuzu Consultant – Tokyo
Assistant General Sales Manager – Lansing

That's 13 jobs in 13 locations in 17 years! Talk about exposure to the selling of automobiles in every type of market! And then there was Opel in Germany and Cadillac to come...but more on that later.

At each occasion of my movement to a new assignment and location, there were no "offers" to consider...often I would literally be told on a Wednesday or Thursday where I was to work the following Monday. You were expected to accept and go, no discussion, and "go" I did. This meant that on all those occasions, I had to move my family. Jane would put our home on the market, complete the sale as soon as possible, (GM had a division called Argonaut that would assist in the sale of real estate, or even take it off your hands at a price determined by appraisal), take the children out of school, and relocate them in schools at the new location (many tears).

Jane deserves a huge number of medals for what she went through, as do my kids for what I forced them to endure. My children had to be the "new kids" time after time. Besides, in many situations I couldn't spend as much time as a father should with his children. This was most hard on my oldest daughter Ann

who was jerked out of middle school and high school when stability should have been a premium, and I would often be absent from home. One thing it did do, however, was to make my three become very close, frequently drawing on each other to manage hurdles in their way. They became stronger in many ways as a result.

Oldsmobile was blessed with two distinct assets which helped the Division to exceed in the face of stiff competition. To reach third place in the industry behind only Chevrolet and Ford meant it had to sell more than either Buick or Pontiac in the GM family of cars, and, importantly, out sell the entire Chrysler Corporation and their nameplates, Dodge, Chrysler, and Plymouth. Import cars and brands had yet to make serious inroads to the American automobile market.

The first advantage was the nearly 3,000 member Oldsmobile dealer body. Taken as a whole, Oldsmobile dealers were the finest in the industry. Dealerships were well capitalized, individually owned and operated, aggressive, housed in modern, efficient and attractive facilities, and constantly demonstrated high morale and motivation. Olds dealer principals were totally committed to the Brand. They, and the Division, had complete trust in each other and shared in both the good times and more difficult markets. An unbeatable combination as so many competitors found out.

The second distinction that made Oldsmobile “different” was the quality of its senior management. Smart, dedicated, honest, hard working, supportive of Olds dealers and Olds employees...they created the atmosphere and image that allowed Oldsmobile to lead. Names like Bill Buxton, an Olds General Sales Manager who went on to be a Vice President of General Motors in charge of marketing; Jim Mattox, Buxton’s successor, an ex-B25 bomber pilot who saw action in the Pacific; and John Beltz, Oldsmobile’s GM Vice President and General Manager, a brilliant engineer with a flair for design, sales, and marketing...a man who may have been President of General Motors had he not succumbed to cancer at age forty-three.

Everyone working within the company tried their best to emulate these leaders and many more like them. This led to a period in General Motor’s history when

a large percentage of high-level management throughout the company was Olds alumnae. The development of people to their greatest potential was high priority within Oldsmobile Division.

I remember distinctly one morning in June, 1972, I was called down to Bill Buxton's office. Something was up. It was not usual for Mr. Buxton to call a middle manager (I was Oldsmobile's Merchandising Director at the time) down to talk with him unannounced and unplanned. So it was with some trepidation that I appeared at his door, and he invited me in...and to sit down! After we had some small talk about how things were going in my area, he said "John, we're sending you off to M.I.T. this summer as a member of their Sloan Fellows Program". He went on to say that GM was known to send one or two mid-career executives to this prestigious course of study each year, and that this year I was one of the two. The other was a Pontiac engineer by the name of John J. Wetzel (who later went on to be a GM Vice President and GM's Chief Engineer).

I was in shock! I had my eye on becoming a Zone Manager soon, and couldn't believe that I would be out of the running for a full year! I felt that I was qualified for that level of responsibility and found a way to say so without being disrespectful. Bill said, "John, don't argue with me on this...you're going"! I calmed down some and we discussed the assignment in detail. I would move my family for one year to the Boston area, remain on full salary, rent a home and be provided with an expense allowance to cover both M.I.T. expenses and personal ones if they were related to the program. I would receive a Master's Degree after successfully completing the course of study and the acceptance of a required thesis.

My head was spinning. This was totally unplanned for. I had no idea it was coming and wondered how I would explain it to Jane and the children. It was a tough adjustment for the family, but my own enthusiasm grew quickly. In time, the sacrifices we made turned into one of the best years of our lives. Jane was expected to participate in much of the Sloan Fellows Program, and there were regular important activities for her and other spouses in both academic as well as personal matters. The kids also adjusted well... as they had on many

previous moves.

The program was just as described – intense! Full days, including alternate Saturdays for classes, plus at least two evening lectures each week, one of which was for both the Sloan Fellow and his spouse. There were no female Sloan Fellows back then. Now, the program has been expanded well beyond the class size I experienced (50) and women make up a large part of the total enrollment. Study was done at all hours that were available, and I learned to practice “selective neglect”, as we called it, to get through the mountains of material from textbooks and a never-ending stream of Xerox copies. Before I knew it, it was time to select a topic for my thesis, get it approved, and seek a faculty advisor to assist.

The work/study part of the Sloan School program was difficult to be sure. The pressure, however, came from the other members of the class. It quickly became apparent that you don't attend class without being totally prepared. They organized us by car pools – four to a pool – depending on what part of the Boston area suburbs we lived in. We four became very close. Tom Thomsen from Western Electric, Lance Friedsam from IBM, Doug Milbury (the first Sloan Fellow to come by way of a private business) from Story, Inc., and me, from General Motors.

We not only travelled to and from school together, but we studied and joined together on any number of projects. In many cases assignments were made to us by “car pool”. And the class was not all American. Members included the following countries: Germany, Argentina, Sweden, Switzerland, Japan, Belgium, Algeria, France, and a Jesuit Priest, a Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel, a NASA (launch coordinator) executive, and a medical doctor who was also a lawyer with a master's in horticulture! Everyone had a vita that you would be proud to be associated with.

The twelve-month school year was packaged with three significant bits of travel. We took two different five-day trips in the United States. One to New York City where we met in small groups with Presidents or CEOs of some of the largest companies in the U.S. Wall Street was included, of course. The

other was to Washington, D.C. where we met privately with Congressmen, Senators (Ted Kennedy, was one), and heads of Agencies. We witnessed an ongoing case in the chambers of the Supreme Court.

Before leaving for these key meetings, members were assigned responsibility for authoring and then asking questions that would be taken seriously and would require careful responses from those whom they were directed. We would review these exchanges when returning to M.I.T.

The most exciting travel was reserved for the final month of classes before graduation. It was around the world, from west to east! Our first stop was London, England, the second, Frankfurt, Germany. From there it was off to Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) followed by a train trip to Moscow. Keep in mind, it was at the height of the cold war...and we had people in our class from high U.S. government positions, the U.S. Missile Command, and NASA. All were briefed by the Secret Service before and debriefed after visiting the U.S.S.R. Following Moscow, we flew directly across Siberia to Tokyo, Japan. All in all a unique group of destinations, especially for me, since I would later live and work in two of those stops, Germany and Japan.

Our world trip included close, small group meetings with industrial and political leaders from the individual countries. I can still remember, with chills, the mayor of Moscow predicting to all of us that within twenty years we and our children would all be living under Communism. Another chance informal conversation that I had was with a Russian General (who was drinking heavily, I might add) who told me what an exciting experience it was to have an enemy in his sights ready to pull the trigger.

While invigorating, it seemed great when we returned home. All the more so for me, since I had received a telegram (remember them?) along the way from Jane...she had just purchased a house for us in Upper Saddle River, New Jersey (since she had learned that we were moving to the Newark Zone), and I was scared about how much she had spent!

Meanwhile back in Boston, I still had to submit my thesis, so I will back up in

time a little bit to tell you how and why I selected a topic for that project, and how it was accepted by General Motors.

After giving a lot of thought to a thesis subject I finally decided that it should be automotive related (remember, I was with Oldsmobile at the time) to hopefully be of benefit to General Motors. GM did not try and influence my choices and left the decision to my professors and me.

At this point in time (1972), all GM franchises were granted to specific individuals, not the company which might be operating the business. Great care was used to select dealer candidates for consideration of a franchise, and specific criteria as to the individual's experience level, his net worth, his ability to capitalize a dealership, his willingness to provide required buildings and fixed assets, all were verified.

Only one GM franchise (it could be a dual, with more than one GM nameplate) could be granted to one individual. Occasionally a dealer would be permitted to invest in another GM dealership, but the practice was that the dealer would have to structure the investment to be retired within five years, or shortly thereafter with the advanced approval of the Corporation.

GM did not want "chain" dealers. They did not offer franchises to dealer or corporate "entities". It was purely a personal contract. While this arrangement did provide General Motors with more control over its dealers, keeping them small enough size-wise to prohibit them having undue influence over GM policies, distribution, or other requirements, it did have a number of very serious drawbacks.

As dealers became successful, making levels of profit in excess of a single dealership's capital requirements, they were unable to seek additional GM franchises due to these restrictive policies. In many cases dealers could add another maker's franchise at their location so long as building, space, and capital requirements for the GM franchise were met first; in addition to the requirements of the second franchise. Furthermore, dealers were frustrated in that GM rules were that the franchise stayed with the individual, not his

corporation, or not with successor individuals that might include family members or key managers who would like option to owning the dealership themselves in the future.

Today, when one thinks of the size and success of Autonation, the Sonic Corporation with multiple dealer franchises, and Roger Penske's New York Stock Exchange listed conglomerate which retails automobiles, it seems like the GM rules back in the 70's were archaic to say the least...and they were!

Nevertheless, my thesis was being written in 1973, and titled "Multiple Investment in the Automotive Field", the purpose of which was to challenge GM's long-standing policy and introduce new considerations. Above all else, I could see that what was going on was that as GM dealers prospered, they literally had no place to go within General Motors to invest in GM opportunities. GM was, in fact, forcing these successful dealer partners to look elsewhere to expand, leading a very large number to further the sale and franchise of foreign makes as they began to enter the U. S. market!

I researched my thesis through discussions with GM dealers, interviews with franchisors in automobiles and other large purchase products, and other data sources that were available to me both within and outside of General Motors. When I finished, my advisor and I felt that we had done a good job of building a case for changes to the restrictive nature of GM franchise policy. M.I.T. accepted the thesis, and I went on to my Master's Degree in Corporate Management.

Not so at GM! You'd have thought I was an ungrateful employee wanting only to criticize and destroy a long-standing policy of my employer! I was told that it was not considered at all helpful, and to my knowledge it mostly went unread on a shelf somewhere at Oldsmobile. BUT...there were copies on the shelves of the Sloan School at M.I.T. as well!

Fast forward to 1984...ten years after the completion of my thesis. In the early 80's (while stationed at Opel in Germany), I had been contacted by McKinsey & Company and other consultant notables to discuss my conclusions, and the

reasoning that went into them. Who could believe it? General Motors was revising their franchise policy!

I received a number of congratulatory letters and would like to quote from two of them. The first was from Dr. Gordon Bloom, Professor of Marketing at the Sloan School of Management, who was my thesis advisor. Gordon stated, "I remember your thesis clearly. It made a lot of sense then and I am pleased to learn that your recommendations are at last being implemented at G.M. It's encouraging to learn that the hard work involved can some time result in major changes in the corporate policy".

Secondly, I heard from C. N. "Bud" Moore, then General Motors Vice President of Marketing, he said "Thanks very much, John, for sharing with the Marketing Task Force, your 1973 thesis on multiple investments. This document has been and will continue to be very helpful to us. As you know, we have liberalized the Multiple Investment Policy recently, almost exactly as you suggested eleven years ago. Your vision into the future at that time was truly remarkable. You touch on other areas of our distribution system, such as the inefficiencies of small dealers, almost exactly as we are dealing with the subject. I am impressed to say the least. There was no support, to my knowledge, in 1973 for any of these thoughts and we are even finding tough sledding today."

To me, these two endorsements are more than enough justification of my long hours of work to try and make a difference in an area that I felt was necessary to change.

Back to the story. After M.I.T. graduation, at which I was proud to have Jane, Ann, John, and Krista in attendance with me, it was on to beautiful Newark, New Jersey, and an Oldsmobile Zone Manager assignment! It's important for me to give large doses of credit to each member of my little family for all that they contributed to this unbelievably magic year. I have been truly blessed.



Taller than my Isuzu Team!

ISUZU AND JAPAN

In early 1978 I was happily fulfilling the responsibilities of Oldsmobile regional manager, headquartered in Chicago, Illinois. It was a high volume region, with five zone sales and service operations located in Chicago, Minneapolis, Milwaukee, Kansas City, and Indianapolis. Olds was rocking along at a very strong pace sales-wise, in third place in the industry behind Chevrolet and Ford.

Our Division had just weathered a serious firestorm after it was discovered that engines in our 88 series cars were actually the same as were in some model Chevs. We had always advertised “Olds Rocket 88’s” and when the public learned quite by accident that many 88’s were actually powered by Chevrolet power trains, all hell broke loose. We were being sued from many places, not the least from Wisconsin where that state’s attorney general launched a massive class action suing for serious damages. No matter that the engines were excellent and well suited to power our Olds models for long life and many miles – they were not “Rocket V8’s”!

Since the discovery of this debacle was in my region, I had the duty of having to appear at numerous public hearings including depositions and intensive questioning as to GM's intentions. I was booed, yelled at, and had things thrown my way by people terribly upset. It was not pleasant.

Finally it was ordered that Oldsmobile must offer to replace anyone's affected vehicle, or at the customer's request pay damages to satisfy the courts. The result was a serious financial hit as well as one to our image, and a huge problem buying back all these vehicles and selling them again through auctions or what have you. Ironically, some of the best and most reliable used 88's were the ones with Chevrolet manufactured engines.

Thankfully, at about this time I was contacted by my Olds bosses and the Corporation and directed to move to Tokyo to serve as a special consultant to Isuzu, a large and well known engine, truck, and bus manufacturer in which General Motors had recently taken a 34% share of ownership. General Motors and Isuzu had been in talks to move Isuzu into the production and sale of automobiles, and my assignment was to develop a marketing plan on how to transition Isuzu into a successful sales organization for cars within the Japanese home islands.

The plan was to move my whole family to Tokyo even though the assignment would be for less than one year. Japanese visa restrictions limited the amount of time a foreign national could secure a work permit. My short-term work permit also served as a strong incentive for me to finish my work promptly and was an even stronger incentive for the Isuzu organization to insure that they provided me all the resources needed to efficiently accomplish the task.

My eldest daughter, Ann, was in high school, and my son John and youngest daughter Krista were in middle school. They would all attend an international school in the Tokyo suburbs housed in a converted naval air base, no longer in operation. Excellent schools, but a long commute by train and bus each day which, when mastered, gave the kids a confidence factor superior to what children their age would have acquired in the States. Tokyo was totally safe –

even for children – to move around this extremely large and populous city. Imposing, but safe.

We lived in an apartment building, Homat West, specifically built for Western tenants. This means larger room sizes, western style bathrooms, larger appliances, and a bit more comfortable as compared to Japanese alternatives. We rented all our furniture, and other than being low with pretty short legs on the chairs, couches, etc., it was very comfortable. We had a TV, but of course, all channels were in Japanese.

My wife Jane had the help of a few other American women to learn how to shop and generally provide for all the needs of our family. I had a small car to drive on weekends when I would dare venture out in the confusing streets, traffic, and geography. Other than that, I had a driver, Wada-San, assigned to me who I became quite fond of ... always on time, getting me where I had to go promptly and safely. Our apartment was located in Roppongi, right in the heart of Tokyo, near the Japanese Tower (kind of a mini Eifel tower) and minutes away from the Ginza. To walk on a lawn or a grassy area you had to go to a park...everything else was paved or blacktopped.

Isuzu's headquarters were located in Omori, in the southern part of Tokyo about 20 minutes drive on a good day. The sales building where I was officed was totally constructed of steel, top to bottom, floor to ceiling. It was cold on cold days, having only a single space heater connected to a gas outlet in the wall by rubber hoses, and hot on hot days when the sun warmed the steel walls and ceilings. It would creak and groan when earthquakes rolled through, which were fairly frequent but not too strong. My secretary – Miyuri Itonaga – was English speaking, totally devoted to serve me and help me in any way possible to be successful. On many occasions I would overhear her talking sternly to even relatively senior executives in my defense when I needed it! It was difficult to beat her to work in the morning although I tried.

I was given access to every possible resource available and teams of individuals with which to work. I remember my first steps were to meet personally with large and small groups to discuss our assignment. There was no doubt that

nearly all were suspicious of me and questioned whether or not I could lead an effort of this nature. To develop a plan to establish a network of retail automobile dealerships would require setting up new, large dealer operations where the market would permit, and dual existing truck dealerships with car franchises where that would suffice.

It was apparent early on that to be successful I needed the acceptance and confidence of those with whom I worked and also with those others whom I needed to interface. The Japanese are very hard workers. They arrive early and stay late. They are fiercely loyal. I decided to try and beat them at their own game. I arrived earlier, worked as long as they did, adapted to their customs and gave every individual serious respect. I was careful on how I covered criticisms. I took copious notes on everything and did my best to only initiate actions after gaining “group” consensus – certainly a new style for me!

An early indication of progress was when I would hear about, or witness, my Japanese colleagues defending my initiatives to others just as if they were their own. I had full access to senior managers to report on progress and secure permission to acquire whatever necessary to complete my work. I quickly became aware, however, that these senior executives knew exactly what I was doing and had probably been briefed on details on a regular basis.

My work began by evaluating Isuzu’s current situation, its problems and opportunities. A complete study of the competition was available through A.T. Kearney and Associates, which was very helpful. Product planning issues were brought to the surface to match Isuzu’s line-up with the market segments in which we needed to compete. Also important was the organizational infrastructure to manage marketing needs, business management activities, and the recruitment, development, and training of sales personnel. Motivational issues, sales promotion recommendations, budget controls, and communications between Isuzu and its dealer organization were a significant part of final recommendations being made.

An overall objective of achieving 10,000 unit sales per month was approved as the plan’s initial goal.

At the end of my stay, final recommendations were distributed to Isuzu management, all the members of my team, and to General Motors as well. Isuzu was well pleased and had the eighty-one page report translated into Japanese, bound, and distributed to every corner of the company. Contact with key Isuzu personnel that I continued to have in the immediate years following my return to the United States indicated good progress to the goal.

Overall, the Japanese experience was very positive for me personally and for my family. It was truly an educational as well as pleasurable time for each of us. The exposure to a totally foreign culture was extremely important to our children and to Jane and me as well. And it was not all work and no play. While my work week frequently spilled over into Saturdays, and the daily schedule went from seven a.m. until into the evening, we had plenty of travel and new experiences. It was almost like the Isuzu senior managers knew when a break was needed. Often they would say that on such and such a date my whole family would be taken somewhere on a holiday to better become acquainted with Japan and its treasures. Fuji, Nara, Lake Hakone, Osaka, Hokkaido, Kamakura, Yokohama, and Kyoto were places we enjoyed.

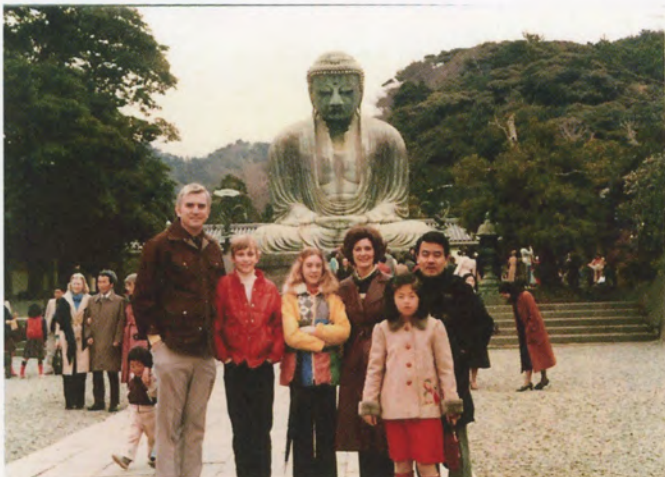
I continued to take pride in how our children made the adjustment to our life in Japan, especially to see how they reacted to the extreme change in culture we all experienced living there. To make the adjustment easier, we did our best to continue a few of our "American" ways. One thing that helped was that GM allowed us to take membership in the American Club of Japan, something like a country club with no golf course! It was located within walking distance from our home, and we often went there to get a real American style hamburger or see an American film in English. Our youngest daughter swam competitively for the U. S. in meets between our club and other similar organizations around Japan. She would walk alone to practice sessions at the pool (12 yrs old!) on Tokyo streets in her red, white and blue warm-ups. I was so proud to watch her swim in her blue swimsuit with the American flag. Her little body was hard as steel and I wouldn't be surprised if the record she set for a 100 meter sprint in her age group isn't still on the board posted there. Daughter Ann actually did some photo modeling and made some friends there. Japanese advertisers often favor using westerners in their ads...perhaps to give them more intrusiveness.

Son John found a way to play baseball on a team made up of U.S. kids, all children of Americans living and working in Tokyo. Normally, sad to say, the Japanese teams would win over John's team, but it was fun for him anyhow.

A final thought. The Japanese I worked with most closely were constantly testing me on how many of their customs, likes and dislikes I could endure. Food choices were one of those tests. When out for dinners, etc., in purely Japanese restaurants, they would order for me since I was not very accomplished in Japanese. They thoroughly enjoyed watching my reaction to foods like boiled baby eels in hot water and tofu, exotic sushi dishes of various raw fish, rice, and seaweed, and other strange tasting and looking dishes. I would often hear them chuckle and see them looking out of the corner of their eyes to see what I would do!

Travel with the Japanese also brought some excitement and new experiences. When staying in a purely Japanese hotel or Ryokan, the first thing you normally do after check-in is to change into a yukata to relax and get comfortable. Their yukatas would cover their bodies down below their knees, but at 6'3" my yukata would not even reach my knees. This caused more than a few snickers when walking around the hotel or attempting to sit on tatami mats. Also, my first experience in a real Japanese bath was something to behold! Female attendants to assist you! Hot, deep pools. Little rinsing bowls to pour water over your head, and little towels as well. Being a rather big tall guy, I had the feeling that all eyes were on me all the time!

What more can I say? Living and working in Japan with my whole family along was a wonderful experience for us all.



Jane and Itonaga San

セールスマン諸君へのアドバイス

J. O. グレットンバーガー

もしあなたが販売の仕事で成功を修めたいと思うならば次の9ヶ条は不可欠な原則として実行すべきです。ぜひ貴方の行動計画にこれらのことを織りこんで下さい。

1. 時間を管理せよ!
1日は短い。納期は有急に促りなければならない。前もって行動計画を立ててそれを実行せよ。
2. 自分の商品を知り、完全なデモをせよ!
お客様からの質問には全て答えられるようになれ。お客様の疑問を予想し、完全な商品知識を身につけてデモをすること。デモは商談締結に役立つし大きな利益を生む。
3. 商品売るだけでなく、自分自身を売り、販売店を売り、ISUZUの高品質イメージを売れ!
4. くじけるな!
士気を高く保て、酒子の悪い時には良かった時のことを思い出せ。
5. 正直であれ!
責任を持ってないことを約束するな。
6. 競争相手の悪口を云うな!
ISUZUの商品の長所を売り込むのだ。競争者をけなしてはいけない。
7. 他人の真似をする前に考えよ!
全ての事柄が良いとは限らない。又良い見本と同じように悪い見本からも学ぶことはできる。見本を真似する前にそれが自分に合ったものかどうかを確かめよ。
8. お客様にとっては全てが新しいことばかりである!
全てのお客様に対し販売の手前を忠実に守りなさい。あなたは長い間自分の商品を売ってきたし、乗り出し、デモもしてきたのだがお客様にとっては全てが新しいことかもしれないのだ。お客様がその特徴を全て知っているという一人息子は儲物である。
9. 商品に誇りを持って! 自分自身に誇りを持って!
ISUZUの商品を決して卑下してはならない。あなたは真のプロフェッショナルであり、そのことに誇りを持ちなさい。

Advice to ISUZU Salesmen

1. Time Management.
2. Know Your Product and Demonstrate It Fully
3. Sell Yourself/ Sell the Dealership/ Sell ISUZU'S Quality Reputation/
4. Don't Get Discouraged.
5. Be Honest.
6. Don't "Knock" the Competition.
7. Think-before Following in Other's Footsteps.
8. It's All New to Each Prospect.
9. Be Proud of Your Product; Be Proud of Yourself!

J. O. Grettenberger





Press Conference In Paris

OPEL

After returning to the States from my Japanese assignment with Isuzu, I was appointed Assistant General Sales Manager at Oldsmobile, headquartered in Lansing, Michigan. It was good to be home, and Jane and I purchased a lovely home in East Lansing. We were living near Okemos where I had deep roots, and where my Mother and Father still lived. We were content, and the Oldsmobile job was one that I enjoyed as Olds was continuing to enjoy solid sales results.

Then it happened again. I was asked to consider the Sales Director position for Opel at their home base in Russelsheim, Germany, located west of Frankfurt about twenty miles. Jane and I flew over for a look-see and stayed a few days. Other than it being déjà vu all over again so far as the required family move was concerned, the job opportunity was too good to pass up. The excitement of living in Europe for four years also was appealing to everyone in the family – everyone but daughter Ann, that is. She had not moved to East Lansing with us upon our return from Japan. Our home prior to the Isuzu assignment had been

in Wheaton, Illinois. Ann had decided to stay in Wheaton with close friends of ours to allow her to complete her senior year in high school. By the time (nearly a year later) we decided to take the Opel assignment, Ann was already enrolled at the University of Michigan. This meant that she would only be with us twice a year...at summer vacation and Christmastime. Very hard on all of us... long phone calls and many tears.

The Verkaufs Direktor position included responsibility for the sales and service of all Opel products in each western European country and the communist countries of Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland. Keep in mind that my stay with Opel was 1980-1984, well before massive changes in the Soviet block. Also the timing was well before the European community of nations was formed which opened borders, and the Euro was installed as the currency for a number of countries.

Conducting business in the communist countries was primarily done on a barter basis. In Yugoslavia we had an arrangement with a forge and stamping operation at Kikinda. They would send us foundry items, and we would pay for them in Opel Kadetts. A good arrangement, but the communist system of not building to schedule was often a problem. They usually scheduled their production based on central government planning rather than anything related to market demand. At times we would get many, many more castings than we needed, and at other times, hardly any. Of interest is the fact that I had a Croat manager home based in Belgrade who was married to a German woman and the Yugoslavs made life as miserable as they could for them. No doubt they have a long memory about Germans and WWII. The normal practice at that time in Belgrade was to go shopping, and where there was something you wanted to buy (meat for example), you look for what store might have it, then you would get in line. Much of the time when his German wife would finally get up to the counter they would close up and refuse to sell anything to her! Often the Yugoslavs would turn off their electric current for pretty long periods, too, or just put them on a restrictive cycle of on and off service. I used to take boxes of soap powder or coffee to them whenever I made a trip to Belgrade.

“Barter” business can sometimes get you in trouble. I had a travelling sales

team headed by a former sergeant in the French Foreign Legion, and they would literally go anywhere they could to sell Opel cars. We would take just about anything of value to exchange for automobiles. Most of the time it was payment in goods or a currency that could be eventually converted to Deutch Marks with a little work. I remember on one occasion we had a chance to trade some cars in one eastern country in exchange for busses. I wasn't in on the deal personally, but it sounded okay to my guys so we went ahead. When the "busses" arrived, they turned out to be military vehicles! Worried, yes! Frightened, no! We ended trading them for something convertible to cash, in Iran, as I remember.

Germany was our largest single market, and Opel has a complete sales and service division for the home market very similar to GM's organizational structure in the United States – i.e., Zone Offices, fully staffed with field sales and service personnel, and distribution, business management, and organization and analysis managers centrally located in the Zone offices. Germany also had a General Sales Manager and supporting staff located in Russelsheim, quite separate from a parallel organization we called Eurex, which managed all other western countries, including the United Kingdom and Ireland.

Reliability, value for the money, solid vehicles and a range of mid-priced cars gave Opel an image and reputation that supported high-volume sales. Opel had large plants in Russelsheim, Bochum, and Kaiserslautern in Germany, and in Antwerp, Belgium, producing and selling well over a million units per year. It was a very competitive market with five European brands fighting neck and neck for market share. The Japanese were just starting to be a factor in Europe, with serious restrictions on them in countries like France and Italy.

While I was in Germany, Opel built and opened an assembly plant for the Corsa (I named the car!) in Zaragossa, Spain, a sub-compact model that we really needed to fill a hole in our line-up. As we got closer to start of production there were a number of large and sometimes violent protests – most of which were anti-American which we considered to be communist initiated. On one occasion a small group of terrorists broke in to one of our offices in Zaragossa proper and started shooting. Two Spanish employees were killed and a number

of other employees wounded before the police arrived and made arrests. Scary times! When we finally moved everything inside the plant property where we had good security, the protests fell off substantially. FYI, the Corsa was a huge success and continues to sell exceptionally well. Also the name "Corsa" comes from Italian, translated roughly as a "race course".

Opel exports from Germany to the various countries through our Eurex operations were complicated and difficult to administer. Each country had their own currency, of course, and each had differing duties, taxes, and quite frequently restrictions on horsepower and engine displacement. Instead of "Zones" as in Germany, we had Eurex operations headquartered in each country's capital city. These offices monitored the individual country's markets, determined pricing of each Opel sold there, and were responsible for making a profit. Also contributing to production and sales inefficiencies were numerous requirements in certain countries specifying vehicle content that differed from neighboring countries. This made shifting of inventory from one market to another almost impossible.

Germany is also known for co-determination in the decision making process, meaning that the primary union, for us the IGMetal, had 50% representation on the Supervisory Board along with non-union management. This practice is unique to most Americans and while it can improve relationships with the unions, it can and often does produce dissention. Every action on the part of both parties is normally directed towards decision making without resulting in tie votes, which must be avoided to insure cooperation. If tie votes do occur, the Chairman of the Supervisory Board, a non-union executive, serves as tie breaker. This however is a last resort.

As Sales Director I served as a member of the Vorstand (Board of Directors), a very prestigious and highly sought after position in Germany. Our family rated a very nice home within what we called the "Opel compound". There were six houses of about the same size in a fenced area of approximately 12 acres in the upscale community of Koenigstein, (translation, King's Stone), Germany. It was nestled in the Taunus mountain area north of Frankfurt. The General Manager, Controller, Manufacturing Manager, Planning Director, Chief

Designer, and Sales Director all lived in the compound. The homes were built shortly after WWII and were all masonry, stucco, and slate roofed buildings – very thick walls and foundation. Security was a big consideration. During our time there the Bader-Meinhoff terrorist group was in operation, known for anti-American actions. More than once our security fence would have graffiti calling for “Death to the Americans,” - unsettling to say the least, but not uncommon. During this same time period the Red Brigade was active in Italy, frequently kidnapping and sometimes killing business leaders unless huge sums of money were paid for their release.

An interesting coincidence, the home our family was assigned, 19 Rombergweg, was also the home Bob Lutz and his wife lived in when he, too, was in charge of sales and marketing at Opel. Bob was a truly outstanding executive who left Opel for BMW, then to Ford of Europe, back to the United States with Ford, U.S., on to Chrysler Corporation, and ultimately returning to General Motors where he recently retired as Vice Chairman.

As we were getting used to living in our “new” home, we discovered that it was like a “fort” in that it was not only built sturdily, but had tight security, standard! One item we had was a special “safe” telephone separate from regular phone service that was directly wired to the German federal as well as the local polizei! Young son John was the first to discover it in its hiding place. When he raised the receiver, unknown to him he automatically signaled the police that there was trouble!

Within a very few minutes two carloads of German police roared into the drive and out jumped six uniformed officers with sub-machineguns and pistols out and ready! They barged in as we opened the door, and even though we did our best to explain (in English, of course) that all was okay, they would have no part of it! They went ahead, searched every room in the house, including the basement! It happened once again when we had guests who picked up the special phone, but we tried to be very careful about setting off alarms in the future.

Our two children, John and Krista (remember, Ann was in the U.S.), attended

the Frankfurt International School in Oberusel, a beautiful community not far away. It turned out to be an excellent school, about 35% American children, 20% German, and the balance literally from all over the world. From a technical standpoint their “product” was outstanding. My son John spent all four of his high school years at FIS, and was accepted by every university he applied to, including Stanford and the University of Michigan. Krista, too, learned a great deal there, but, of course, she had to return to the U.S. after we were transferred home to spend her senior year. Not a good thing as you might expect! She was (and still is) pretty tough, however, and made the transition successfully.

A further comment about son John. He and I played baseball together a LOT starting when he was four or five years old. In fact, baseball for him was a means to achieve some identity at all the various stops I made along the way and helped him gain friends and a degree of “stature” quickly at his new home bases. The problem was, FIS had only limited sports activities and no baseball. He and Krista both played basketball and volleyball at Oberusel, but for John, the absence of baseball was a real negative – even though, I might add, the basketball and volleyball teams played other international schools at places like Stevanger, Brussels, London, Paris, Vienna, etc., I could go on. What Frankfurt did have, however, was a very large U.S. Army base just a few miles from our home in Koenigstein. Early on, John and I would drive over to the base and play catch or just watch the dependent youth teams practice. It wasn’t long before young John was invited to join the action even though we were not military.

When the coaches saw him play (as it turned out the Army’s coaches for soldiers’ children were very proficient, some of whom had minor league professional baseball experience) they spent time with him and had him on the roster as a pitcher and outfielder as they played at military bases all over Germany, including in Berlin’s American “sector”. Remember, Berlin was divided into zones only accessible by military “duty” trains from the west. He not only got great coaching and playing experience with the Army (no opportunity for college recruitment, however), when he returned home he made the University of Michigan team as a walk-on, lettered all four of his years

there, pitched in the 1984 College World Series, and received a “full ride” scholarship from the U of M for his junior and senior years!

A few more final “family” comments about our Opel time. Our family lives really did center around the Frankfurt International School, as it did for all the U.S. nationals living and working in the Frankfurt area. We participated in all sorts of things there. Jane was a regular volunteer manning the school supplies and candy store (she seemed to always have to put “in” more than she would “take out”, when it came to accounting for the money), and of course, there were the team sports to watch, school and educational meetings to attend, festivals and holidays to take part in, etc. Also, just as our kids would stay with families in all the various countries and cities they visited for sports, our home was always open for visiting players from other international schools. One would never know for sure what color, nationality, or religion our guests might be. A real lesson in how to accept people of all races from all over the world – and a wonderful plus for John and Krista and just as important for Jane and me!

Finally, a comment on three wonderful Christmases in Europe. A good friend, Gene Leonard, who I worked closely with in Japan, and his wife Doris, owned a chalet in Villars, Switzerland, that was right out of a storybook in terms of its beauty and location! Its name was Chalet Mecki (porcupine in Deutch). Every Swiss chalet has a name, and at least in Villars, that was its only address.

Gene and Doris allowed us to rent Mecki for three straight years at Christmastime since they were still in Japan. We asked the Milburys and their three children, Mark, Todd, and Noelle, to join us for ten wonderful days on two of the occasions, and for both our families they were unforgettable Christmases. Skiing, sightseeing, enjoying the quaint village of Villars, the brilliant red electric trains, and the abundance of snow created memories that all of us will never forget. Actually, Jane and I have returned to Switzerland time and again over the years and, next to the United States, it has become our favorite country.

I worked for three different General Directors at Opel. The first was Jim Waters, a long time overseas executive for General Motors. His calm, unruffled

style was great under pressure and he was a significant influence on managers like me, experiencing crises and other situations in an unfamiliar setting. A good man.

The second was Bob Stempel, a former Oldsmobile engine engineer, and a rapidly accelerating executive on his way to become the successor to Roger Smith as GM Chairman. We got along fine. Bob was especially good on his feet, be it with Opel people, the press, Opel dealers, or interfacing with other corporate heads in Europe. He disliked conflict with the unions, and, in my opinion, gave in to them earlier and more generously than necessary. Based on my experience, unions in Germany already had more benefits, work classifications, holidays, and other perks than the UAW, especially with their right of co-determination.

The third top executive was a German national, Ferdinand Beickler. He was a tough and overly critical manager, again in my opinion. Perhaps his personal experiences had a hand in this – in fact, I am sure that they did. Ferdy was an Opel employee well before the start of WWII. I'm not even sure if he was recruited or if he volunteered to serve in the Wehrmacht, or if he was an officer or enlisted man. He was captured by the Russians towards the end of the war, and transported to Russia to work as reprisal for the actions of Germany. Who knows the conditions under which he had to live and work? I do know that it was in the early 50's that he was finally returned home. A terrible price to have to pay.

Mr. Beickler was first a manufacturing man. Very precise. The "devil is in the details," he would say, and he would pursue details to the nth degree in literally everything he touched. He didn't like me very well, in fact, I think he was glad to see me transferred so that he could appoint my successor, an Australian whom he DID like, that had worked with him at Vauxhaul in the United Kingdom. Beickler was, however complimentary to me at my departure dinner, and, I am told, a bit surprised when he learned that I had been made a General Motors Vice President and head of the Cadillac division.

I was lucky to have inherited some very talented senior managers, many of them

veterans of the German armed forces during WWII. It is a unique experience to hear to stories of individuals who had previously been opponents, if not enemies. Perhaps you've heard that Germans accept their duties and their superior's orders as their responsibility to carry out at all costs. It's true. They are disciplined and dedicated, totally committed to their cause.

Anfried "Kat" Scheskat was a brilliant marketer. He was about to have been captured by the Russians at the end of the war. He and a comrade came across the bodies of two French soldiers, put on their uniforms, and by using Kat's rudimentary French confused the Russian soldiers into believing they were French and of course, an ally. Kat and his friend then made it a long distance en route to surrender to Americans, which they did. Because of Kat's proficiency in English, he was offered, and accepted, a position as an interpreter for the U.S. army!

Another member of my Opel staff was Ernst Theobald. Ernst enlisted in the Wehrmacht, and was assigned to an anti-aircraft battery right in his hometown of Russelsheim to help protect the Opel factory, which was a key Frankfurt area target. He told me that he did all he could to shoot down the American bombers as they came every night, street by street, to destroy everything in their path. After a while, he said, the Opel facilities were totally destroyed. He had nothing further to protect or to shoot at, so he was transferred to a Panzer division. He went on to say that the uniforms of German tank crews were black...not dissimilar to those of the SS. For that reason, when his tank was later surrounded, he and other crew members jumped out of it and discarded their clothes! He said it was the practice of allied soldiers to kill SS troops immediately. Who could blame him for taking that evasive action? And, for him, it worked.

One last bit of trivia. Fritz Lohr, Opel's Chief Engineer and a good friend of mine, was a loud, and typically boisterous German with also typical nationalistic characteristics, which is commonplace among Germans. Half in jest, but half serious, one night when we were out drinking that good German beer together with other German friends, the War came up between drinks and songs. "We tried it in 1914, and it didn't work," he said, "We tried it in 1939,

and it didn't work! Let's try it again!"

My story of Opel days wouldn't be complete without a few words about my private secretary, Frau Christel Oswald. She was a little bit of a woman in stature only. She was my confidant, my advisor, my "protector", and my critic! She was an untiring worker. She helped me practice speeches in German – enough at times to convince my audience that I was fluent – at least until they began talking to me in Deutch, zu schnell!

Thus ends a wonderful four years in Germany. I could go on until you would all be bored. I hope you've enjoyed a little of my ramblings.



Christmas in Villars with our Friends the Milburys



OKG, Me, Laura, and Jane. Graduation Day for young John, Frankfurt International School



Skiing together - Germany, Italy, Switzerland and even Vail Colorado!



Our new Home in Konigstein



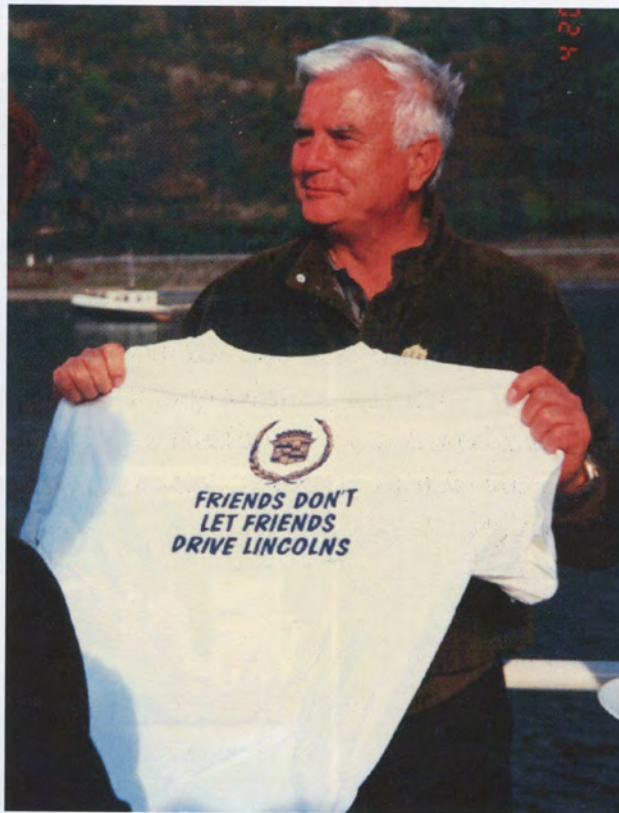
Jane and Me at the Opel Master Dealer Celebration



Opel's World Champion Rally Team



Opel Rally Cars - Ascona Models



CADILLAC

As I left Opel to return to the States, I was contacted by F. James McDonald, President of General Motors. He asked me to come to his office as soon as I reached Detroit, and with a lot of excitement and a bit of trepidation I readily accepted! My imagination was going in every direction as to what might be in store.

It didn't take Mr. McDonald long to get to the point. "John," he said, "we are appointing you as Vice President of General Motors, and General Manager of Cadillac." My head was swimming. What better than to be made a Corporate officer, and better still, to be given responsibility of GM's flagship division, an absolute icon in the automotive industry! In my mind there could be no better assignment!

We talked for a while and I started to calm down. It was at that very first

meeting that I later realized that Jim was giving me a clue as to what was in store. He said, "You know, John, you've been gone for four years and the market here in the United States has changed quite a bit. Gas prices have risen dramatically and are expected to continue to rise. Research indicates that people are going to want cars that are smaller and more efficient. You need to get over to Design Staff and take a look at where we are going."

This was in January of 1984. I learned that a special ride and drive of the GM lineup for 1985 was scheduled shortly at our proving grounds in Mesa, Arizona. All the car division chief executives would be there along with key mid-level executives and even Pete Estes, the former GM President replaced by McDonald. I couldn't wait to get there and see what next year's Cadillacs and other GM entries would look like.

I did review Cadillac's next year models at Design, as Mr. McDonald had suggested. My first impression was, "WOW" they sure have been downsized! Keep in mind that for the past four years I had been selling in a market of smaller, high-performance cars throughout Europe, so I was not overly shocked. I had learned to respect luxury competitors that were not as traditionally large as Cadillacs in the U.S. market, Mercedes and BMW to be specific.

After seeing them in the flesh, and driving them on proving grounds roads with other high-end cars, I was convinced that the 1985 DeVille, Fleetwood, Eldorado and Seville were too small and underpowered for what traditional Cadillac buyers wanted. While they might never use it, Cadillac owners want fast pick-up off the line and a level of size and comfort second to none. They also demand cars fast enough that they could outperform on 0 to 60 times versus most other cars, especially luxury cars.

Pete Estes took me aside during the proving ground drive session. He said, "John, you're going to have some trouble getting these cars to sell." Later, Jim McDonald hinted that he wouldn't let one of the new Sevilles out of the plant without the new tri-color paint treatment (a special paint scheme at extra cost that did seem to add some distinction to the car). All this, and my own apprehension made me nervous.

At first I thought that maybe I'd been out of the country too long. What had happened was that while I was gone, GM had embarked on a conversion of its complete U.S. car fleet to smaller, more fuel efficient cars. Gasoline prices, after all, had risen to between 2 and 3 dollars a gallon by the early 1980's, a price that for the times put fear in the minds of all manufacturers.

My "gut feel" that day proved correct. The cars were too small and anemic for the American luxury market. They didn't sell. While the U.S. luxury car market boomed, Cadillac sales and market share dropped. Lincoln, with its traditional size and styling was a primary beneficiary of Cadillac's decline. Mercedes-Benz, Jaguar, and BMW turned from being niche marketers to full-scale competitors. Luxury buyers told Cadillac loudly and clearly in the 80's that they didn't want small cars with little horsepower.

Dealing with excessively downsized Cadillacs turned out to be only some of the problems we faced in the mid-80's. The styling of most of our cars bore a look-alike to Buick in particular and even Chevrolet in some models. During that time period press coverage of the look-alike syndrome increased with pictures to prove the point, Fortune magazine even did a story on GM design shortcomings, devoting a front cover to three models of General Motors' cars emphasizing their similarities. Cadillac prospects were particularly sensitive to this issue. Distinctiveness was missing.

While the overall reduction in size was due to the fear of high gas prices, the loss of Cadillac identity was due to a combination of financial pressure to take costs out of the vehicles and zealous manufacturing managers searching for every opportunity to commonize GM products to make manufacture and assembly easier, and therefore, reduce costs of materials and labor. Another blunder of the early 80's was to add a smaller, more fuel efficient car, the Cimarron, to the line up in 1982, to hopefully appeal to younger buyers. It was not a success. In fact, it caused Cadillac to suffer a further loss of image as the attempt to take a Chevy or Pontiac entry up-scale to be a Cadillac never resulted in significant volume.

Finally, the third, and some would say, the most critical problem facing Cadillac was a significant drop in quality and reliability. During this time period Cadillac sales were being made to customers based on their perceived quality – at least to the tradition of what Cadillac quality had been in the past. Cadillac at one time was known as “The Standard of the World” but not during the mid-eighties. I learned the lesson that “perception lags reality” the hard way. Reality was that Cadillac quality was going down hill, but the perception of buyers did not recognize that fact, until however, they started having trouble with their cars.

Our “fit and finish” was lagging competitors. Our major component systems had high “problems per hundred” compared to other makes as measured by J. D. Powers. Our engines lacked the performance our owners had gotten used to, and even they had problems. I will never forget a hurriedly called meeting by Bob Templin, Chief Engineer, and Al Rasagan, Motor Engineer, to meet with me in my conference room. They brought with them movie film shot by a new “heat photo” system of photography that allowed a look into an operating engine to see the movement of most of the parts due to varying temperatures. At first everything looked fine in our HT4100 engine (an engine used in a large portion of our production). I could see the coolant moving through the block and oil flowing to all the critical surfaces. Then, all of a sudden, slight amounts of the coolant entered the oil! With continued operation the amount of coolant mixed with oil increased, with the obvious break down of specification standards of the oil, which would, over time, cause the engine to fail.

It was determined that in some cases, the cylinder walls of the castings were too thin, and that under heat, pressure, and friction, coolant could enter the oil, diluting its effectiveness.

So to re-cap, here is what Cadillac and I, its General Manager, faced.

Cadillac had overly downsized most of its product lines. Our cars lacked distinct Cadillac characteristics. Our quality had slipped, and many of our

engines could or would fail. On the bright side, I was privileged to have a core of highly talented managers and general employees capable of working together to lead the organization in executing a turnaround.

At this time, General Motors had recently undergone a major reorganization in an attempt to reduce the number Divisions reporting directly to an Executive Vice President. Chevrolet, Pontiac, and GMC (CPC) reported to Lloyd Reuss, a Group Executive, and Buick, Oldsmobile, and Cadillac (BOC) reported to Bob Stempel, also a Group Executive. It was the first attempt to reduce the role of divisional Vice Presidents and to start to consolidate manufacturing, finance, material management, and to a degree, engineering into "centers of expertise".

Commonization again raised its head. Reporting lines were increased rather than decreased. New, powerful groups emerged, each attempting to further their own science (manufacturing, engineering, finance, purchasing, etc.) and divisional exclusivities suffered. Worse yet, the divisional nameplates and their market segment coverage blurred, and sales declined.

A turning point for Cadillac came in 1987 when it reassumed responsibility for most of its engineering and manufacturing. Under the BOC organization Cadillac had become primarily a marketing arm, unable to effectively influence the overall character of Cadillac products. During that time Cadillac had lost its traditional control of engineering and manufacturing operations.

Fortunately, I was able to regain control of Cadillac design as a first step toward recovery. Then, in late 1987, we merged the BOC Detroit Product Team into Cadillac, giving us control of all our engineering and manufacturing operations. Cadillac took charge of the Fleetwood and Clark Street assembly plants, the new and modern Detroit-Hamtramck Assembly Plant, the Grand Blanc Stamping Plant and approximately 500 engineers. Essentially, Cadillac was again a self-contained car company.

Celebrations took place at every Cadillac location. Cadillac flags went up along with "old glory" at every location, and employees welcomed the opportunity to exclusively design, engineer, build, and sell Cadillacs again. Both union and

salaried employees rejoiced. I recall a significant number of “old” Cadillac employees who had retired under the BOC organizational framework returned and insisted that all their retirement paperwork be changed back to reflect that they were Cadillac, not BOC retirees! The power of the Brand and the pride of working for Cadillac began to reassert itself everywhere. There was a genuine feeling among the roughly 10,000 Cadillac employees that they were ready to turn things around.

What we needed was a plan. The organization was in place to make a difference. I had a feeling that every corner of our Division was set to do their part and was up to a challenge. What follows briefly recaps the actions put in place to regain our history of success. While most of the specific initiatives went on simultaneously for the next several years, I will discuss them in the following categories: Product redesign, Power train development, Cadillac quality, and Sales motivation and marketing.

THE REDESIGN OF CADILLAC CARS

While the science of computer design and simulation was progressing rapidly, in the mid to late 80’s computers were an assist, but not yet the answer for “fast” to market. We started with talented designers who could visualize through their creative minds and document their visions on paper and in clay. Designers need freedom. They need to be sure they understand the desired outcome in terms of size, market, cost, and image. Then you can turn them loose to develop alternatives for consideration that will fit engineering and build capabilities.

Fortunately, Chuck Jordan, GM’s Vice President of Design and I, worked well together. I respected him, and I believe he respected me. He had an outstanding design team, and he dedicated a significant amount of his talented resources to Cadillac. Divisional organization within Design included an exterior and interior studio for current product, another for future product, and a third for experimental design. We used to have specialists on either interior or exterior design, with the two having to come together for the final product. More recently, interior design is done simultaneously with exterior design to

eliminate potential conflicts and speed up the process.

Due to the importance of Cadillac's need to not only improve current product acceptance, but generate a complete re-design of the next generation cars at one time, Chuck assigned us five studios with special help from world famous Ferrari and Alfa Romero designer Sergio Pininfarina in Turin, Italy. Pininfarina had a long history with Cadillac, having designed a number of concept and specialty vehicles for the division. Previously it would have been unheard of to devote these amounts of resources to one Division. But Cadillac was different. It is the flagship, and as such, it must generate a significant profit for General Motors and serve as a plus for all GM cars. General Motor's customers like to think that they all have a "little bit of Cadillac" in any GM nameplate they might own.

A first step was to cancel the Cimarron, which was done without fanfare. Next, we started what we could do in the short term to regain some of what had been lost through size reductions of current Deville, Fleetwood, Eldorado, and Seville models. After all, they would have to be sold for at least three to four years before completely new replacements could be ready.

Taillight and minor rear fender extensions were designed on a rush basis. Anything to regain the appearance of size was first on the list. On Fleetwood models we designed a "closed in" framework of their back glass for a sort of "limo" treatment. It worked. And the addition of slightly more chrome on most vehicles – especially on the grill – improved Cadillac presence on the highway and also enhanced the look of Cadillac cars in the customer's driveway.

Thanks to the leadership of then Chief Engineer, Warren Hirshfield, we contented and released for production the first Seville STS (STS stood for Seville Touring Sedan). The idea was to take the then current Seville, without any tricks in increasing its size, and add performance enhancement to its top speed and 0 to 60 time, remove chrome and replace it with matching body color paint, and add high performance aluminum sport wheels and a "spoiler" for an added effect. It worked. The STS has continued every year since as a mainstay in the Cadillac line, given its share of special design and real performance

capabilities, and currently (2011, its final year) is marketed as an STS without the additional Seville designation.

The first all-new entry, the Deville for 1989, was given massive development resources. Its new design came along quite readily, and by incorporating “simultaneous engineering” processes, it was completed in record time. It had everything we were looking for in overall size, modern styling, performance, and handling characteristics. When it was brought to market it was an immediate success, and dealers welcomed it with relief. Even limousine manufacturers were pleased that Cadillac once again had a car that could be extended into an attractive limo, putting a number of excellent looking cars in the hands of affluent customers across the country.

As the “new” FWD Deville and Fleetwood were introduced, we dropped the Fleetwood designator from the very large RWD Fleetwood Brougham. It became simply a Cadillac Brougham and would soon be dropped due to its age in Cadillac’s product offering and its “low tech” identity. As it became public that Cadillac was soon to discontinue the aging Brougham, the first of two threats on my life occurred, frightening my secretary and, I admit, making me nervous for a time. My secretary, Dianne Rowader, answered my phone one afternoon and the caller warned that “if Grettenberger doesn’t reverse his decision to stop Brougham production, he’s a dead man!” To top it all off, about twenty minutes later he called back again just to make sure Dianne understood what he had said! I was out, she was scared, the police and Cadillac Security were called, and all efforts to trace the call or determine the caller’s name and location failed.

The second threat came a few months later, and again it was a secretary, not Dianne as I remember, to take a call saying that a bomb had been placed in my office! I had a three-room suite consisting of an entry and secretarial area, a conference room, and my actual office and bathroom. We had to evacuate the entire building that time, while Cadillac Security and Detroit police searched everywhere for a bomb. They found nothing. All that happened was that our offices were a mess, and everyone got to go home early that day!

Meanwhile, the race to re-design our cars went on. We started to do “concept cars” to draw attention to our stand at auto shows, both across the U.S. and at Geneva, Frankfurt, Paris and Birmingham, England. We needed to demonstrate that things were going on at Cadillac...that we were on the move and were a car company poised to command attention. At every location we used the concept vehicles as a means to gain marketing inputs from show visitors by interview and questionnaire...seeking direction on what people liked or disliked.

“Show car” concept vehicles were expensive to make, but did give our designers an opportunity to “reach” towards what Cadillac cars of the future would look like. And obviously, the real data from interviews was helpful, if mostly taken with a “grain of salt”. Our designers and engineers knew what potential new features, style, performance, and capabilities were possible to offer in the near future. Customer inputs are only based on what they know or have been exposed to, and that stems from current production cars. Cadillac concept cars such as the Aurora (a car name that I later released for Oldsmobile to use), the Solitaire (a sleek, technologically advanced luxury coupe) and the Voy’age (a large, highly futuristic, V12 powered luxury sedan), did wonders for Cadillac publicity, clearly signaling the advance of future products from our Division.

After the ’89 Deville, the next two nameplates for re-design were Eldorado and Seville. These two car lines represented Cadillacs that expressed highly personal attributes that would appeal to customers who wanted to make a special statement about themselves, their level of success, and their personality. It was a difficult task for our design team, but everyone understood the objective and was committed to it.

In the case of the Eldorado, Chuck Jordan enlisted the Italian design team of Pininfarina into a “contest” to see which design was best. Pininfarina had worked for some time on the newly introduced Allante, Cadillac’s first roadster in recent times, and a car that was receiving rave reviews for timeless design. What resulted from the contest between GM and Peninfarina was much more than a “combination” of themes. Taunt, but flowing lines complimented the

new Eldorado front to back, and top to bottom. This redesign came out on time for the 1992 introduction, and remained virtually unchanged until the Eldo was discontinued in 2008, sixteen years later.

During the period leading up to the introduction of the Allante in 1987, and then throughout the design phase of the '92 Eldorado, I made many trips to Torino and became closely connected to Sergio Pininfarina and his family as well as a host of world famous designers in his company. We became quite close friends, Sergio and I. It wasn't all business, and we always tried to save a little free time when I was in his home city as well as when he traveled here, or when we would meet at an auto show somewhere in the world.

Two wonderful experiences stand out on the personal side. On one occasion Jane and I had an evening engagement in New York City helping to host Cadillac's support of "A Million Dollar Cabaret", a spectacular event held in the Rainbow Room atop Rockefeller Plaza with Elizabeth Taylor personally soliciting large contributions to the fight on AIDS from everyone there. It was an important sponsorship for a serious cause to research treatment options...and, it provided Cadillac with a personal entre to a large and prosperous audience, all Cadillac prospects!

After returning to our hotel that night I began to have an uncomfortable, itching feeling on both of my forearms. Jane thought I'd get over it, so I went to bed, having to get up early for a Concorde flight to London where I had a luncheon meeting. After that I had to catch another flight to Turin in time for dinner with Sergio Pininfarina. An amazing schedule to say the least! All this time my arms began to swell, itch terribly, and turn quite red. I mentioned it to Sergio, and I remember him saying that if it worsened he would take me to his personal physician in the morning.

It did worsen, and off we went to his doctor at a hospital first thing the next morning. It was like walking into a hospital here in the States 50 years ago! Very unsettling. They weren't quite sure what was the matter, but treated each arm with a salve and wrapped them in gauze. I made it through that day's meetings, but the second night was one of the longest and most painful I had

ever experienced. I had help from Sergio again, but this time it was to get me on the earliest flight he could back to Detroit, which he did. I called my office and asked for a car and driver to meet the plane and take me to Ford Hospital, which is what happened.

Ford doctors removed the gauze and were amazed at what they saw. It had been a serious case of poison ivy...but now had grown to alarming proportions. High doses of steroids were injected, and after a couple days I made dramatic improvement. Enough for Italian medical treatment!

On another occasion while on a driving vacation with Doug and Nancy Milbury that took us to Turin, Sergio invited the four of us to dinner at an excellent place outside of town with his wife, two sons, and daughter. What I didn't know was that just recently an attempt had been made on Sergio's life – a gun shot that smashed the windshield of his car as he was driving. The Red Brigade had been active in Northern Italy, kidnapping and holding their captors for ransom. Sergio had reserved the entire restaurant for the evening. Not a large place, but still, a serious and expensive precaution. We all arrived from different directions in different cars, of course. All during the delightful dinner, armed guards remained in the room and around the perimeter outside. Everyone appeared friendly and happy to see us in such a beautiful setting. It was exciting and a little scary, but it proved Pininfarina's resolve and that of his family.

Sergio did make an extra personal effort for us to reach design approval for the Eldorado, but the Seville design, also destined to be all-new in 1992, was a different matter. Its theme didn't come easy. One execution after another, both in print and in clay, proved "not just right" and had to be sacrificed. I can't even remember how many times we started over. There were constraints – the severe slope and fast angle of the windshield, the rear wheel opening and its construction, trunk luggage capacity versus rear seat legroom trade-offs, and finally, could it be built to meet assembly line capabilities – these and many other considerations had to be dealt with.

Then after much frustration, I remember that on a Saturday morning about ten o'clock, I received a call from Chuck Jordan, Vice President of design, "I think

we're on to something, is it possible for you to come down to the studios right away?"

I left immediately and when I arrived at the studio, Chuck and several of his Seville design team – Dick Ruzzin, and Len Casillo and others – were huddled around and over the full sized clay that would eventually be the final execution of the 1992 Seville. They were cutting paperboard templates to stick on various angles and curvatures of the vehicle's design, using tailor pins, I might add, so that one could be easily removed and replaced by another to give a differing exterior view.

Then, over and over, Chuck and his crew and I, would step back for what Jordan referred to as a "squinty-eyed view" of the whole car in clay. Suddenly, after final placements of templates following a huge number of trials, the theme of the overall side view, followed by the front and rear views started to take shape. "I'm convinced we've found our theme," Jordan said, and so we had.

In the days and weeks that followed, the clay was finalized and reduced to computerized dimensions to be converted to hundreds of prints and manufacturing guides to pull together for final approval of production. The result? The 1992 Seville won more awards than any car in Cadillac's history. Motor Trend Car of the Year was the first, and most prominent. Automobile Magazine's Automobile of the Year and Car & Driver Magazine's "Ten Best Automobiles" soon followed. Every auto analyst responsible for luxury performance sedans gave us top billing. What a thrill it was to accept the Car of the Year trophy at the '92 Detroit Auto Show. Even today, in 2011, the car looks good on the road. It truly was an "advanced design", and only minor "refreshments" were added during its nineteen-year run.

POWER TRAIN DEVELOPMENT

All during the time that Cadillac styling initiatives were steadily progressing to new product executions, serious actions to correct power train shortcomings were underway in our engine offerings. To recap, Cadillac faced the challenge

of “what to do” to correct the prospects of engine failure on HT4100’s where engine coolant was finding its way inside the block. The results held the potential of a disaster for owners and an unbelievable press and public opinion problem for the Division. It was more serious by far, than an earlier engine snafu on the Cadillac 8-6-4 V8 that was supposed to electronically determine how many cylinders would be in operation at differing power loads. This technology was intended to save fuel by only using that amount of engine output required under varying power levels. Operation was inconsistent and resulted in dealer technicians modifying the engine to only perform in one mode, rather than to have intermittent skipping in the number of cylinders functioning, thus defeating the design intent.

The HT4100 problem was an indicator of engine failures to come. Stopping production was considered and rejected as a primary strategy since not all engines were affected, and tests could be performed to indicate where there were high probabilities for failure. There also were additives that could be inserted into the radiator, which, in many cases, eliminated the problem.

Nevertheless, many owners would be subject to repairs, expense, and inconvenience if their car would fail, and this could not be allowed to happen. We made the decision to inform dealers that when an owner would experience any degree of oil contamination that the engine was to be replaced under warranty, free of charge. Dealers were directed not to attempt repairs by opening the block. A system of dealer notification to the Division was put in place to immediately ship a replacement motor to the dealer in exchange for the return of the problem engine.

This was the right decision to minimize owner inconvenience as rapidly as possible, but it was expensive to do so.

The power and performance shortcomings took more time to resolve. Cadillac owners have historically preferred larger displacement engines with long life, quiet performance, and power enough to come off the line and reach high speeds with ease. Fuel economy was important, but not nearly so as they are today, or were in the early 90’s.

We began a series of enhancements in displacement, each providing more power from the same basic engine, but with better fuel economy. We moved from the troublesome HT4100, a 4.1 liter engine, to versions at 4.5 and 4.9 liters, respectfully. Cadillac sales and owner satisfaction improved. During the 1990-1993 time period, development of an all-new 4.6 liter, aluminum block, DOHC, was conducted. This motor was mainly the child of an outstanding engine engineer by the name of Tom Stephens and his team (Tom is currently, in 2011, Vice Chairman and Chief Technology Officer of General Motors).

It was exclusively offered in the 1993 Allante roadster, a low volume, high performance vehicle that permitted an ultimate test of the engine at a low enough usage level to monitor every characteristic before beginning high-volume production across all Cadillac car lines. We called it the Northstar V8. As a Division we wanted to continue moving up in volume and further towards higher price and luxury in the marketplace. When viewing this objective graphically, where we wanted to go was further up and in the North East quadrant of a price (horizontal) and luxury (vertical) axis. The Northeast direction if you will, hence Northstar.

The Northstar V8 went on to great success, the best eight-cylinder engine in the world, as expressed by many critics. Even today many thousands of Cadillac cars are on the road enjoying its performance and reliability.

CADILLAC QUALITY

Cadillac quality had always been its strength. From its earliest days and its first international award, the Dewar Trophy, quality came before anything else. It allowed Cadillac to be on everyone's list for most desirable car, for the ultimate of prestige, compared with vehicles like Rolls Royce, Duesenberg, Mercedes Benz, and Packard during the early days of the industry. As mentioned earlier, by 1985 Cadillac had a difficult time supporting the claim to be "Standard of the World". Truly a massive effort would be required to re-establish our reputation.

Cadillac's turnaround started in 1985. That's when our engineering and manufacturing departments started implementing simultaneous engineering. SE contrasted with the traditional serial approach to automobile development and manufacturing, in which individual departments functioned largely in isolation from the others.

With SE, product design and development was able to begin with integrated knowledge of all essential elements, including performance targets, product features, systems and parts, processes, and maintenance requirements. Simultaneous engineering anticipates how changes in one functional area affect the others, making it easier to prevent problems and bottlenecks, determining in advance how to monitor and control production processes, and to identify opportunities for quality improvement.

The effectiveness of SE, however, hinged critically on carefully orchestrated teamwork. At that time more than 700 employees and supplier representatives participated on simultaneous engineering teams responsible for defining the engineering, marketing, and continuous improvement of all Cadillac products.

Successes achieved by SE teams were the springboard to a complete transformation in our quality culture. Our partnerships with the United Auto Workers (UAW) were a catalyst in this transformation. Along with our executive team and plant managers, union leaders served on the Divisional Quality Council, which was a part of the UAW/GM Quality Network. At Cadillac the Quality Network also included plant councils at each major facility, which were supported by the efforts of several hundred work teams and cross-functional teams, each composed of between 10 and 15 hourly and salaried employees.

It was at this time, early 1988, that we decided to compete for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. The criteria for the competition seemed to closely align with all that we were doing to regain our emphasis on top quality in the first place, so why not try and use that exercise to our advantage? And, if we should win, what better press and morale builder could we have than to

receive a Presidential citation for our efforts?

We plunged into the Baldrige contest. It entered in to every facet of Cadillac's business, including the performance of every business unit and sub-unit, right down to every employee – executive or hourly – from top to bottom throughout the organization. Particular emphasis was placed on me, as Cadillac's General Manager, and my Executive Staff. There would be no lip service to the Baldrige effort by those who might pass the work to others. Every employee had a role, and every employee must be aware of his/her mission. All this was closely scrutinized and tested by the visits of Baldrige examiners. We had the start of the need for an absolute understanding of every employee's role with our widespread simultaneous engineering program. What was needed was to broaden the scope of this initiative to include everyone at Cadillac and to educate each to the importance of individual contributions.

I knew we were making progress when during one of the examiner visits a Baldrige representative approached a line worker who had a particularly difficult job lifting and polishing heavy Cadillac bumpers and asked, "Do you know who your customer is?" The person's response was, "Do you mean my internal or external customer?" No doubt, we were getting through to our workforce.

We pledged to involve our employees "in the running of the business" and solicited the views of all employee teams during the preparation of annual business plans, which included both short and long term quality improvement goals. We had an open, yet disciplined planning process, culminating with detailed quality plans for every unit. Feedback on progress was provided through individual and team recognition awards. We were developing a clear picture of what the division must do to maintain or achieve world-class status in each category.

We were very much aided by W. Edwards Deming, a professional quality guru brought to our organization by our Chief Engineer, Robert Dorn, himself a graduate of Dr. Deming's philosophy and teachings. Dr. Deming taught the teachers of our organization. He made us all experts in focusing on all facets of

quality and how to achieve it. Cadillac owed him a great deal of credit for our quality turnaround, and we promoted his leadership to other GM units as well.

In 1989, two key initiatives took place. Cadillac increased its warranty term from the twelve month, 12,000 miles commonly offered in America, to four years, 50,000 miles, a remarkable and newsworthy advance. Next, under the direction of Bill Lewellan, Cadillac General Service Manager, Cadillac introduced the first "Roadside Service" program for all Cadillacs under the warranty period. A phone call would initiate a response from the nearest Cadillac dealer, complete with trained mechanics, fast moving maintenance parts, and even a few gallons of gas. Cadillac dealers responded enthusiastically to this initiative, putting together a large network of mobile service units. We even set up specially priced GMC or Chevrolet vans to ease the investment costs associated with a dealer's compliance. It was a huge first step.

Then we got the news. It was the fall of 1989, and the Secretary of Commerce announced the winners of that year's Baldrige Award. We were not among them! We did receive an "honorable mention", but it did little to assuage the feeling that ran rampant across Cadillac. All that work. We thought we would win. It was like a punch to the gut.

Shortly thereafter at one of my staff meetings, we discussed this loss and its impact on our division. It had taken its toll, but we knew, too, that competing as hard as we did resulted in improvements to Cadillac's success in building, selling, and servicing better quality cars. We just didn't know whether we should try again the next year. I wasn't sure that we had the drive to go through all the competitive actions again the next year. What if we lost a second time? What would our organization's morale be like then?

We decided to put the question up to our people. We did a survey that reached every member of the Cadillac team. "Should Cadillac try again for the 1990 Baldrige?" I was so proud of the response. The overwhelming result of our inquiry was, "Yes, we want another chance! And we will win this time! Let's go for it!"

And that's just what we did. We did everything we had done in 1989, but even better, and more complete, and more involved at every level. Cadillac did win the 1990 Baldrige National Quality Award, and to this day Cadillac is the only automobile manufacturer to have won the Baldrige. The award was presented in the auditorium of the Department of Commerce by President George H. W. Bush and Secretary Robert Mossbacher. Other winners in our category were John Akers of IBM and Fred Smith of FedEx.

The beautiful Steuben crystal and gold award, ironically, is now on display in a special section of The Henry Ford museum, Dearborn, Michigan, where it has been on loan for quite some time.

SALES MOTIVATION AND MARKETING

Anyone not experienced in the sales and marketing of automobiles will have a difficult time comprehending the resources necessary to establish an image, reach millions of prospects, motivate hundreds of franchised dealers and their sales teams, and provide a rich and satisfying ownership experience to customers. It takes much more than dollars to accomplish the necessary actions that will answer challenges like these.

It takes street smarts, dedication, the commitment of dealers and their sales and service departments, and creative experts in advertising and promotion to begin to do the job, and an extra measure of luck to be successful.

The Cadillac dealer network, some 1600 strong, was the most significant asset the division possessed in marketing its cars. By and large they were community leaders, well capitalized, housed in outstanding facilities, profitable, and had top-notch personnel in both sales and service departments. Cadillac recognized the importance of keeping its dealers motivated and totally committed to their marketing role, and to assist in this task, we conducted competition among dealers to achieve what we called the "Master Dealer" program. It was not a competition between dealers, but a program to encourage dealers to achieve very high standards within their own dealership by hitting difficult targets in

every department.

Out of the total dealer network, we could expect a hundred or so annually to be successful in reaching all the goals set. The prestige that was associated with this recognition led to real pride among the entire dealer body, and competition to achieve repeat wins was always intense. In addition to being awarded a specially tailored green jacket with a gold Cadillac wreath and crest, dealers and their spouses were hosted to a four-day meeting held at a luxurious resort location within the United States. Meetings would include special reveals of new Cadillac cars and marketing programs, as well as outstanding guest speakers – among whom were Henry Kissinger, Alexander Haig, Dick Cheney (then Secretary of Defense), Presidents Bush and Reagan, Bob Costas, and Arnold Palmer (himself a Cadillac dealer in Charlotte, NC), just to name a few.

In addition, the final night banquet provided truly outstanding and famous entertainers such as Tony Bennett, Bob Newhart, Ann Margaret, Don Rickles, Sammy Davis, George Burns, Liza Minnelli, and Paul Anka. You can imagine how excited and pleased Cadillac dealers were to have had this special attention up close and personal.

When marketing to affluent segments of the market, it is not efficient to try to cover the mass media as you would with mass-market brands such as Ford or Chevrolet. It is far better to pick your targets with a rifle, rather than a “shotgun” approach. As examples, we launched major efforts into golf, sailing, and polo, all with the intent to become associated with upper income market segments.

Since 1968, Cadillac and Travelers Insurance had been the sole sponsors of the Masters Golf Tournament, still known as the number one PGA event in the world. With only two advertisers we achieved huge ratings for reaching the “right” audience for our cars and had plenty of exposure during the four-day event. It was expensive for Cadillac, but worked out to be great coverage for less money than if we had done much more regular TV nationwide. In addition to sponsoring the Masters on television, we provided a large number of vehicles for official and player courtesy use. These units were in high demand at only

slight discounts at the conclusion of the tournament.

As sponsors, Cadillac was offered spots for two foursomes to play the Augusta course on the Monday morning following the end of regulation play. On two occasions I used my "prerogative" and played with others of our Cadillac and advertising agency team. I'm not a very good golfer, but the thrill of being out there and actually playing on exactly the same layout from the day before was thrilling so say the least. So much so that on my first drive the first time out I dubbed my shot, and it only went about a hundred yards down the first fairway!

The second time I played there, Don Hackworth, another GM Vice President and friend of mine, played with us in the other foursome. He had a very large "professional" golf bag... a beautiful sight to see. As we were getting ready to tee off, I noticed our caddies for the two groups having some quiet conversation, and some money changed hands. It dawned on me that they were betting between each other, pitting our group against the men in the second group. At the turn, my caddy spoke to one of the others and I heard him say "how you doing?" The other caddy answered with a sour look, "Shit, my man's all bag". I've had more fun at Hackworth's expense with that story time and again.

We really started getting into golf seriously about 1990. At that time the Senior PGA Tour was just getting started for pros fifty years and older. Some great names were included, and the TV audiences and actual attendance was growing rather fast. Our agency worked with Dean Beman, the man behind the tour, and arranged to sponsor the annual Cadillac NFL Golf Classic in Clifton, New Jersey, where senior tour players and top NFL football players are paired to compete. Before long we had formed a Cadillac "team" of senior tour pros that included Lee Trevino, Bob Murphy, Jay Siegel, Jim Colbert, Jim Dent, Dave Stockton and Larry Ziegler. They could win tour points all season long and competed for new Cadillacs at the end of the season.

At every event in the Cadillac Series, we had on-site car displays, hospitality areas, and advertising to enable Cadillac to further leverage its golf sponsorships. We signed Fred Couples as our only PGA regular tournament

player, and he, coupled with all the Senior Tour “heros” of the game wearing Cadillac apparel, gave us a significant and productive presence in the sport.

Cadillac’s involvement with sailing centered on the sponsorship of the America’s Cup. It was also an event well attended and suited to attract upper income followers, all good prospects for Cadillac cars. We teamed up with Dennis Conner, a twice America’s Cup winner, and his boat the “Stars and Stripes”. This world competition was starting to be covered live on television internationally, and while also expensive, fit into our budget. We competed with Conner at the helm twice, once in Freemantle, Australia, and later in San Diego, California.

In addition to providing sponsorship dollars to the Stars and Stripes as several other major companies did, we were able to offer Dennis Conner and his ship designers the opportunity to use a GM Cray supercomputer and technology and, more importantly, access to the GM wind tunnel to optimize and reduce drag on the boat’s carbon fiber hull and keel design for optimum strength and aerodynamic fluidity.

Cup events also provided highly motivational sites for Cadillac dealer incentive contests. Dealers would be grouped by size across the country and compete against targets set by our sales department to win trips to race locations. Sailing at this level, the U.S. against world competition, allowed Cadillac to gain new prospects that we had not been able to attract as successfully before. I had the opportunity personally to experience the thrill of riding with Conner on the Stars and Stripes off the coast of southern California during the American sail-off to determine the ultimate contender for the United States. We sailed against America II, owned by Bill Koch, in the semi-finals and won! America’s Cup boats have a crew of 16, including the captain, the tactician, and the navigator. Race rules allow a 17th man “owner” berth, and that was me. The sounds, the wind and speed of the boat, the command of the captain, and the proficiency of the crew are a wonder to behold. Close maneuvering at the start, and at the buoys on the course are exciting and dangerous as the contenders sometimes come within a foot or two of colliding!

Another limited, but very focused, market for Cadillac's promotion is the world of Polo...and I'm not referring to Polo brand clothing! Yes, the Sport of Kings, Polo...played and followed by the affluent and ultra rich as well. Talk about a rifle shot target group, well suited to the luxury car market. In fact for over 20 years, Cadillac has had a presence, even now, sponsoring the annual Cadillac Cup for charity, which moves from one locale to another around the United States.

Under my direction in 1987, Cadillac's involvement in Polo led to one of our greatest publicity events. That year we had sponsored our own polo team, playing out of the Palm Beach Polo Grounds located in a magnificent complex in Wellington, Florida. This complex was built at the initiative of Bill Ylvisaker, Chairman of Gould Inc. On this particular date, our team was playing a team on which Prince Charles was also scheduled to play! He and Princess Diana flew in for a special early luncheon before the match, and Jane and I had the opportunity to have lunch with them in a very small group (about 12 people) at the Polo Club.

We were "schooled" on proper protocol in advance. I tried to have them picked up in a new Cadillac, but to no avail. Rolls Royce had to be the one! We'll never forget their arrival. A receiving line was formed with Jane and me near the head due to Cadillac's presence that day. Prince Charles looked just as he does in every picture you've ever seen of him. Trim, very "English" in speech and demeanor. He asked me if I were a "player," and I had to tell him "no".

Next in line was Princess Di. She was stunningly beautiful! And tall! She was clearly taller than Charles, and when I shook her hand and looked into her eyes, they were exactly at the same level as mine. As tall as she was, she still had high heels and clearly was (except for Jane) the most beautiful woman at the luncheon...and later at the grandstand, too.

We had a few moments for small talk before sitting down, and Prince Charles excused himself quite soon to get into his polo outfit and pads. Mostly the talk

was about the beautiful day, the match, and of, course, I did get a few words in about Cadillac. Not enough to be boorish, but enough to not miss the chance!

The polo match was great! Prince Charles played very well, and it is not an easy game to play! I was happy, too, about the occasion, since my daughter Ann was there to watch the match with us and see Princess Diana in her big floppy hat (my description!).

But it doesn't end there. That evening Jane and I were invited to an elite dinner at the Breakers. It was truly an experience. The dinner was a tribute to Armand Hammer and his wife, he being one of the world's best known businessmen and philanthropists. Jane and I were near the head table. Listen to this: my dinner partner was Joan Collins! Jane's was Joan's much younger husband, who dozed off and on all evening.

Joan did not doze! She was upbeat and intelligent to talk to and I enjoyed her company...especially since we had many toasts and, of course, each time I had to help her up from her chair in her very low cut gown! I thought I'd hear an alarm and wake up soon.

Bob Hope was a featured speaker along with Prince Charles, and Merv Griffin was the master of ceremony. Bob Hope was good, but not as quick or sharp as he was (who is?) in years past. Charles talked about one of his favorite charitable activities – saving trees or something like that – and Armand Hammer hardly said a word. He didn't have to!

Not all of my promotional efforts came off so well. In 1990, I was contacted by Donald Trump, expressing an interest in co-sponsoring a luxury limousine program! His idea was this. He would input to the interior styling of the vehicle and allow Cadillac to use his name in promotional activity. By doing so, he intended to purchase fifty of them for his personal use. He was looking for means to transport high rollers from New York City to his hotel and casinos in Atlantic City and return.

The “Donald” had also designed a rather attractive Trump symbol in chrome, which he wanted to place on the rear quarter of the car for added “distinction”. We had been doing business with a limousine conversion manufacturer on Long Island for some time and he jumped at the chance to do a project with Cadillac and Donald Trump! Planning went forward, and I met Donald at his offices in Manhattan. We decided to build two prototypes to cement the deal and to secure firm approvals from all parties as to content, specifications, and price.

The two prototypes were built but when it came down to approving the transaction, and placing a purchase order for the fifty limos, nothing happened! Donald gave all sorts of reasons for a delay, purchased one for “his father”, but no order for the remaining forty-nine. I’m not even sure what happened to the second prototype...probably the Long Island conversion “partner” kept it or sold it, who knows? In retrospect I think it was a blessing in disguise.

So much for the Trump limousine! Suffice it to say, there were many more promotions of the “successful” variety going on all the time. And this doesn’t mean that we didn’t promote, incentivize, and advertise in all the traditional ways. Magazines were a big medium for Cadillac because, again, you could pinpoint their specific readership to make sure we were spending the ad dollars efficiently. TV was mass market, but here the shows were researched carefully. Direct mail and support for dealer initiatives of their own were important. So were incentives and dealer bonuses.

On one occasion when we had unsold inventory in factory “warehouses”, our general sales manager, Pete Gerosa, and I nearly got ourselves fired. The market was very slow, dealers didn’t want more inventory cars, and we really needed to clear the warehouses and get the cars into dealer hands where they had a better chance to sell. Sooo, we came up with a program we called “Stock and Sell”. The idea was to give dealers a bonus whenever they took a car out of the warehouse, and another bonus when it was sold or leased to a retail customer. Well, it worked. Too well, or at least a lot better than we thought it would. The cars flew out of the warehouse, and so did our budget for the program. We proved that PSA (price sells all).

Keep in mind that all four of the areas I've just described, the re-design of our cars, power train development, Cadillac quality, and Cadillac promotion and marketing, went on simultaneously for several years. We had successes along the way, but it took awhile to correct our shortcomings and put the division back on its feet. Looking back, our sales during my years at the controls never went lower than 240,000. We were always #1 in the U.S. luxury car market. Our reputation for quality recovered, but with still a ways to go – remember about perception lagging reality? It would take more time to achieve world-class rankings. And finally, we made a profit that we could be proud of for General Motors.

Best of all, from my standpoint, the morale and “can do” attitude of our employees were as high as a kite, and, I believe, the envy of all GM divisions when I retired in 1997. That was very important to me. Recently I spoke to the retired engineers of Cadillac – a group totally devoted, still, to Cadillac. From their reaction, I had the feeling that if I asked, they would jump back into harness and go to work again! Truly dedicated.

Before drawing this chapter to a close, I want to say a few things about Roger Smith. He's been much maligned for not being a “car guy”, for his high-pitched “squeaky” voice, and his insensitivity to workers where plants must be closed or cars cancelled. Michael Moore made a fortune off his extremely negative and mostly untrue portrayal of Roger in Roger and Me.

Roger knew he wasn't a car guy...and for that reason surrounded himself with the finest automotive engineers, designers, and marketers. I rather liked his voice. And Michael Moore couldn't hold a candle to Roger's vision of the future, financial brilliance, honesty, strong character, and leadership skills. He was a true visionary. He started Saturn – calling it a “lulu” – to innovate and seek better relations between the UAW and General Motors, resulting in a car company demonstrating a “new way of doing business”. He made hundreds of millions for General Motors from the acquisition and later sale of Electronic Data Systems (EDS) and Hughes Electronics. Even after the disposal of both of these acquisitions for a huge profit GM shelves were full of technology acquired from Hughes, primarily, that would be used in future car production.

Roger was an excellent communicator with his officer corps and GM's Board. GM's Board met monthly on Mondays. On Thursday or Friday before Board meetings, Roger would hold "shirtsleeve" meetings with all the Corporate officers available in Detroit. We would all be around a long table as Roger reviewed the items up for discussion or decision at the Board meeting the following Monday. We were invited to comment or make any observations or suggestions that might be appropriate. He appreciated receiving input, and every one of us enjoyed these productive, informal sessions.

I found Roger to be a good man to work for, and I enjoyed his personal side too, having been bird hunting with him on several occasions. He was a real sportsman and a good shot, too!

When I decided to retire at age 60, Cadillac was still the GM flagship, and its future as such was assured. I had spent 13 years at the helm, longer than any other General Manager in the division's history...even longer than its founder, Henry Leland. Reorganizations were underway to once again look for new efficiencies that appeared to reduce the scope of divisional management, and I had been there and done that!

I actually had three retirement "send-offs", the first with the Tri-Staters Cadillac dealers in New York City. Most of our dealers from New Jersey, Connecticut, and New York were there and a lot of nice things were said. They gave me a pin stripe New York Yankee's uniform jersey with my name and the number 13 on its back (13 for my years as their Cadillac chief), and my retirement was announced in Times Square on four-story high chase lights, blaring the news to the world!

The second retirement dinner was the GM Corporate affair held at the Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA), with then Chairman Jack Smith in charge. As you might imagine, it was a fun time, but quite formal. Three other GM Vice Presidents were also honored. John Rock, Ed Mertz, and Gary Dickenson. We each had a chance to say a few words, and each of us was presented the

traditional officer retirement gift, a very large solid silver tray with a personal message inscribed along with the signatures of every living GM officer, active or retired, engraved in silver for posterity. We used to refer to it as the "pickle dish"...if you can imagine.

The third and final retirement function was a huge affair, never since duplicated, I am told. It was held at the State Theater, a few doors east of the Fox on Woodward Avenue. Over 500 people were in attendance. Dealers, many with their wives, came from all over the nation. Suppliers, advertising agency executives, Cadillac employees, other Corporate officers, friends and family (my children and all my close relatives) were there, too. It was a very well planned and organized affair – albeit an emotional one for Jane and me.

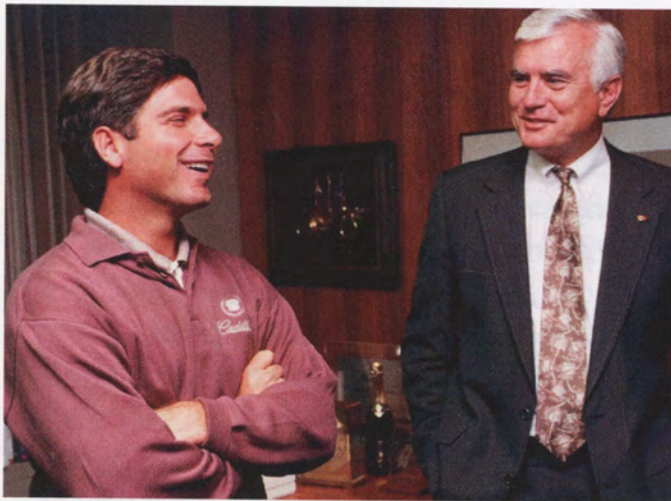
I was roasted and toasted, criticized, and praised. Dallas dealer, Carl Sewell and Dealer Council president Chris MacConnell made memorable comments. There were skits to make fun of my transition to non-GM life with no company planes to fly, only rooms (not suites) to use in hotels, no District Managers to drive me around, and the need for me to use "real money" to pay for everything as I go along!

Fred Couples was there by special video and commented that at last he would be relieved not having me pushing him to WIN every time out! He gave me a set of irons to remember him by. In person at the theater was Lee Trevino, who enjoyed poking fun at me in an on-stage act with Pete Gerosa and others of my sales staff. Even son John got into the act by taking part in a skit about some of my intense mannerisms. Thankfully, I have a video tape (and DVD disc) of the whole party from the several bars, to super hors d'oeuvres, and band music.

Jane accompanied me on stage to the podium at the very end of the evening, and both of us did our best to speak without shedding big tears – not totally successful.

Finally, as a wrap up, a recognition that I received from the Automotive Hall of Fame as "Industry Leader of the Year" in 1991 was probably the ultimate in personal satisfaction. This was certainly special to me to have my name appear in their museum in Dearborn, Michigan, along with many noted auto greats such as Lee Iacocca, Roger B. Smith, Heinz Prechter, Roger Penske, Rick Wagoner, and Dieter Zetsche, winners in other years.

Everyone's favorite golfer, Fred Couples



Cadillac dealer Dick Gidron, Donald Trump and Me



Sammy Davis Jr., Jane and Me



Lee Trevino, super golfing personality

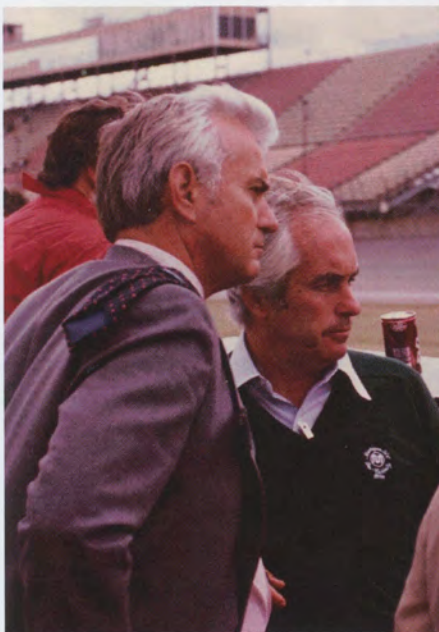


Jane, George Burns & Me



A Dubai Sheik on the "creek"

One of the 24 Limos I personally delivered to CITIC



Roger & Me - Penske that is

Sergio Pininfarina, a great friend and greater designer at the World Trade Center in NYC

Automotive News

August 27, 1996 \$10.00 per copy (including postage and handling charges) Outside the U.S. add \$2.00 per copy. 1996 year—\$40.00 per year, \$7.00 per copy.

Cadillac comeback

Bigger cars, more horsepower lure luxury customers back into the fold

John O. Grettenberger
Cadillac general manager

NEWS/PACT

Press coverage we enjoyed at Cadillac!



QUALITY TAKES THE PRIZE

The Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award accomplished several firsts Wednesday. Federal Express became the first service company to win and Cadillac became the first automaker to drive away with the award. What the honor means to three winners:

<p>John Akers IBM chairman</p>  <p>“The Baldrige Award has helped to rally business around a common objective: more than ever, quality is the key to competing effectively in global markets.”</p>	<p>Fred Smith Federal Express chairman</p>  <p>“At least 15% of the cost of any product or service is spent on rework or repair.”</p>	<p>John Grettenberger Cadillac general manager</p>  <p>“I think it's good for the auto industry in North America. Winning the award now is going to be a measuring point from which we have to improve, rather than one to fall back from.”</p>
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COVER STORY
Baldrige sets standard of excellence



July - Sept. 1991
Volume 25 No. 3

AUTOMOTIVE HALL OF FAME NEWS

Automotive Industry Leader of the Year
John O. Grettenberger

Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award

First of the Finest



Cadillac General Manager John O. Grettenberger gets set to drive the first Allanté onto a transport Jan. 15 at Detroit/Hamtramck. Priced at \$54,700, the Allanté offers just about everything. All about it: Pages 8, 9, 10, 16.

Cadillac Move Draws Applause

With dealers and employees applauding the division, Cadillac on Jan. 7, B-O-C Group Executive William E. Hogwood said Rosetta Riley, director—customer satisfaction; Tom Hirschfeld, named director product planning and specialty

The Highlander, Malcom Forbes' 151ft. Feadship



THE FORBES CONNECTION

Forbes magazine provided an audience that was perfect for luxury car advertising. Their demographics were like a tried and tested map of where Cadillac should go for its print advertising. As a result, we used Forbes as a key advertising venue and became a regular purchaser of a significant number of pages each year.

Even though Cadillac was a valued customer to Forbes, it was still a surprise in 1985 to receive a personal invitation from Malcolm S. Forbes to make a Hudson River cruise on his yacht with the Forbes family and a number of important business leaders, government officials, and noted members of the Arts. Jane and I didn't realize it at the time, but this actually was the start of a long friendship with Malcolm, and his sons Steve (Malcolm S. Jr.), Kip, Tim, and Robert...plus, of course, their wives and several of their children.

That first cruise on the Highlander, a 151' Feadship, began around 10:00 a.m. on a football Saturday following the Hudson River to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point where we disembarked to attend the game with Mrs. Douglas MacArthur and General Colin Powell and his wife. It was a delightful and stimulating afternoon! The game was both interesting and entertaining, but the conversations and getting to know others of the party were the real plus to the day. I was impressed by how Malcolm had organized the trip to the extent that each of his family members had lists of the names of guests that they were responsible for meeting to insure that we were all getting acquainted with each other and having a good time.

Every family member, young and old, was "working". Again, it was good business for Malcolm to be sure...many of us were advertisers. But also the political figures and key opinion leaders there offered comments on business and political issues that would also be appreciated by Forbes writers and staff.

Highlander cruises took place annually for several years. Always the same - formal personal invitations - excellent choices of participants and interesting destinations. I remember visiting Hyde Park and touring FDR's home and likewise, on a subsequent year, doing the same at Sagamore Hill, Teddy Roosevelt's estate, noting his home to be just as strong and impressive as Teddy was himself - animals and hunting scenes in abundance! Cocktails and delicious buffets were served on board the Highlander when appropriate during the trips.

As I said earlier, these cruises were the beginning of several years of contact with Malcolm Forbes and his family. Jane and I were visitors in the Forbes family home "Timberfield" in Far Hills, New Jersey for a celebration of the 70th anniversary of Forbes Magazine. A hundred or more executives from major corporations were there, some arriving by helicopter, some by chauffeur driven limousines. Jane and I drove together - in a new Cadillac, of course.

The activities we shared with Malcolm Forbes and his family got better and better. Tim Forbes and his wife invited us one summer to board the Highlander

in Cleveland and travel over to Put-in-Bay Canada enroute to a final destination on the Detroit River near the Renaissance Center in downtown Detroit.

On another occasion we joined Kip Forbes and his wife and children for a four-day excursion on the Highlander to Glacier Bay, Alaska, with Deborah Norville and her husband, and two other couples, both from the business world. Forbes' Capitalist Tool airplane (a converted 727) picked us up in Lansing, Michigan, on the way to Juneau. What a magnificent cruise! If you can imagine, its own helicopter to fly us up to the glaciers and even land on them! Two, not one, Donzi's to cruise around the icebergs – up close – and fabulous food and wine. Super smooth water in and around the glaciers where we watched them calve. Super quiet except for the roar of the ice when its cliffs crash into the ocean.

When it was over, the Capital Tool (it was painted money green, just as is the Highlander yacht) delivered us safely back to our home in Lansing.

Still, as remarkable as these associations with the Forbes family were, there were even more spectacular events! Malcolm Forbes was a true citizen of the world...in addition to his involvement with business and governmental leaders around the world he owned homes and other real estate in Europe, North Africa, the Pacific rim, and in western states here in the United States.

One such property is Chateau Balleroy near Bayeux and the site of the Normandy invasions of June 6, 1942. Perhaps you have heard the term "Mansart Roof" which is a particular architectural treatment to building a unique French roof. Chateau Balleroy was constructed in the early 1700's using plans prepared by architect Francois Mansart himself. It is a magnificent structure, dominating the small community in which it resides, with fantastic gardens and a large area of fields and woods adjoining and large enough, by the way, for Malcolm Forbes to hold impressive balloon flight exhibitions regularly attracting balloonists from around the world. Cadillac had its own promotional balloon team in the late 80's which also had the occasion to fly at Balleroy, evidence of our international presence.

Malcolm's son Kip hosted a special excursion to Balleroy which Jane and I

were invited to join. Again, flying over and back on the “Capitalist Tool”! It was a small group which included world famous designer Arnold Scaasi and his partner, the head of Rolex for North America, a honest-to-goodness Countess, and a Hollywood producer!

Jane and I were assigned the “blue” suite just down the hall from Malcolm’s room. As you might expect it was decorated in a medium shade of blue with satin upholstered walls, complimentary paintings and antique French furniture. Activities included a special tour of the hugely impressive U. S. military cemetery at Normandy, the Omaha Beach landing sites, shopping in Caen, and exposure to the French countryside. And yes, we had a balloon test flight in the “back yard” as well

A few years later I was planning a driving vacation through that part of France and called Steve Forbes to ask if I might show the chateau to our travelling companions, Doug and Nancy Milbury. They had heard about our visit there and were just dying to have a look-see.

Steve’s response was “Why don’t the four of you plan to stay there overnight and enjoy yourselves?” He checked to be sure it was not in use with other family members, and then confirmed a day/night that it was available and it fit right in with our travel plans. What an experience! Since Jane and I had been there for a few days a couple of years earlier, we conducted the tour to every interesting corner ourselves. There were only two staff members in the chateau; a cook and a man of the house, plus the four of us. Needless to say, that short stay was the highlight of our vacation trip!

Now, I’ve saved the best for last. What turned out to be the biggest world-wide social event of the year was Malcolm Forbes’ 70th birthday party in Tangier, Morocco. It was covered by every communication medium throughout the world and included the famous and the not-so-famous from all walks of life. I’ve kept a complete roster of invitees, and even now it is rather overwhelming to peruse the list. It was held over a four-day weekend as I recall, with flights from Kennedy to Tangier and back. Everyone stayed at a hotel in Tangier which the Forbes family had redecorated at great length to accommodate all the

guests. The actual "birthday party" was held in Malcolm's palace which he had acquired several years earlier, but more about that later.

Getting there was as exciting as anything we did once we arrived. Jane and I were asked to arrive at a special place on the Kennedy Airport facility to await a charter flight. I think we arrived there about 9 o'clock in the morning. When we got there, there was already a huge crowd of people milling around a big protective tent enjoying a stand-up breakfast, with everyone, I'm sure, wondering what was going to happen. Lots of Moroccan bands, dancers and singers dressed in full costume were performing for entertainment.

After what seemed a long time, a DC8 "stretch" taxied over near the site. The doors were opened, and loud speakers began to call for individuals by name to step on board and take their seats. This in itself took quite a long time. Jane and I were not called.

Shortly thereafter the DC8 moved out to the runway with great fanfare and applause from all of us remaining. Not too long after their departure a 747 came tooling over. Just as before, the doors flew open and the loud speaker began calling names. Now a 747 carries a lot of people, as I'm sure you know. It went on and on. Jane and I were not called.

As they were buttoning up the 747 for take off, Jane and I looked at each other, and I remember one of us saying, "Maybe they forgot us!" I think I said, "Maybe I didn't do the right thing when we checked in so they wondering what was going to happen.

Then it happened! To our, and I think everyone's surprise, a gleaming Air France Concorde arrived at the scene. "Oh no, I thought...there's been a mistake. This can't be for us." But it was. Our hearts were beating fast when we heard our names and even faster when we made our way up the ramp and saw some of our travel mates. We were seated directly across from Henry Kissinger and his wife. In the next row up was Barbara Walters. Further down the aisle were Walter Cronkite and his wife. There were more names to drop, but trust me, Jane and I were in tall cotton.

The flight was terrific, just over three hours, I think. And when we landed in Tangier there were huge crowds of Moroccans in full native costumes...singing and dancing...blowing horns...and beating on drums. We had landed before either the DC8 or the 747 that left New York earlier than we, thanks to our remarkable Concorde.

The ride into town was unique to say the least. Our hotel, the Hotel Solazur, was totally dedicated to the Forbes' event and security was extremely tight. We were all issued big name tags to wear around our necks to pass through the circle of guards that surrounded the hotel.

Guides accompanied members of the party who wanted to explore Tangier and its souks. It didn't take long to realize that they were a needed accessory since it was such a foreign and imposing place, totally different from other parts of the world where feeling "safe" is not a concern.

The "main event" was held on Saturday evening at the Palais Mendoub, the home of a former member of the Moroccan royal family which Malcolm had purchased as a vacation home several years earlier. It was very elaborate and extremely interesting to tour and to examine a number of Malcolm's collections, treasures, and objects on display.

The receiving line was primarily Forbes family members including, of course, Malcolm in kilts and full Scottish formal attire. Serving as co-hostess was Elizabeth Taylor resplendent in a beautiful gown. She was to receive a million dollars that evening from the Forbes family recognizing her work in raising funds to fight AIDS everywhere.

The dinner area was outside in huge, decorative, Saharan desert type tents, all floored with large, unbelievably beautiful oriental carpets. Each tent was hosted by one of the members of Malcolm's immediate family. The food was unique but delicious, and fine wines flowed freely. Most of us were in black tie, but a number of the guests arrived in colorful Middle Eastern costumes.

After dinner we heard from Malcolm, Steve, and of course, Elizabeth Taylor who graciously accepted a check for one million dollars in support of her anti AIDS campaign. Standing applause followed, and then we all enjoyed one of the longest, most colorful fireworks displays most of us had ever seen.

Sunday morning around eleven we were all taken to a large parade ground on the outskirts of Tangier for a formal luncheon (again in tents – but not so elaborate) hosted by the King of Morocco. This time the food was certainly impressive but wholly native to Morocco, served in very large trays placed in the center of low tables for everyone to share. We all did our best to feel comfortable on enormous colorful pillows, which were in much greater supply than chairs!

Entertainment centered in the parade area and consisted primarily of horseback riding demonstrations by men dressed in flowing robes...reminiscent of those in Lawrence of Arabia! Large numbers of riders were carrying antique long rifles, and they made repeated mock cavalry charges, firing their weapons at full gallop.

The following day we all boarded our respective planes and headed home to New York. No real problems, but in my case I found it necessary to make repeated stops to the bathroom thanks to our Moroccan picnic!

Upon our arrival in the States we were bombarded by the amount of publicity given this event on radio, television, and the newspapers. Some reports were very critical of Malcolm Forbes for spending a not-so-small fortune on such an extravagance. Others were supportive due to the great gift to fight AIDS. In my mind the publicity alone was worth the price in advertising Forbes Magazine and the other publications marketed by this truly unique family!

A footnote. Malcolm S. Forbes died at his home in Far Hills, New Jersey less than six months after his 70th birthday extravaganza.



Enroute to Malcolm's 70th Birthday



Chateau' Balleroy, Normandy





Jane and Me in the White House Press Room

THE PRESIDENTS

During my General Motors career (1963-1997) I had the pleasure and privilege of direct personal contact with four Presidents of the United States of America. The first was Dwight David Eisenhower. It was only slightly more than a chance meeting, but it was important to me just the same.

I was a young Oldsmobile district manager covering the southern half of Los Angeles, responsible for Olds sales and service and its dealers in that area. In those days, the mid-sixties, Oldsmobile was a hot commodity selling in third place in the industry, behind Chevrolet and Ford. We had the overall transportation sponsorship of the Rose Bowl parade, providing all the Rose Committee needs with a large number of 88 and 98 Olds convertibles.

My assignment at this particular occasion was to make sure that the Grand Marshall's Oldsmobile was in pristine condition, and that I should be close by at all times to offer any assistance required. The Grand Marshall was General Eisenhower with his wife Mamie riding at his side. To say that I was nervous to

meet them and offer my services is an understatement.

When we met, however, before the parade start and at the end of the parade before game time, I was relieved at how friendly and accommodating Eisenhower was to me. We got along just fine, and his Oldsmobile did us proud.

Much further on in my GM career I had the opportunity to interface with Presidents Reagan, George H. W. Bush, and Bill Clinton. As many people are aware, Cadillac has produced the majority of presidential limousines purchased by the Secret Service for our Presidents. They are absolutely unique automobiles and must possess the highest level of reliability. Three identical limos are normally ordered at one time...one always to be with the President, one on its way to the President's next destination, and a third held in reserve.

While General Manager of Cadillac I had frequent contact with the Secret Service, and never once did I receive a negative report on our limousine performance – especially relative towards meeting their specifications for ride, handling, and safety. Presidential limousine specifications are highly classified. Other than to comment on the fact that they are Cadillacs, all reference to build specs are never discussed outside of Secret Service controlled situations. In fact, from the time that limousine construction begins, and nothing exists beyond a rough chassis and wheels, a Secret Service representative is with the vehicles during the entire working day. Each night the construction areas for the vehicles are locked and sealed to insure that there can never be an unauthorized person in close proximity to them.

The armor installed on every exterior surface, the communications capability of the vehicle, its weight, acceleration, top speed, and braking specifications are closely guarded. Even with all of the required modifications, the outward appearance of these vehicles is undeniably Cadillac. This has tremendous value to the status and image of the Division, and, I believe, to the entire Cadillac line.

Presidential limousines are sold to the Secret Service. Cadillac would bid on the sales price to our government, as would Lincoln from the Ford Motor

Company. I do not believe that Chrysler has in modern times been a participant in trying to be selected as a Presidential limousine vender. I know, but will not reveal, the selling prices on those vehicles sold to the Secret Service during my tenure as Cadillac General Manager, but I do not know the details on Cadillac's costs involved. Only the divisional finance director, who had dual reporting lines to me and to the Corporation, knew that number. Suffice it to say, that any subsidy absorbed by Cadillac over their selling price was truly worth that consideration.

This brings me to the next part of the Presidential limousine story. My first personal delivery to a sitting President was to Ronald Reagan, in 1983. Talk about an exciting experience! Upon final acceptance by the Director of the Secret Service, the vehicles were delivered to their control, and only the traditional formal delivery remained. It was scheduled at a particularly busy time for me as on the evening of the designated date I was scheduled to make a keynote address to a large gathering of Cadillac dealers in Florida.

General Motors President F. James McDonald was to accompany me and Cadillac's Director of Public Relations, Sheri Perelli, to meet with the President.

We gathered in the lobby of the GM Air Transport Service at Detroit Metro Airport fairly early that morning and boarded a company jet for the short flight to Washington. I know that Jim McDonald felt the excitement of the day; he even said so to me! We arrived at the Capitol before lunchtime and made sure all was in order for the delivery before having a quick lunch and moving to the White House. We also picked up Warren Hirshfield, Cadillac's Chief Engineer, and one other engineer who had spent untold hours on the Presidential limo project, to be a part of the presentation.

The limousine was sparkling like no other before and was squarely placed under the portico usually reserved for the arrival and departure of visiting dignitaries. We thought the next step was to go inside and form a little receiving line to greet the President, but to our surprise Nancy Reagan appeared to have a look! She did a walk around and opened the doors to check out the interior, all the

time asking all sorts of questions regarding the safety measures of her husband's new limo, primarily those related to protection. She seemed to be satisfied with all our answers, thanked us all, and left with a smile.

Then came our face-to-face meeting. Reagan's personality immediately dominated. He was smiling, enthused about our presence but more so because of the reason we were there! We wasted no time at all and went out to review the Cadillac's features, as a slight rain was falling although we were out of the weather under the portico. President Reagan made some small talk about wanting to drive the car and complained that the Secret Service would never let him drive anywhere himself.

He loved the looks of the Cadillac. After he peered inside he asked me to get inside and sit in the right rear seat, since that is where he would most often sit. The interior roof trim of the limo included perimeter lighting that could be switched on and off to make those inside more visible to people who might be looking, such as in a parade.

So I climbed in as he had asked, and the President stepped back to have a look at how he would be seen. I even gave him a little wave like I supposed he would do when he had the opportunity! He was really pleased! The interesting thing was that he seemed primarily interested in how he would be perceived while riding inside, rather than all the safety and protective features it provided. Quite the opposite to the questions and the reaction of Nancy, who concerned herself with protection above all else.

Then suddenly President Reagan said, "Oh! My goodness! Lets go back inside!" While none of us were aware, out in the yard twenty or thirty yards away there were several Secret Service agents spaced at intervals, and as I said, it was raining lightly. Reagan apologized all the way in, saying, "I completely forgot they were out there. No need to have them get all wet on my account!"

Following that, we did go inside for a short private talk, and then we were on our way --- like I said, a great and memorable experience. We went directly to Washington National to re-board our plane to return to Detroit. I remember

landing at Pontiac airport to let Jim McDonald off, and then it was in the air again for Florida in time for me to make my speech. I was really keyed up after all that had taken place, and I am sure I let my pumped up feeling show through to our dealers that night.

Some years later, after Ronald Reagan left office, Cadillac secured him as a guest speaker for our Master Dealer Conference, where only Cadillac's best dealers were invited to attend. It was a real treat to have him there, in Laguna Beach I believe. He remembered our earlier meeting and told me how much he had enjoyed riding in such great cars.

Now, I was to introduce him that day and it was a real honor. I worked on my intro to make sure it was just right and practiced a few times. Reagan was terrific and brought a standing ovation before taking questions from our dealers.

A little background to what happened at my introduction. In those days, I had been nicknamed and was called (affectionately, I hope) by many of our dealers and "some" of my own people, "The King". Well, Pete Gerosa, our Cadillac National Sales Manager, had contacted Reagan's speech writer and explained this little tidbit of information to him. What it led to was Ronald Reagan's first words to the audience following my intro being "Thanks, John. This is a historical day. It's the first time that a President of the United States has ever been introduced by a King!" The crowd roared.

I had met George H. W. Bush during his campaign for President. He was a likeable man, interesting to talk to, and I was glad to support him. It was a couple of years after his victory, however, that I had a much greater opportunity to get acquainted. In 1990, Cadillac won the Malcolm Baldrige Presidential Citation for quality. This is covered in greater detail in my discussion of Cadillac accomplishments, but nevertheless it's important to my contact with Presidents. It was this George Bush along with Commerce Secretary Robert Mossbacher who presented Cadillac with the Award, and I was the lucky man to accept it on behalf of everyone at Cadillac and the General Motors Corporation.

We had some private time together with other 1990 winners Fred Smith of

FedEx and John Akers of IBM, Baldrige recipients that year. President Bush was delightful to talk to...a stand up guy, fully stimulated about the Baldrige and what it meant as an objective for business and business leaders across the country to raise manufacturing performance in the United States.

Later on, and shortly after President Bush left office, I invited him to speak at our Cadillac Master Dealer Seminar, just as President Reagan had done a few years earlier. I remember that on the afternoon of the day he was scheduled to speak I received an unannounced telephone call from his aide saying that the President wanted to invite my wife Jane and me to join Barbara and him for a round of golf! We were at the Phoenician hotel in Scottsdale, and they had a truly beautiful course that President Bush wanted to play.

How could we refuse? We agreed and hurried around to get ready for what turned out to be a truly enjoyable experience. President Bush had invited two other friends from Phoenix to join our foursome, and Jane played with Barbara and two of her friends. We were both more than a little concerned that we would embarrass ourselves, since I was a 19 handicap, and Jane didn't even have one! As it turned out, our fears were no factor. Jane really enjoyed Barbara Bush, and she was a delight out on the course. A pretty good golfer, too!

It had rained that morning and the course was pretty wet in places. There were rope markers on several of the holes to keep carts at bay. As it turned out I drove President Bush in one cart and his friends played together in another. Just before we started for the first tee, the club pro whispered to me, "Don't worry about those markers, just go wherever you want!"

On one occasion we pulled up to a rope marker, and before I could do anything George Bush jumped out, moved the marker and motioned me forward! I certainly have never duplicated having an ex-President of the United States move barriers for me to allow driving through! We had three Secret Service security men with us for the round, one close by, and one out in front, and one following a distance behind us.

The President was a fast player and on one occasion we asked a foursome ahead of us if we could play through. They agreed and were visibly startled when we approached. The President introduced himself to each and thanked them for letting us play through.

President Bush did an excellent job with his appearance before our dealers the next morning. Following the meeting I invited the President and Barbara to join us in our suite for lunch with a small group of our largest Cadillac dealers and their wives. He was happy to do so, and we had an excellent time together, with each of the dealers posing for photos and asking questions in that informal and personal venue.

That is the last time that I met with President Bush in person, but we have corresponded with each other a number of times. He even sent me a red ball cap from Houston that says "Cadillac Bar" on the front! I have one of his handwritten letters, some photos, (and our golf score card) framed and hanging in our East Lansing home. He beat me by 2 strokes!

President Bill Clinton was in office at the time of the Scottsdale activity, having, of course, won a victory over George Bush. As it turned out, new Presidential Limos had been ordered by President Bush, but by the time they were ready for delivery Bill Clinton had taken over. So it was off once again to the White House for the special delivery!

This time I took along several of my executive staff and key engineers who had been responsible for the build of the Clinton limousines. We all assembled on the drive just outside the oval office and near to the rose garden. President Clinton was right on time and was excited to inspect the new Cadillac and take official "delivery" of it as I handed him the keys. I must say, he was extremely gracious, spending personal time with each member of our party for photos and questions before retiring back to the oval office. Our flight back to Detroit was one of smiles and pride on all of us to have been given the privilege of so much time with our nation's President!

READY, SET, GO!

While I have not yet visited Clinton's Presidential library in Little Rock, Arkansas, a number of friends of mine have, and each was surprised to see a large blown up photo of President Clinton as I handed him his limousine keys. If you go there, they tell me it is near the main entrance!



*To John Grettenberger
With appreciation*

Bill Clinton

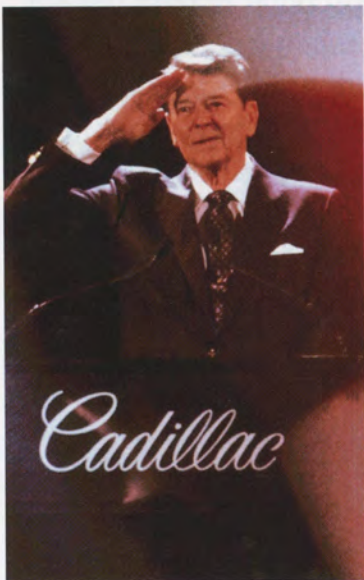
Barbara, George H.W., Jane and Me



Golfing at the Phoenician in Scottsdale.



President Reagan with Jane and Me



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

February 14, 1997

Mr. John Grettenberger
Cadillac Motor Car Division
General Motors Corporation
30009 Van Dyke Avenue
Warren, Michigan 48090

Dear John:

I am delighted to join your family, friends, and colleagues in congratulating you on your retirement from Cadillac.

America's success has always depended on individuals like you, who understand the value of hard work, creativity, and an unwavering commitment to excellence. You can look back with pride on a career marked by innovative leadership and on a legacy of notable achievement.

Best wishes for continued success and every future happiness.

Sincerely,

Bill Clinton



Houghton Lake, MI, Sunset at our cottage.

EPILOGUE

There's a phrase I learned from my Japanese colleagues at Isuzu. "Time Flies Like an Arrow!" Certainly true. You don't think about it when you are young; it takes "time" to realize how important "time" is, and how quickly it passes. You wake up one morning and suddenly you realize that so much time has passed, and at what great speed! Thankfully, I've always practiced the theory that you need to make the best of your time. While I believe that my father thought more about the future than I have, we both made sure that we did all we could, enjoyed what we did, and didn't "put off" until later what we could do today. Better to wear out than rust out.

As this is being written, nearly fourteen years have passed since I retired from General Motors! I've enjoyed every minute of this lifestyle change, but it hasn't been a time where you could say that I've been sitting around wishing for the old days back. I still look forward to starting my days early, walking with my dog, Sam, at least two miles each morning, rain, shine, or snow, before my ritual shave and shower. I enjoy having breakfast with Jane, and I'm sure she

enjoys it when I leave to join young John at LorAnn for the rest of the day...or at least until around 3 p.m. I like to continue to stay involved with our family business, although I recognized some time ago that my role is to advise, not make operational decisions that son John and Carl Thelen are much more capable of doing.

I'm down to just two Boards now, Sparrow Development Inc. and the Friends of Historic Meridian, a historical society whose mission is to preserve the history and heritage of Meridian Township by continuing to build, maintain, and enhance the eight restored buildings in our "village". The Sparrow Hospital connection goes back since before I retired from GM. I have served on this board, responsible for the "profit", rather than the "not for profit", side of Sparrow for many years, the last four as its Chair. At present, I am a lay member on the all-important Patient Quality and Safety Committee, working with the most senior physicians, nurses, and administrative staff of the hospital. It's interesting and a worthwhile endeavor to improve in every way possible the care, treatment, and satisfaction of Sparrow patients.

Similarly, my time spent actively supporting the FOHM is productive and satisfying. Our village includes the 1860's farmhouse that my great, great grandfather, Johann Georg Grettenberger, built for his family...a house that Jane and I, along with my eldest daughter, Ann, were the last Grettenbergers to live in. An old barn with hand hewed supports and rafters stands next to the house having been moved there and placed on a new foundation by my mother, Laura Grettenberger.

If that wasn't enough "family" reason to be involved in this village, there is one more thing. I was pleased to spearhead the raising of \$285,000 in donations to build an exact replica of an Okemos church built in 1870 by townspeople. We gifted this "Chapel" to the Parks and Recreation Department of Meridian township in 2009, and since then it has been the site for dozens of weddings and other types of functions, generating revenue to help maintain all the other restored buildings making up the Village.

Shortly after retiring from GM, in 1999, I joined the board of ANC Corporation

(Alamo and National car rental companies), it having been spun off from Autonation, founded by billionaire Wayne Huizenga. ANC was a very interesting board, being a Fortune 500 NYSE company, which until September 11, 2001, was heading in the right direction. Then, following the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center, travel and the rental of cars dropped precipitately. Unfortunately, ANC was not sufficiently capitalized to withstand the prolonged drop in sales, weakened significantly, and needed to find a buyer. It was subsequently sold, and now has been operating successfully for a number of years under new management (Enterprise Holdings).

Then, for three years, I served on the board of Trans-Tec, a newly formed manufacturer of hybrid electric commuter and shuttle busses located in Denver, Colorado. This company had important technology patents, but, after limited success competing against much larger, well-established competitors in manufacturing and sales, terminated operations.

Following TransTec, I joined the board of the Spartan Oil Corporation, a Lansing, Michigan, distributor/wholesaler of petroleum products to bulk stations, including fuel oils, lubricants, and related items. Spartan was owned by a close friend, Bruce Maguire Jr., of East Lansing, Michigan. The Maguire family operated the company throughout the state, along with other significant businesses involved in real estate, the construction and leasing of business properties, and land development as well.

As time progressed, Jane and I became more active in our churches, St. Augusties Episcopal Church in Mason, Michigan, and later, St. Katherines Episcopal church of Williamston, Michigan. With our travels and frequent moves during our General Motors days we never really connected with the various churches we had attended on, I must admit, a less than frequent basis! By missing that opportunity during the most important years of my children's upbringing, I failed to help them establish any real relationship with a "church of their own". My hope now is that they will each recognize this failing on my part and pursue their own affiliation in future years.

I should also mention that following GM retirement, I was offered and accepted

numerous opportunities to lecture at Michigan State University and Spring Arbor College business schools, often on the topic of ethics. It was, and continues to be, a serious topic due to the well-known exploits of executives at such companies as Enron, Martha Stewart, Global Crossing, and World Com.

By far, my most enjoyable life experience has been my relationship with my eight grandchildren. Maybe it's because I have more time now than I did with my own kids, but whatever, it is truly fulfilling. Like they say on Lake Wobegone, "The girls are all beautiful, the young men strong, and every one of them of them above average". At least that's how I see it.

Jillian Kay Orr – Smart and beautiful, now an alumna of Michigan

Kelsey Ann Orr – Like her Dad, creative and strong willed, athletic, and sensitive

Thomas "T. J." Orr – Big, strong, and cautious, will be a solid leader

Paige Noelle Grettenberger – Sweet and loving, our newest Wolverine, whiz at math and science

Anna Michelle Grettenberger – Popular, athletic, outgoing, and smart, too

Sloane Catherine Forbush – Talented dancer, many friends, caring, loves Okemos but amazed by Europe

Zachary Scott Forbush – Talented musician, motivated athlete, loves his family

Troy Roger Forbush – The youngest; smart, loves life, fearless...no one wants to see him grow up

We all travel together at least once a year. The rest of our "fun" times (including parents, boy friends, girl friends, and other guests) are at Houghton Lake. I think we all love our cottage, and I prefer it most when every bed is full, and you have to take care that you don't step on any of us sleeping on futons. There's always room for one more, including dogs, but no cats...a few

of us have allergies!

Our family adventures have given everyone enough happy memories to last a lifetime. Usually, there have been sixteen of us traveling together, but this year we are down to eleven. The older we get, the more difficult it is for everyone to be available at the same time.

We have to be a little careful when telling stories about all the places we've been as a family. People wouldn't believe it! We started 13 years ago at Disney World. Then it was off to Acapulco, Cancun, St. Lucia, a Disney cruise in the Caribbean, followed by Cabo san Lucas, and a Royal Caribbean cruise, again in the Caribbean.

Finally, the "super" destinations! Hawaii, Austria and the Czech Republic, Italy, Alaska, and this year (2011), a Seabourn cruise in the Baltic, including three nights in St. Petersburg, Russia, with stops on the way in Germany, Denmark, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland. Our travel agent loves us!

Along the way, Jane and I have picked up a surrogate family, too. It all started with our love and caring for Rebecca Skellenger, daughter of Jerry Skellenger, our loyal and dedicated caretaker of our Houghton Lake home and property. Jerry has been with us for almost twenty years in what has become a nearly full time job. With his permission, we offered to send Rebecca to college at Ferris State University, where she did very well, graduating with a BS in elementary education. While at FSU, she met and later married her husband, Justin Hill. They now have two children of their own, live in Tampa, Florida, and have plans to return to Michigan soon.

Jane and I have also been fortunate to make several trips together with close friends Doug and Nancy Milbury, and more recently with Bruce and Mary Jo Maguire. Kalos golfing cruises, driving trips in Germany, Switzerland, and France...just to name a few of many great destinations.

Currently my greatest personal satisfaction is working with my son John, at LorAnn, where he is CEO. The business has done very well since he and Carl

Thelen, COO, came on board, with sales and profit increases every year since they arrived. Having no set hours (and no need for any) I come to the office each day I am in town, around 9 o'clock, and keep busy with all sorts of personal and company activities until 3 or 4 in the afternoon. My dog, Sam, has a nice bed under my credenza and gets treats daily from our 26 employees. All in all, it is a great arrangement! "Retirement" would be a bore without it!

I don't like the thought of being in my seventies, so I don't think or worry about it. Life's been good to me. I am a survivor, as most of my family and friends are aware. Like my father did, I'm looking ahead...looking further to see how my grandkids do with their lives. I'm already proud and pleased with what my children have accomplished, and I love them dearly...just as I do everyone in my family.

Most importantly, my friend, partner, and wife, Jane, has helped me with the transition from General Motors to "civilian" life. Through it all, she's the one constant in my being. She has been totally supportive, but not without the advice and criticism that I need pretty regularly. All this, while her "retirement" made her needed all the more, but in a different way! She has become totally involved with the care and feeding of eight grandchildren and their sometimes overwhelmed mothers and fathers. If Jane is not at home, I know that she must be taking a child somewhere, or shopping for someone, or maybe she is with her "Cadillac girls" in the Detroit area. She remains constantly on the move...I wonder where she picked up that trait!

In closing, let me say that I appreciate the serious urging by family and friends to put my story down on paper. I've actually enjoyed the time spent on writing and thinking about some of the most of the interesting things that happened to me along the way. I hope you've enjoyed reading about it...for me, as they say in the automobile business, "It's been a great ride"!

John O. Grettenberger Sr
2011

2491 Overglen Court
East Lansing, MI 48823

Our Traditional 19ft. Christmas Tree



Left: Anna, Sloane Zachary, Kelsey, Jillian, Paige, Troy and T.J.



Our Family - This time in Acapulco!



Home with our ever present Weimaraner

February 17, 1997

Mr. John O. Grettenberger
2491 Overglen Court
Lansing, MI 48823-9475

Dear John:

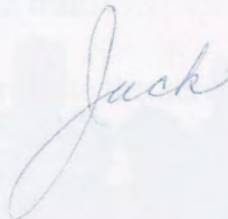
I am delighted to inform you that the Executive Compensation Committee (ECC) has approved the payment of awards under the 1996 GM incentive plans. This marks the third consecutive year since the start of our Corporation's turnaround strategy that executives in all GM business sectors will receive an annual incentive award payment.

Included in this package you will find detailed information about the delivery of your 1996 incentive payouts.

John, throughout your 37 year career at GM, you have always been extremely conscientious and professional. Both your dealers and staff have the highest regard for you. You have been a great spokesman for the Cadillac organization and should be very proud of the mark you have left on GM throughout your career. The new Catera will be a great success, and your leadership made this possible.

Please accept my appreciation as well as that of the entire President's Council for your contributions to our success in 1996. I wish you well in your business and personal endeavors in 1997 and beyond.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jack". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

Enclosures

OCT 18 1990

General Motors Corporation

J. O. Grettenberger

LLOYD E. REUSS
PRESIDENT

October 16, 1990

Dear John:

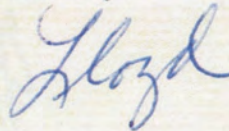
Warmest congratulations to you and your team! Winning the Baldrige Award is a tremendous accomplishment, and I'm just delighted, as all of you must be.

John, this is just the latest -- and by no means the last -- step in Cadillac's fulfillment of its mission. It is one more piece of proof -- to the press, to the public, to all of our many stakeholders -- that Cadillac really can build the world's finest automobiles. And it is one more tribute to your strong leadership: to your continuing focus on excellence, to your uncompromising dedication to customer satisfaction, and -- most important -- to your building of an enthusiastic and talented team that is moving Cadillac forward in the direction you have set.

Again, congratulations to everyone on the Cadillac team. This is simply an outstanding achievement -- and a source of pride and inspiration for all of General Motors.

Best personal regards.

Sincerely,



cc: J. T. Battenberg III

Mr. John O. Grettenberger
General Manager
Cadillac Motor Car Division
2860 Clark Avenue
Detroit, MI 48232

CHAIRMAN & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

RECEIVED

NOV 23 1988

J. O. Grettenberger

November 11, 1988

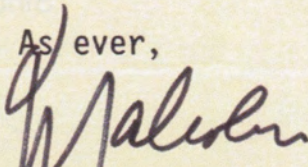
Mr. John O. Grettenberger
General Manager
Vice President
Cadillac Motor Car Company
General Motors Corporation
2860 Clark Street
P. O. Box 297
Detroit, Michigan 48232-0297

Dear John:

Just a personal note to tell you how humbly grateful I am for that generous salute you extended on the occasion of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith's 75th birthday.

It was most moving to be a medium for the message.

Thank you, John, very, very much.

As ever,

Malcolm S. Forbes

eg

ELIZABETH TAYLOR

February 1, 1988

RECEIVED
FEB 5 1988
J. O. Grettenberger

Mr. John Grettenberger
General Manager
Cadillac Motor Car Division
General Motors
2860 Clark Avenue
Detroit, MI 48232

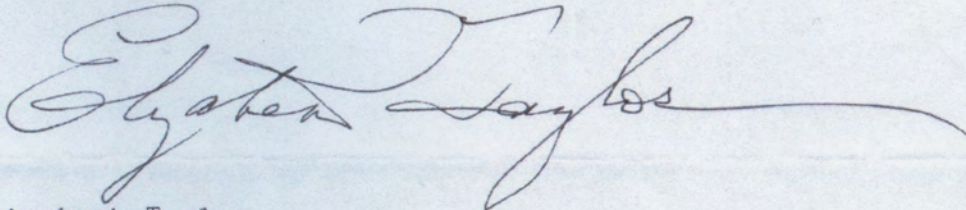
Dear John:

I just wanted to drop you a note to thank you for making "A Million Dollar Cabaret" the spectacular event it was.

I very much enjoyed meeting you and your lovely wife, Jane, and introducing you to Sir Gordon White.

It is so gratifying to meet individuals who are so deeply committed to fighting the tragedy that is AIDS; thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elizabeth Taylor". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Elizabeth Taylor



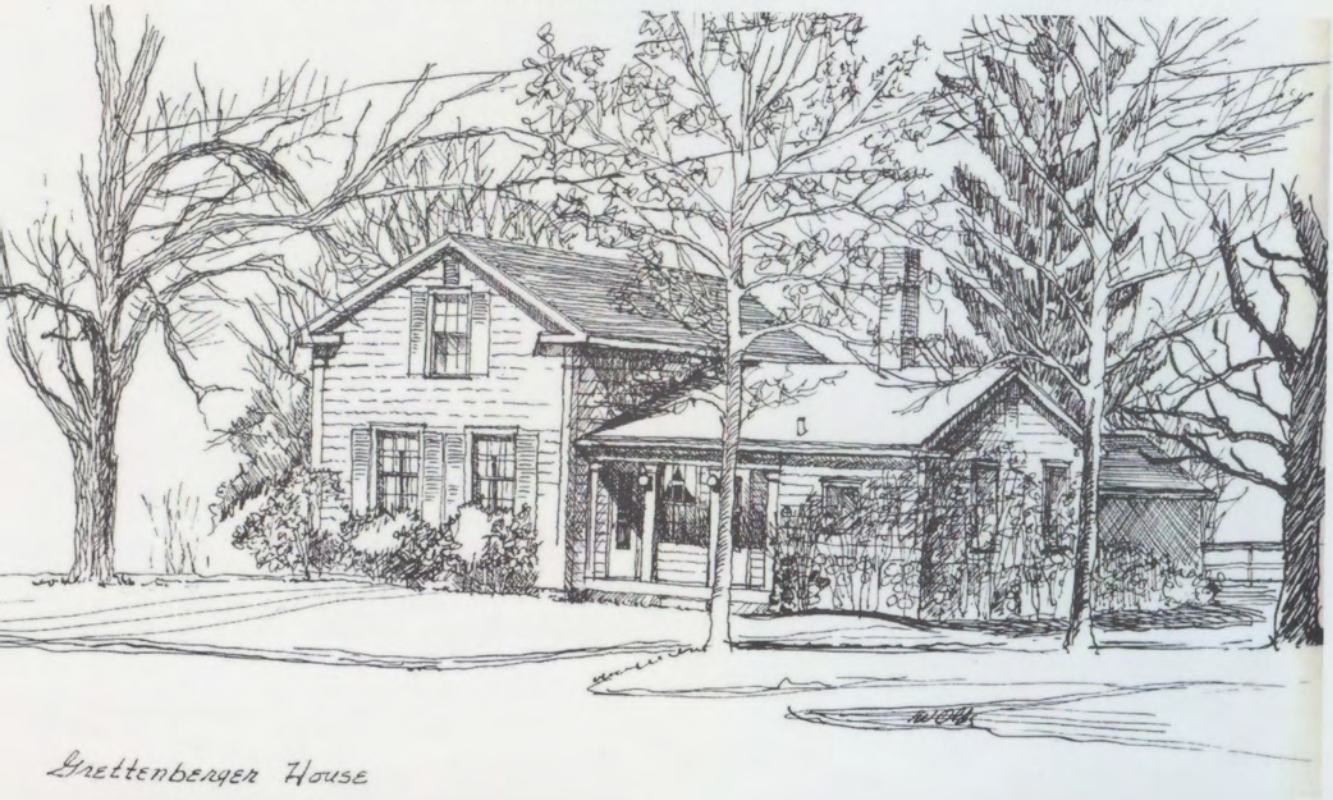


Ann Catherine

John Jr. & Sr



The original Johan Grettenberger Farmhouse - Okemos 1854



Grettenberger House

