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Plymouth's the "One" for '41



Mark Walker's 1941 P12 Special Deluxe auxiliary seat coupe



Made in America

Walter P. Chrysler aficionados know the pinnacle of his locomotive career was as plant manager at the American Locomotive Company (ALCO; now defunct) in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Walter Chrysler left ALCO to embark on his automotive career with Buick in 1912, and then went on to found Chrysler Corporation in 1925. Years later in 1940, foreseeing the end of steam locomotion, ALCO formed an alliance with GE Rail to build diesel locomotives with General Electric supplying electrical gear. GE ended the arrangement in 1953, and went on to build diesel locomotives on its own 100-plus miles to the north in Erie, Pa. GE eventually garnished 70% of the locomotive market share in North America.

Mark Merritt and his twin brother Mike started at GE Rail (now, GE Transportation) on the same day, May 2, 1977, and both retired on the same day, April 1, 2018, a month shy of 41 years. Working



***Chrysler Corporation, and General Electric:** "Two Titans of Industry." Perhaps no one knows the nuts and bolts of both industries better than Mark Merritt*

at GE Rail was a family affair. Over the years, Mark's sister, brother-in-law, and three brothers worked for, retired from GE, while a younger brother and a nephew continue to work there. A machinist for 25 years, Mark moved on to assembly—alternators, cab wiring, oil, fuel and air lines—before finishing the last eight years of his career as an inspector.

Mark says, "The car had spent most of its life in Las Vegas and was bought new by Dudley and Violet Pollard. The dealership where they bought it was Desert Motors, 1205 South 5th Street, Las Vegas, Nevada. In 1998, the car was sold and went to Idaho. I suspect it was kept outdoors at that time, because when



***Mark's wife Brenda** at the age of two in 1959*

I did the restoration I could see evidence of leaves, pine needles and small critters. Then sometime around 2008 the car went to Michigan. We came along in September of 2012 and that is when I started to work on it. I did the motor, transmission and the front end first. After doing the mechanicals over two years, we then put 4,000 miles on the car. Then I took it apart again to do the body and interior."

To members of the '59 Plymouth



***GE's 1,000 New York Central**, picture taken November 23 1967. The picture is of the final assembly management. The unit is an old workhorse A U-30*



***Mark with the '59** during the mechanical phase of restoration*

Forum, Mark is known for his meticulous craftsmanship and attention to detail, the same attention he brought, no doubt, to his locomotive career over the span of



Mark Merritt with his younger brother **Chris**, nephew **Mike Juhas** and twin brother **Mike**

five decades. You can read all about Mark's remarkable "Winter of '59" restoration here:

<<http://bit.ly/mark59winter>>

Mark's career timing was propitious. GE had planned to close the Erie plant by the end of 2018, moving operations to the newer plant in Fort Worth, Texas. Currently, even those plans are in doubt, as GE Transportation has announced

locomotive was due for the scrap yard when CSX, instead, donated it to a museum located eight miles from where Mark lives, repainting it with its original Chessie logo.

Mark relates, "*Chessie* made a pit stop back where it was born (Building #10, Final Assembly). My boss asked

workers who had service prior to 1980 to get in a photo shoot. I'm on the left, the big guy on the far right is my twin, the fellow next to me is my younger brother, and the



Mark wore his '59 Plymouth shirt

many siblings currently working at the same place, and I told him: 'Hell, this is all that is left.'"

Still, both *Chessie* and Mark's 1959 Plymouth live on, in proud testimony of being "Made in America" and to the people that built them.

—**Dan Morton**

1959 Tech Advisor

<dan@59plymouth.net>

*"For '59... If It's New,
Plymouth's Got It!"*



plans to sell off the division altogether. Like Plymouth, the locomotive brand that GE championed may soon be orphaned.

In 1980, GE built a "U" series locomotive, fondly known as *The Chessie*, for the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad. Later bought by CSX and repainted, the

'pup' is my nephew—he's an engineer and teaches classes on diesel engines. The guy from the magazine thought it was unusual to have that

