

It Was Your Father's Oldsmobile

Once upon a time, when GM was king of the hill in the American automobile industry, Oldsmobile held a special place in the lineup of GM cars. The brand had an excellent reputation for producing quality, although not trendy, family transportation and also for introducing many of GM's milestone features like Hydra-Matic – first fully automatic transmission (1940), the Rocket 88 OHV V-8 engine (1949), and front wheel drive high production volume cars (1967).

In 1988, Oldsmobile began a campaign to change the brand's "family car" image with younger buyers by introducing many models with a youth emphasis. Olds came up with **"It's not your father's Oldsmobile"** marketing campaign to reinforce the brand's new direction.

Chesapeake Region member Ron Siegrist had an Olds experience long before the 80s/90s marketing campaign where the car really was his father's Oldsmobile. Back in 1966 Ron purchased his second new Oldsmobile 98, a red convertible. Ron learned a couple of days later that his father had purchased a 1966 Olds Delta 88 four-door hardtop from the same Maryland dealer four days before Ron picked up his car.

Ron has a track record of driving his new cars until they achieve high mileage and become tired. Then he restores them for use as antique cars. Sort of the ultimate in automotive recycling. Ron drove the 1966 convertible for 16 years, then it became his daughter's car for another 17 years. In 2001 Ron took the 1966 back and restored it. It has 287K miles and an AACA First Junior award.



Ron Siegrist's 1952 Oldsmobile 98 that was rescued from the crusher in Pottstown, PA



Julie Siegrist with the 1966 Oldsmobile 98 that was also the family car for her daughter



Ron Siegrist with his 1970 Oldsmobile 98, which is an AACA First Junior & Olds Club national award winner

And what about his father's Olds? Well, several years ago after talking to his deceased father's widow, he learned that she still had the 1966 Delta 88, but had lost her driver's license and needed to dispose of the car. Ron drove across Alligator Alley in Florida, picked up the car and returned it to his winter home on the west coast. It's now restored and serves as his daily driver in Florida.

Ron has a life-long preference for big Oldsmobiles. After graduating from the University of Maryland, he bought a new 1952 Oldsmobile 98 convertible, with a blue exterior and interior. This was his first family car, because when he and Julie got married in Florida it took them on their honeymoon and was the daily driver until he bought the 1966 Olds. 56 years after buying the '52 he still has the car in Florida. It is restored with 230K miles on it.

About 25 years ago Ron located another 1952 Oldsmobile 98 convertible in a junkyard in Pottstown, PA. It was scheduled for crushing, but with only 120K on the odometer, Ron bought it and restored the car, which has an Olds Club national award. The engine on the car was so good that it didn't need to be rebuilt. Both of Ron's 1952 98 convertibles have exactly the same options. The only difference is that the Pottstown car has a black exterior/red interior.

Ron's fifth antique Oldsmobile is a 1970 98 convertible that he bought as a collector car. It's an AACA First Junior award car with an Olds Club national award too. Other antique cars that Ron has include two Chevrolets and two Cadillac Eldorado (1966 and 1976) convertibles. He bought the 1976 new, kept it all these years and then restored it.