



the Phillips Family & the Auto Business

You have no doubt seen illustrations of a family tree, names on imaginary branches representing various members of the family, going back through the generations. Now that you have that pictured in your mind, if you use your imagination a little, you will see that the Phillips family tree has a vehicle or two resting there in the shade under those very limbs. And if one were to focus a little more clearly on those vehicles, it is likely they would be identified as a truck for hauling car parts, and a Pontiac of some sort. As we outline the careers of three men in the Phillips family you will find it takes very little imagination to see the family tree as I have described it.

It began with Ed Phillips in the later part of the 1920s when he started selling tire boots out of his car. Tire boots were cemented on the inside of tires to extend their life. Outgrowing the car Ed purchased a ton and a half truck to better serve his growing parts business. He traveled all of Northeast Oklahoma, selling parts under the Guaranteed Parts Co. name. Ford parts made up the bulk of his business; in 1928 there were an estimated 8 million Model Ts in service across the country.

He later traded trucks, and names, selling under the United Parts Co. name. In 1937 Ed opened his first auto parts store at 1515 E. 11th street in Tulsa called the United Parts Store. During World War II Ed Phillips was one of the few men who were trained to repair blocks and heads on military vehicles. This important work gave him the

25,000 MILES
*Without Puncture
or Blowout*

Cut your own tire bills —and make good money selling **National Tirefiller** to others. A proven success for 12 years. Eliminates tubes, punctures and blowouts. Increases tire mileage 30 to 50% and still outwears several casings. Easily inserted; easy riding. Over 300,000 enthusiastic users. Big sales possibilities. Some good territory still open. Driver agents make good profits. Mail coupon today for proposition.

AGENTS WANTED

NATIONAL RUBBER FILLER CO.
230 College St., Midlothian, Texas

I am interested in your agent's proposition
..... I want your direct prices on National
Tirefillers Please send full information.

Name

Address

MAIL THIS NOW

This is a magazine advertisement for a product very similar to the tire boots Ed Phillips was selling in the late 1920s.

status of necessary civilian personnel.

Several stories about Ed from the WW II time period have been passed down through the family over the years. One such story is about tire chains. In the early history of the automobile, chains were used more for mud than snow, as the majority of roads were very poor. Most of them consisted of dirt, or a combination of dirt and gravel. Mud chains as they were called helped you get around after it had rained. By WW II roads had improved significantly and tire chains were mostly associated with use in the snow. This meant they were most likely to be found in the snow states, not so much in Oklahoma. It snows so little here that even snow tires are rarely seen. The story goes that Ed ran across a deal on a large quantity of tire chains. At the time bulk quantities of tire chains came in barrels, he was able to obtain several barrels of what is normally a slow moving car accessory here in Oklahoma. As fate would have it, the next winter brought a major snow storm and Ed was able to make a nice profit suppling all the local parts stores with tire chains.

During World War II many materials were scarce, as the top priority was for their use in the war effort. Rubber was one such product, and tires for civilian vehicles were nearly impossible to obtain. Ed was in need of tires for his delivery truck and could not buy any. He saw a utility farm wagon in a catalog and noted that it came equipped with new tires, the same size tires he needed for his truck. He purchased the wagon and switched out the tires with his truck.

Ed ran the store on 11th street until 1949 when he had a building built and opened a new store called Harvard Auto Parts at 1534 S. Harvard in Tulsa. He ran this business for two years, after that he worked out of his home garage rebuilding water pumps. Ed would continue this business until just before he passed away in 1988.

Roy was one of four boys born to Ed & Katherine Phillips. He grew up helping out at his dads parts store, sweeping floors, stocking shelves, doing whatever he could. He picked up enough about the parts business that when it became time to start his own career he was able to land a job at a parts store. In 1951 Roy started at Standard Parts Co. at 818 S. Detroit in Tulsa, stocking shelves and making parts deliveries. He would have this job until



Ed Phillips' Guaranteed Parts Co. truck.



Standing beside Ed's United Parts Co. truck are three of his boys (from left to right) twins Ray & Roy and older son Leroy. Jim, the youngest is not in the picture.



This 1938 photo shows Ed Phillips (left) at his parts store.

1955 when at that time he made a move to Standard Motor Supply, working the parts counter for a year and a half. He left there for a position as Parts Manager at Anthony Chevrolet in Sand Springs, Oklahoma. His next job change did not take place for almost five years, but would be a great move as it would place him at a dealer that later would become one of the best in the state. In 1961 Roy went to work at Cashon Pontiac, located at 12th street and Boston Avenue in Tulsa, Oklahoma. He started out there as parts manager and would stay there for 27 years.

A lot of changes occurred at the dealership in those 27 years, and Roy's job would change with it. Cashon would soon sell to Dumas Milner, a business partner who had previously owned the dealership. This was a good time to be associated with Pontiac, for most of the next decade Pontiac would solidly hold down the number three position in auto sales. It was an exciting time to be selling Pontiacs, and Pontiac parts. Starting in 1962 Roy was zone champion 5 out of 6 years in parts sales. The first year he accomplished this he was awarded a Chief Pontiac belt



This is Milner Pontiac Inc. at 12th and Boston in Tulsa, Oklahoma. This photo was taken around 1963, Roy Phillips was the parts manager at the time.



Award Belt Buckle like the one Roy received for top sales in zone.

buckle, and each year thereafter that he won a diamond was added. The zone encompasses several states so this was quite a feat.

The dealer made a move in 1967 from their 12th and Boston location to a brand new facility at 2111 East 11th Street. A special newspaper insert dated Thursday December 14, 1967 announced the grand opening of Milners new build-

ing. Situated on 8 1/2 acres this new facility cost one and a half million dollars to build and was touted as the Southwest's finest automotive facility. It had 129,000 square feet and boasted 50 service stalls. To commemorate the occasion Milner had 25 special 1968 Catalinas built. Called the Roustabout, they featured special gold paint and emblems in the likeness of Tulsa's Golden Driller.

Roy started out as parts manager at the new location, but a write up in the Tulsa Tribune newspaper dated April 6, 1968 announced Roy as the new service manager at Milner. Roy and Milners success mirrored that of Pontiac's success, as in 1968 the Pontiac GTO was named Motor Trend Magazine car of the year. For his work at the dealership Roy would continued to win awards too. It was announced in the March 7, 1970 Tulsa newspaper that he won a trip to Acapulco, Mexico. This was just one of several such trips. Roy remembers fondly the trip to Pontiac headquarters, which included a visit to the famed Super Duty room. This is where Mac McKeller, a Pontiac engineer and his staff did all their work developing the legendary 421 Super Duty engine.

In 1970 the dealership changed hands and the name was changed to Premier Pontiac. Car sales, parts sales and service continued to be outstand-



ROY D. PHILLIPS
Milner Pontiac, Inc.
Tulsa, Okla.
(Oklahoma City Zone)
Times Award Won: 6
ZONE CHAMPION: 1962, 1963,
1964, 1966, 1967

Roy's picture as it appeared in the "Pontiac Engineered Parts News" a newsletter that went out to all the Pontiac dealerships in the country.



Photograph of the new Milner Pontiac location at 2111 East 11th Street in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

ing at the dealership. In December 1976 Roy Phillips was named general manager of Premier Pontiac. The highlight of Roy's time as general manager may have come in 1979 when the dealership



This 1979 Trans Am is one of the 2,988 Pontiacs sold at Premier during the 1979 model year.

sold 2,988 Pontiacs. Ernie Miller Pontiac, the other local Pontiac dealership combined with Premier that year to out-sell five local Chevrolet dealerships and were 4th and 5th in sales among Pontiac dealers in the country.



This December 27, 1976 Tulsa Tribune newspaper ad announced Roy's promotion to General Manager at Premier Pontiac.

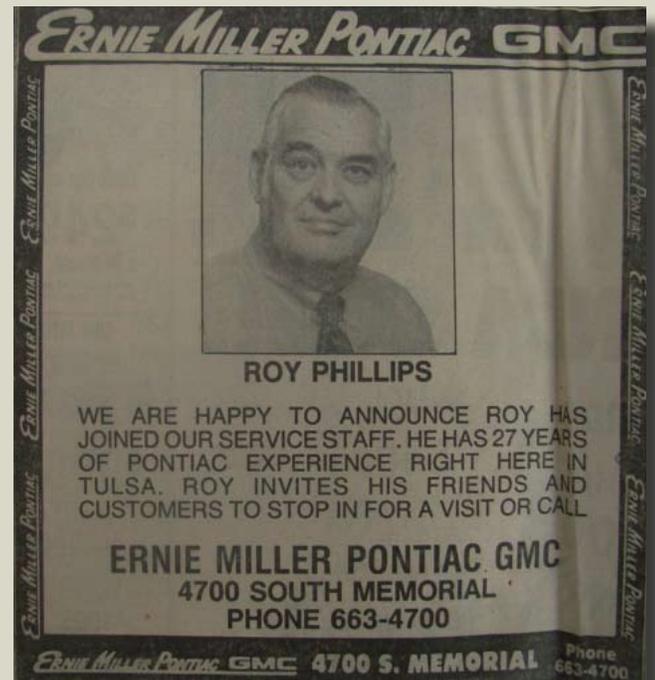
In 1988 Roy left Premier when it once again changed hands. He went across town to 4700 South Memorial to work at Ernie Miller Pontiac. Ernie and Roy had worked together at Milner. In 1969 Ernie went out on his own and bought Corley Pontiac in Broken Arrow, and a few years later built the current facility on Memorial in Tulsa. Roy would

work there until his retirement in 1997, ending a 46 year



One of many award plaques Roy has earned during his career while in the automobile business.

career in the automotive business. He is busy in his retirement, but occasionally finds time to help out at his sons business, Phillips Muscle Car Parts where he is quite at home amongst the racks of parts books and isles of parts.



1988 Tulsa newspaper ad announcing Roy's start at Ernie Miller Pontiac.

Steve Phillips started at age 13, working during the summer at Premier Pontiac in Tulsa where his dad was the parts manager. There in the parts department he swept floors and stocked parts on the shelves.

In August 1977 he bought his first car, a 1968 Pontiac GTO which he still owns today. After graduating high school in 1979, he went to work full time in the parts department at the Pontiac dealership where by this time his dad was general manager. Here he learned the GM parts system and worked with the customers that came in for parts. As parts were dropped from GM inventory, Steve had to turn a lot of customers away. He then started to help them find the parts from other sources, both used and NOS. He saw an increasing demand for these hard to find parts and started to get more serious about tracking them down. You have to remember at this time there were no reproduction parts like we have today.

He started attending swap meets, visiting wrecking yards and making connections to find parts. As his inventory grew he picked up an old semi trailer to store them in, and had parts cars stashed around town at various locations. His part time business grew to the point that on May 5, 1988 he left the dealership and went full time into buying and selling hard to find NOS and used parts. He added more and more trailers until it became obvious that a building was needed, so in 1996 a building was built to organize and store the thousands of parts he had collected.

Today Phillips Muscle Car Parts located in Tulsa, Oklahoma is home to over 15,000 General Motors NOS parts and thousands of used parts. Steve still travels to swap meets, scouring the countryside for parts that he sells to walk-in customers at his shop, and on the internet.

Steve continues working in the automotive business like his father, and grandfather before him. And now you see why I say that the Phillips family tree has a car parked under it.



This picture was featured in the Milner Dumacrat, a magazine for all the employees of the many businesses owned by Dumas Milner. Left is Steve at age 2, his sister Leigh Anne and his brother Roy Michael at far right.



Steve with his first car, a 1968 GTO, August 1977.