

BERNARD (BERNIE) STEINBERG

OUR FOUNDER AND FIRST PRESIDENT

Bernie grew up in Chicago. He went to college at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He was a music major and played the trombone, piano and string bass – a very talented guy. He met his wife, Kathy, at the Aspen Music Festival and School where she was a vocalist and he played the trombone.

Bernie and Kathy have been married 56 years. They have two daughters and six grandchildren. He says, “the two benefits of being older are senior discounts and grandchildren.” Bernie and Kathy are world travelers, although their travels have been temporarily interrupted by the Covid situation. They have been to every continent except Antarctica.

Bernie shifted gears (car pun) from music to law and graduated from the University of Chicago Law School in 1964. He joined a private law firm and worked there from 1964 to 1971. He then worked for the State of Colorado’s Judicial Branch, later becoming an Administrative Law Judge with the United States Equal Opportunity Employment Commission, retiring in 2006.

Soon after he came to Colorado, Bernie decided to learn how to fly a plane. He obtained Private and Commercial Pilot licenses and joined the Civil Air Patrol as a mountain search pilot. His favorite plane was a Cessna 182 which he flew with Kathy on trips around the country.

Bernie obtained his driver’s license a few days after he turned 15. He bought his first car in 1954 at the age of 17 – a 1930 Model A Ford coupe which cost him \$15.00. His next car (and first Oldsmobile) was a 1949 model 88 Fastback which he bought in 1957. His next Oldsmobile was a Capri Blue 1954, model 88 with a 3-speed manual (column shift) transmission. After it was rear-ended, Bernie bought another ’54 Olds – a 4-door 88 sedan, painted an eye-catching Persian Lime Fire Mist Metallic, which he still owns (see picture).



In total, Bernie has owned seven or eight Oldsmobiles over the years, most of which were 1954s. Why '54? Because he has a deep affinity for them that came out of his experience in Chicago where they were popular for the big V8 Rocket engines and cool appearance.

In 1976, Bernie spotted a 1955 Oldsmobile 98 Deluxe Holiday Coupe parked for a long period of time in Boulder. He put a note on the windshield expressing interest and after a few months, managed to purchase the car for \$125. It was a Nebraska car with every factory option except air conditioning. He only added wire wheel covers. The car was originally a tri-color – black, red, and white and repainted white over red as it remains today in the picture below.



In 1979, Bernie saw an advertisement to join the Oldsmobile Club of America (OCA) in *Hemmings Motor News*. Later that year, he explored the idea of setting up a local OCA chapter and placed an advertisement in *The Denver Post* inviting interested Oldsmobile owners to meet at Cranmer Park in southeast Denver. There was enough interest to move forward and the Colorado Chapter of OCA, subsequently named the Rocky Mountain Oldsmobile Club (RMOC), was established.

A dozen or so people showed up for that first official meeting, which was held outdoors at the Jim Blum Oldsmobile dealership in Englewood. Bernie was elected the club's first president. Over time, club meetings were shifted to the Empire Oldsmobile dealership in Denver, then in the mid-1990s to the city government complex in Arvada.

Bernie and Kathy are still active members of RMOC and have enjoyed participating in the club's meetings and activities since its inception 40 years ago for the same reason most of us are members – nice people with common interests and fun activities built around a meaningful hobby.

Bernie gives special kudos to Larry Ruppel whom he encouraged to become RMOC President for the first time, some 20 years ago. He credits Larry with the right leadership skills and personality that make things work in good times and challenging times like those we are experiencing now.

Bernie Steinberg deserves our respect and appreciation for his initiative in starting RMOC, a club which has been a source of great enjoyment for literally hundreds of people and their families and an important part of the community for four decades.

Thank you, Bernie!

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