

SPOTLIGHT

MIKE WATSON

Charter Member

By: Tim Hall

Mike is a fifth generation Coloradan dating back when our state was just a Territory. He grew up in Denver and went off to college in Kansas where he took up Antique Automobile Restoration and Industrial Technology. He received a B.A. having spent his senior year as an exchange student in Britain. He lived in Nebraska for 15 years and now lives in Cheyenne where he is a warehouse manager for an agricultural product company.

One of Mike's hobbies is looking at and researching the history of the Oregon, Mormon, California and Pony Express trails through Wyoming. He says: *there is history around here as most of the original sites are still standing including huge wagon ruts cut into limestone north of Cheyenne; they have not been plowed under for building houses.*

Mike is the impetus for starting our Rocky Mountain chapter of the Oldsmobile Club. It goes like this: 43 years ago, to the month, Mike spotted a two-tone (Mint Green/Glen Green) 1955 Olds Super 88 two-door (post) near Evans and Downing in Denver. It was for sale by a private party for \$700. The car was "born" in GM's Wilmington, Delaware plant and sold new from a dealership in Hyattsville, Maryland. Mike was only 15 at the time but he got the car.

A few months later, Mike joined OCA. He saw an advertisement in JWO for parts for his '55. Coincidentally, the ad had been posted by Bernie Steinberg. In the process, Mike became acquainted with Bernie and suggested they start an Oldsmobile chapter – a bold suggestion from a young man.

Over the next couple years, Mike and Bernie hosted two get-togethers of Oldsmobile enthusiasts and found sufficient interest to move forward. As an attorney, Bernie developed the bylaws and related documents; Mike took care of the public relations and advertising to attract members. And, as they say, "the rest is history."

Mike has owned around 50 – yes, *fifty* – Oldsmobiles over the years, including some Cutlasses, 442s and a 1968 Hurst Olds. But of all of them, his favorite was his first, the one he bought when he was 15 – the 1955 Super 88 pictured. He got his driver's license in that car, had it through high school and kept it for 39 years. A high point was driving this car to Lansing for the 100th anniversary of Oldsmobile in 1997. It was one of three 1955 Oldsmobiles showcased at that prestigious event. Mike sold his '55 a couple years ago and no longer owns an Oldsmobile, but still attends club activities from time-to-time and still cares about the club and the people he worked with to start our Rocky Mountain Oldsmobile Club 40 years ago.

