

**So long Pontiac; it was a good 83 years.**



**The brand image until 1938**

On the 27<sup>th</sup> of April 2009, CEO Fritz Henderson made official what had been rumoured for months - the end of the Pontiac automobile division in GM. The sad image of another proud name, Pontiac leaving this world to join, Studebaker, Packard and Reo. left auto buffs horrified.

In the autoworld Pontiac was a late starter only being born in 1926, out of the ashes of a merger with the Oakland Motor Company.

Their first model - a six cylinder, 40 hp model was the Pontiac Chief. Thirty nine thousand units were sold in the first six months of production in 1926 and cost \$895.00. In a recent Barrett-Jackson antique auction a similar model was listed at \$49,500. Quite an appreciation from the inflation price of \$10,797!



**1926 Model 6 Pontiac**



**Cobourg's first Pontiac dealership**

In Cobourg the earliest remembered, by old auto industry doyens, Bob Wilson of the late Wilson Motors and Don Macklin whose father ran Macklin Motors, Pontiac dealer was Bob "Windy" MacDonald. He had a salesroom and garage at 129 King St W. This shop is now occupied by a bedding store but when one looks at the front it is very easy to imagine stately Pontiacs sitting behind the glass front just waiting for customers to take them out.

Mr MacDonald sold cars until after the Second World War, as Don Macklin recalls, "He did very well as cars were rationed and he was the only dealer able to get them."

The next person in the memory chain was a man called Ralph Rennie and his Showroom and garage was across the road from MacDonald in the building now occupied by a couple of fast food restaurants immediately across from the West High School.

He then transferred the franchise to Harold Huff. But he didn't last long as Art Smith a dealer in Baltimore was brought into Cobourg and he settled, with the Pontiac franchise at the bottom of Second St, on the corner of Albert.

The franchise was transferred again in 1958, this time to a couple of long time Cobourg garage owners, Len and Wib Thomas, who had operated a SuperTest gas station at King and Spring, now the site of a Mr Sub shop. Wib Thomas had moved, by 1958 to a garage on University and Spring. He was selling International Trucks, Studebakers and an import Morris Minor. His garage was large enough to take on the Pontiac franchise and he ran it on that site until it moved across the Avenue thirty years later. Gary Thomas, Wib's oldest son recalls that the first car off the transporter in 1958 was a Pontiac Parisienne, "I'll never forget it - it was salmon-pink!"



**A hard driven 58 Pontiac Parisienne - a salmon one!**



**Thomas Pontiac Buick, 100 University Ave. W**

Moving across the Avenue into a brand new showroom in 1988 allowed the franchise to flourish and as it did so did the sales of Pontiac.

In 1990 Bill Campbell assumed control. Bill, a native of Hastings and a veteran of the industry since 1976 where he started selling GM products at "The Golden Mile". Under his watch the dealership has won the "President's Award" for excellence three years in the last ten years.