

The **PROFESSIONAL CAR**



TOWN CARS
*THE ARISTOCRATS OF
PROFESSIONAL CARS*
FLXIBLE'S ONLY
*HIGH-TOP
AMBULANCE*



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ON OUR COVER – They were automotive royalty -- true aristocrats among private limousines and professional cars. From the earliest days of motordom, the open-front town car publicly distanced the wealthy from those who worked for them. Just as in the horse-drawn carriage days, the liveried chauffeur rode out in the open while his well heeled charges rode in coddled comfort *inside*. The classic open-front town car reached its zenith in exclusivity in the 1920s and '30s. In the late 1920s, hearse and ambulance manufacturers began to offer ritzy open-front town car-type hearses and ambulances. The principal feature in this issue is a comprehensive review of this brief but very flamboyant era in funeral coach and ambulance design by noted author Thomas A. McPherson, who, we're pleased to note, has become one of our regular contributors. The classic town car era lasted for just over a decade, from 1928 to 1939. Our cover photo, from the Editor's personal collection, shows a 1930 S&S *Riverside* Town Car hearse being road-tested by a Sayers & Scovill factory employee.

CENTERSTRETCH – The first all-automobile funeral in America rolled through the streets of Chicago in 1909. Over the next few years more and more progressive undertakers replaced slow horse-drawn processions with auto funerals – considered undignified by some. The historic photo in our centerstretch shows what is believed to be the first motorized funeral procession in the city that put America on wheels – Detroit. We found this great image in the National Automotive History Collection archives at the Skillman Branch of the Detroit Public Library.

BACK COVER – It isn't often that those who *write* about history actually *make* history. But Tom McPherson, who authored the town car story in this issue, did exactly that. As President of the Eureka Coach Co. in Toronto, just for fun (and to jerk the chain of his fellow NFDA exhibitors), Tom single-handedly revived the classic open-front town car funeral coach in the mid-1980s. Under Tom's dynamic guidance, Eureka built no fewer than *nine* town car hearses between 1984 and 1988 -- several of which are owned by PCS members today. But even imagination has its limits. Tom drew the line when a funeral director in a large eastern city asked Eureka to build him a town car flower car! This black-over-white *Concours Town Car* was displayed at the 1985 PCS International Meet, which Tom hosted at the Eureka Coach Co. plant in Toronto.