

The
PROFESSIONAL
CAR



NUMBER 135

1st Quarter 2010

The Professional Car

Number 135

First Quarter 2010

IN THIS ISSUE: - Sixth Annual PCS Micro-Meet Report From Flint, Michigan
- Dark Day In Dallas: JFK 1964 Miller-Meteor Combination
- The Miller Art Model – By Thomas A. McPherson
- Springfield, New Jersey Squad Rigs: A Photo History
- Cotner/Bevington Oldsmobile Ambulance Reunion

COVER PHOTOS – The car on our front and back covers is, arguably, the most famous (or infamous) funeral coach in America. Exhibited only a few weeks earlier at the 1963 NFDA Convention in Dallas, the all-white *1964 Miller-Meteor Cadillac Classic Limousine Duplex Combination* was purchased off the show floor by the O’Neal Funeral Home in Dallas. After only a few services, this coach was thrust onto the front page of American history in the dark hours following the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in Dallas on November 22, 1963. We vividly remember the grainy TV pictures of this coach, drapes drawn, threading its way through traffic en route from Parkland Hospital to Dallas Love Field with the slain President and widow Jackie on board. Following this day of infamy, the ‘64 went back to work as just one of the vehicles in the O’Neal fleet. Whatever happened to this historic vehicle? Tom McPherson tells the entire fascinating story in this issue. The coach was ultimately acquired by PCS member Ardeen Vaughan of Alvarado, Texas -- who turned down a bid of nearly one million dollars for this car a year or two ago. We’re grateful to Mr. Vaughan, who provided these professional-quality photos of a truly historic vehicle.

CENTERSTRETCH – Toronto, Ontario PCS member *Darren Bedford* is the proud owner of a perfectly matched pair of 1962 Miller-Meteors – a *Landau Traditional* and a *Classic Limousine*. Darren purchased both of these end-loading hearses in the Western U.S., one in Washington State and the other in Montana. Our centerstretch photo was taken by Tom McPherson on the lawn of the Baker Vault plant north of Toronto last fall.

MILLER ART MODELS – The secondary feature in this issue is a history of the A.J. Miller Company’s style-setting *Art Models* built from 1934-1942. With their graceful arches framing either carved drapery panels or beveled glass above the body beltline, the Miller Art Model marked a return to symbolic, ornamental hearse styling. Author Tom McPherson shares numerous Miller factory photos from his personal collection to tell this interesting story.