

The
PROFESSIONAL
CAR



*THE 1961
SUPERIORS*



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EDITOR'S MESSAGE - The car that graces our cover is a 1936 A.J. Miller Packard 120BA Art Model hearse owned by funeral director Simon Manning, who lives 'way "down under" in Wellington, New Zealand. This stunning funeral coach originally came out of Texas. Regular contributor Tom McPherson stumbled across this beauty while looking through some photos taken at a car show in New Zealand. Although the photos were fuzzy, Tom was able to read the nameplate in the window, so he checked out the funeral home's Website and contacted them, requesting more information and some good photos of the car for *The Professional Car*. He got an immediate, enthusiastic response from Mr. Manning – who hired a professional photographer who took the stately Packard to a nearby park where he photographed it extensively. The Owner's Pride subject in this issue, Mr. Manning's Miller garnered both the front and back covers of this issue as well as the centerspread. New Zealand is a long way to go to find a classic American professional car built in Bellefontaine, Ohio, but we think it's worth it.

Tom also wrote the principal feature in this issue – the introduction of Superior's all-new 1961 models, which the author considers the high point, or *apogee*, of Superior's industry styling leadership. In that milestone model year, the Superior Coach Corp. of Lima, Ohio expanded its already comprehensive funeral car and ambulance model lineup from two distinctive series to four, with the addition of new Sovereign and Crown Sovereign models to the Royale and Crown Royale series introduced in 1959. That wasn't all that was new at Superior that year. In mid-1960, just prior to the unveiling of its '61 models, Superior introduced a bold, new corporate logo -- an intertwined "S" and "C" that identified Superior's sales and service facilities for the next two decades. In the late 1960s the Shields family sold Superior Coach to the Sheller-Globe conglomerate. It was mostly downhill from there. But that's another story.

- **Walt McCall, Editor**