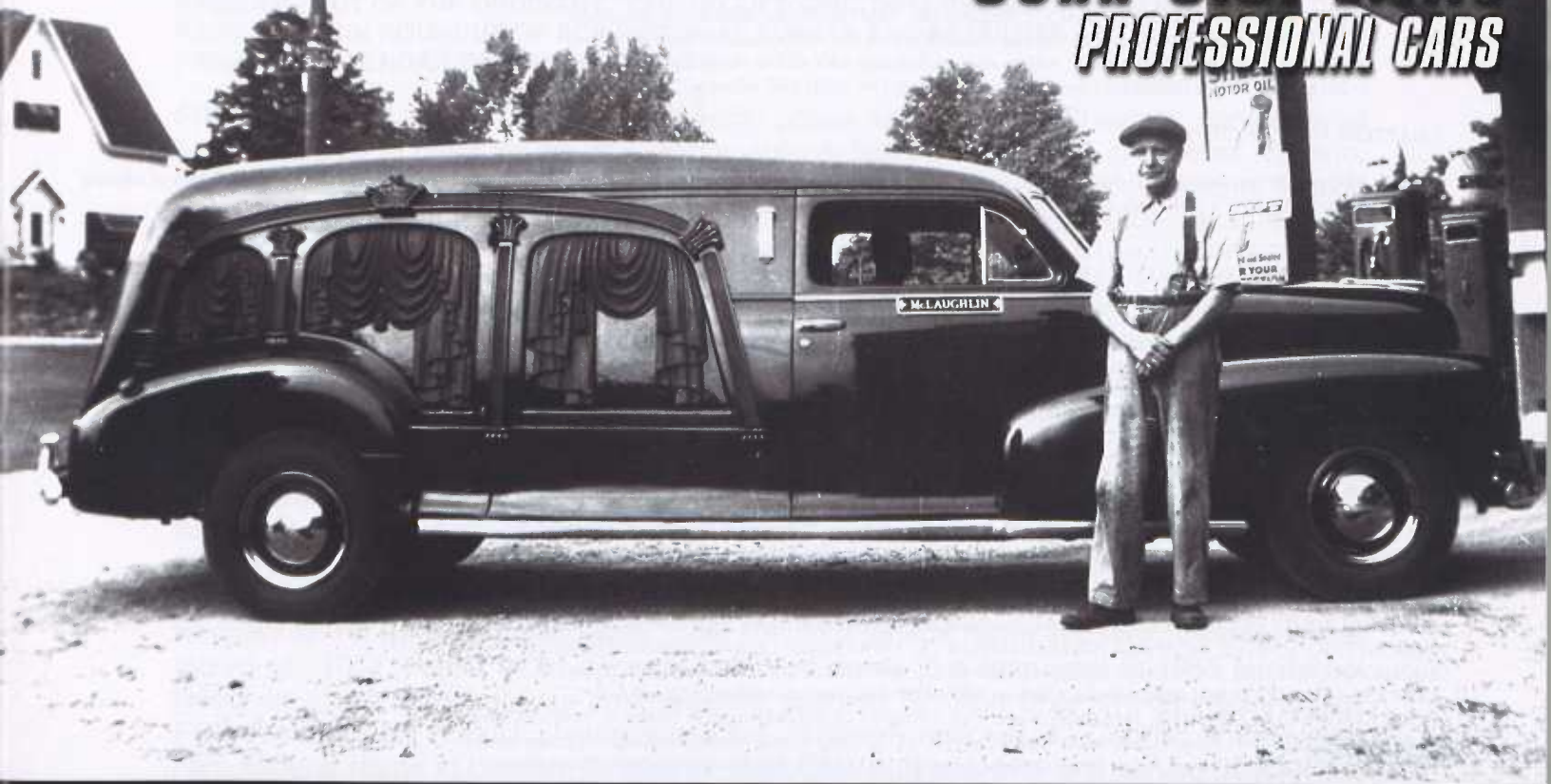


# *The* **PROFESSIONAL** *CAR*



*John J.C. Little*  
**PROFESSIONAL CARS**



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# The Professional Car

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**FRONT COVER** – John J. C. Little proudly poses with the 1948 Chevrolet carved-panel hearse he built to order for the W.S. McLaughlin & Son Funeral Home in Listowel, Ontario. One of the last carved-drape hearses built in North America, the side-servicing funeral coach was an extended-wheelbase conversion of a Chevrolet Model 1508 sedan-delivery vehicle.

**BACK COVER** – Thomas R. Ford and Jack L. Ford of the Ford & Sons Funeral Home in Blenheim, Ontario take delivery of their 1946 Ford two-way side-loading hearse at the John Little garage in Ingersoll, Ontario in September 1946. The base car was a slope-backed Ford Tudor two-door sedan purchased from Knight & Rigby, the local Ford/Monarch dealer in Blenheim. Both photos from the Walter M. P. McCall Collection.

**CENTERSTRETCH** – The most ornate and best known of the many professional cars hand-built by John J. C. Little is this beautiful Gothic-panel carved hearse which Mr. Little designed and built for Russel Needham, of the Needham Funeral Home in Chatham, Ontario. An ambitious conversion of a 1941 Cadillac Series 61 Coupe, it has blue stained glass side windows and a Henney casket table. Later sold to a funeral home in Essex, Ontario, it was retired ca. 1962. Found in an advanced state of decay in a farm yard in 1985 by Russel Needham's son, Lloyd, it was professionally restored by Stan Uher of RM Restorations. PCS member Kent Roduck photographed the stunningly restored '41 Cadillac at the Needham Funeral Home in London, Ontario in 1988. This truly one-of-a-kind carved hearse was profiled in *TPC #49*, and some of us saw it at the 1993 PCS International Meet in Chatham, Ontario.

**EDITOR'S NOTE** – We had long planned to do a feature story on this little-known Canadian coachbuilder, but Gregg Merksamer beat us to it. Gregg often visited John J. C. Little's daughter Mary at her home in Ingersoll while traveling through Southwestern Ontario on his way to and from Detroit. Gregg's story was originally published in *Old Cars Weekly* in 2007. We are pleased to reprint Gregg's story here (with a few minor edits) and to profusely illustrate it with some of many of the photos Mary Little gave us way back in 1972. Coming up in our next issue: Part II of Tom McPherson's comprehensive history of the James Cunningham, Son Company of Rochester, New York.

– Walt McCall, Editor