



1976 S&S AND 1977 MILLER-METEOR CADILLAC HIGHTOPS

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COVER PHOTO Some photographs really tell a story. Our cover photo for this issue graphically illustrates the end of one era and the beginning of another in American ambulance design. The two cars in Tony Karsnia's cover photo represent the last of the big, full-sized Cadillac professional cars and the first of the smaller ones. The car on the left is Tony's 1976 S&S Cadillac Medic 1. Parked next to it is Winnipeg, Manitoba PCS member Brian Schuff's 1977 Miller-Meteor Cadillac Lifeliner. Tony and Brian both acquired their ambulances last year: Karsnia found his in Alexander, Iowa and Brian his in Tracy, Minn. Cadillac ended production of its long-wheelbase commercial chassis at the end of the 1976 model year. The all-new 1977 commercial chassis was significantly smaller. This drastic "downsizing" was a result of the auto industry's compliance with new Federal fuel economy standards. Consequently, the 1976 model year was one of the biggest in professional car industry history. Some ambulance operators bought large fleets of '76s which they put in storage and placed in service only as their older cars wore out. Ditto for funeral directors who couldn't get enough of the last big 1976 side-servicing hearses. Within two years, the passenger car-based ambulance had disappeared.

INSIDE BACK COVER The Combination Funeral Car and Ambulance was a staple product in every professional car manufacturer's model line from the early motor era through the 1970s, when this versatile "two-in-one" professional car was killed off by tough new ambulance specifications regulations. By 1980 the combination coach was gone, and with it much goodwill ambulance service once provided to their communities by local funeral directors. The combination coach was instantly recognizable by its airline-style window drapes, partition, folding attendant seats and roof-mounted beacon. The coach in this February, 1962 ad is the 1962 Superior Pontiac Criterion Limousine Combination.

BACK COVER PHOTO Just as the stately Cadillac continues as the luxury car chassis of choice for America's funeral directors, Mercedes-Benz is the preferred chassis for premium hearses in Europe. This is a 1992 Mercedes-Benz "Bestattungswagen" built by Pollman of Bremen, Germany -- Europe's largest and most prestigious hearse manufacturer. This is the latest in German luxury hearse body styles, with swag type window draperies behind huge side windows which curve into the roof. Photo courtesy of Tom McPherson, who visited the Pollman plant in December.