

In Remembrance

Dear MCA Members,

By now most of you already have heard the sad news. On July 16, 1998, Jim Osborn passed away at his home in the North Georgia mountains. Surviving Jim is his wonderful wife, Sue, and sons David and Mark.

Jim, as well as Sue, has been an MCA member since the early days (membership number 376) and has always been actively involved in the Club. He held numerous official positions within the organization including president, national head judge, and editor(s) of Mustang Times. He and Sue kept the fairly young publication going at a time when no one else was interested in undertaking the challenge. This was also long before the days of professional typesetting and, later, computers. All material was typewritten and pasted up by hand. This work was in addition to the numerous other jobs they held within the club. As if all this were not enough, the Osborns were busy raising a family and trying to build a business from humble garage beginnings.

Jim was a salesman, pure and simple. He could sell nearly anything to anyone. Many times he has convinced an automotive enthusiast that the Mustang was really the car to have. And if this person owned a Mustang then, of course, this person must also become a member of the Mustang Club of America: a sort of package deal.

It always seemed as though he was wheeling and dealing. And he always did it with such

ease. If you needed a favor, no problem. But expect him to ask a favor in return and it might well be a pretty big favor. However, he never asked anyone to do more than they were capable. And in the end, 99% of the time everyone benefited in some way from his deals and favors.

Jokes and pranks must have been high on the list of important things to do. A close-knit circle of friends were constantly trying to



one-up the next guy. Some of the stunts these guys pulled on each other were absolutely mind boggling. Some of these friends began to refer to Jim as dad or granddad. This, of course, was a not-so-gentle reminder that he was aging, but in a way those nicknames were very indicative of the privileged rank of seniority he had earned within MCA.

During the 1980s the Mustang Club of America faced a fairly bleak time. Membership and participation by directors was at an all time low and the treasury was nearly dry. Jim and Sue, along

with a very small handful of dedicated people, helped keep the club running. On numerous occasions expenses were never turned in for reimbursement and things that needed to be done simply were done. No committees, no discussions, just a desire to keep things going. You see, Jim didn't seem to understand the word failure. His attitude was always, "okay this is what we're going to do to achieve this end." It was never "I wonder if this will work". If for some reason the plan was not entirely successful, it was viewed as a lesson learned and another plan of attack was established. This, of course, explains why the Osborns have proven time and time again that they could get the job done and turn any venture into a successful one. Our club would not be what it is today without the leadership and unwavering dedication that Jim gave to the Mustang, the Mustang Club of America, and to the people who are involved in this hobby.

This man had friends and acquaintances all over this great country of ours. In and out of the Mustang hobby, many folks knew Jim Osborn. He was no stranger to key people at Ford Motor Company and did everything he could to help preserve our favorite pony car. For a time he served on the Board of Directors for Mustang Museum, Inc., but a work related problem required his attention at home forcing him to resign his position.

A very unfortunate incident that left Jim with a burned-to-the-ground GT500 Shelby convertible led to the current MCA

requirement that all Mustangs at shows carry a fire extinguisher. Our association with SEMA (Specialty Equipment Manufacturing Association) and the good work they do for the hobby can also be attributed to Jim Osborn.

His huge collection of Ford related memorabilia was possibly second to none. (When was the last time you saw an original Mustang I press kit dated early 1963 still complete with a letter from Ford, press release information, Ford factory photos, and the original envelope that it was all mailed in?) Factory information, books, videos, diecasts, posters, artwork, paraphernalia, collectibles, memorabilia, and more photos and literature than one could ever review. Jim was a true collector and enthusiast. His enthusiasm was contagious and he didn't mind sharing his treasures, many of which were beautifully displayed.

Many of you know that Jim was the show chairman for the 30th Mustang Anniversary Celebration at Charlotte Motor Speedway in 1994. He was the founding father of that show: the fact that there even was a show is a tribute to Jim Osborn. That was the largest and greatest Mustang gathering ever held. The 35th Mustang Anniversary Celebration in April 1999 was again being organized and chaired by Jim. Key personnel had been selected and put in place, several meetings had taken place, and work was underway. Now the largest obstacle must be faced - pulling the show together without Jim's experienced guidance.

Not only was he the epitome of the most dedicated worker for MCA, Jim embodied everything that is admirable, honorable, and praiseworthy with MCA. Jim never met a person he did not consider a friend. If you saw him, met him, shook hands with him, talked with him, or heard him speak, you will never forget that

encounter. He always made time to talk to anyone. He would ask how the family is and you always knew Jim spoke from the heart. An approachable, friendly, "good ol' boy", and a professional businessman, Jim was at ease whatever the environment. Whether he was rubbing elbows with movers and shakers within Ford or listening to a young kid at a show telling him how one day he hoped to own a car like Jim's Shelby, or just talking Mustang, he always enjoyed the conversation.

Time heals all wounds. We will press on. In April of 1999, while we are all enjoying the excitement that the 35th Anniversary show will hold, let us remember we are there as a result of the hard work of Jim Osborn. He may not be able to attend in person, but he will be watching and smiling down upon us.

Let each of us make a commitment to keep his spirit and vision alive and growing within the Mustang Club of America.

If the wealth of a man can be measured by the number of friends he has, then Jim Osborn was one of the richest men in the world.

Respectfully,
Tony Garcia, Publisher
Teresa Vickery, Editor

The following piece was sent to us by MCA member Lee Wilmot. He first met Jim in 1969 when they were both involved in the fine art of drag racing. Lee pointed out to us that at the time Jim was driving a Plymouth! This is not intended to make light of any facet of religious beliefs. This is intended, however, to bring a smile to the faces of those who knew and loved our friend Jim Osborn.

Jim has only been in heaven for a few days, but he's already met with Henry and Edsel Ford and has a pretty good deal worked out on all of their leftover litera-

ture from the 1930s and 1940s. When I say a pretty good deal, it was a good deal for him but Hank and Edsel had to pay shipping.

The Big Man, God himself, comes strolling up to him, hands behind his back and says, "Excuse me, Mr. Osborn?"

"Yes," Jim answers.

"Jim, I need to talk to you about something."

"Great," says Jim, "I need to talk to you also. Nice to meet ya." Jim goes on, "You see, God, you've got one helluva place for a car show. You see, we take the old Riverside Raceway, pack it full of cars and have an open track event, invite some of the old drivers like Fireball Roberts, Tiny Lund, and Davy Allison. You know what I'm saying. We charge \$35 a head. You get a cut, I get a cut and everybody's happy. You know what I mean."

"Yea, Jim, great. Look, that's not why I'm here. It seems you've only been here a few days and so far eight sets of the Lost Sea Scrolls and 15 sets of the Ten Commandments have miraculously appeared. Moses is all upset because he says he knows for a fact that the one and only original was destroyed."

"On top of that," God goes on, "Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John handed over several copies of their books to me this morning with the words 'Jim Osborn Reproductions' across the diagonal of each page! They're talking about bringing in the HBI (Heavenly Bureau of Investigation). There's going to be an inquiry. Now, do you know what I'm saying? Do you know what I mean, Jim?"

Jim replies, "Yes, I'm sorry, Father. With everything that's happened to me in the last few days, I just wasn't thinking. You're right. Cut those four guys in for 10% and you take 10. Plus Father, all the "I would rather be in Heaven" t-shirts are free. You know what I'm saying?"