



# SCOTT DRAKE

▲ Lana Peacock, Executive Director of the East Texas Crisis Center, and Scott Drake look over the Mustang before it crosses the auction block at Barrett-Jackson.

Text by Mary Jean Wesche  
Photos courtesy of Scott Drake Enterprises

**A**s most of you are aware by now, Scott Drake Enterprises and the MCA sponsored the “Pay It Forward” contest which began in the fall of 2008. The winner was announced at the 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Mustang Celebration in Birmingham, Alabama, in April of 2009. The prize was a 1966 Mustang convertible that was in dire need of restoration. The winning club was to restore the car in time for SEMA 2009, and then the Mustang was to be auctioned at Barrett-Jackson in January 2010.

The winning MCA club was the East Texas Mustang Club. Their Restoration Team picked up the Mustang on Saturday and began the work on the following Monday. The East Texas club had the Mustang’s totally finished within 100 days.

The “Pay It Forward” Mustang was on display at SEMA 2009, in the Scott Drake Enterprises booth. Just prior to the presentation, I sat down with Scott Drake for a one-on-one about his company and what was behind his efforts to “Pay It Forward.”

**Mustang Times:** I was wondering what prompted the beginning of this contest? I know you had restored a car for one of your high school teachers?

**Scott Drake:** Yes, he was my high school shop teacher. He was the drafting teacher. His name is Bala Palaygi. I spoke at his retirement ceremony. So many times people

want to do something for a teacher, but often they die before you have the opportunity. I didn’t want that to happen.

In class, I remember he told his students that if any of us “made it,” he wanted 10%; I didn’t give him the 10% but I did restore his car.

It was a 6-cylinder 1965 Mustang. In 1978, I put my first part on his car outside drafting class—it was trunk weather stripping. I dumped buckets of water to test it. I thought it was cool that he was willing to help a student.

As years went on, he stopped driving the Mustang and it sat outside in back of his house rotting. I asked about his car 25 years later, it was still there. I tried to talk him into restoring a fastback or something, but he never wanted to. His wife bought the Mustang brand new and there was sentimental value in the car. We restored it and presented it to him at a SEMA show. That was the “Payback” project.

That led me into the “Pay It Forward” project with the Mustang Club of America. It makes me feel good to give something back. I feel very blessed with a wonderful business, just having a lot of fun for the last 30 years. So I decided, let’s do something else. The “Pay It Forward” project was next. Paying it forward is doing a good deed and passing it to something else.

Look at the photo of what the Mustang was, that old beat up car, and what it is today, it’s a beautiful thing.

**MT:** Were you surprised at the response from MCA clubs about this project?

**SD:** MCA clubs really stepped up to the plate with this, but only one club could win. The East Texas group was highly organized from the beginning, and very passionate, they dove into this project. Their plan and presentation was awesome. Not only did they restore it, they really marketed the results, while also honoring the contributors to this project.

**MT:** Knowing the winning club picked up the car on Saturday and began work the following Monday, when you see the end result what do you think?

**SD:** It chokes me up, here’s a group that really gets it—the “Pay It Forward” concept. It’s a wonderful group of people as is the charity they chose. They did it for the passion of the hobby, capturing the Pay It Forward concept, along with their charity. Everyone contributed. If we can bring this concept into everybody’s life, we can make a difference one person at a time.

It has been a tremendously successful program. I feel that we have a responsibility to do these types of projects. It brings to light the old Mustangs and it truly gives something back. I feel blessed to have what I have and I feel that we need to keep progressing with these types of programs.

It got emotional when I gave Mr. Palaygi the keys; I’m getting choked up now. The passion shown by this club and the camaraderie. Of course, the other sponsors that contributed to this were equally as honored to be a part of it.

**MT:** It thrills me to see these people do this just for the hobby and to help their Charity.

**SD:** These people paid their own way to come to the West Coast to see this car presented here at SEMA. And, they will also do the same, I heard, to get to Barrett-Jackson in January in Arizona. They were totally committed.

**MT:** Let’s discuss your company and the parts you produce.

**SD:** I make the decision what parts we’re going to make, our staff engineers make a part, and we either enhance or reproduce it. We do quite a bit of research before we decide the parts are worthy. Not all replica parts are the same. Our parts are not lower priced, but they are made to specs—a better part, engineered with good materials and a good finish that will last longer. My passion is to make the part right, sometimes I may be behind the market because if I don’t think the part is right, I won’t approve it. Someone else may beat me to market with a part, but we want it to perform and be authentic, and I won’t approve parts until I feel they are ready.

We have a lot of old Ford blueprints. We reproduce parts from an authentic point of

# ALUMINUM TRAILERS

- **Ultra Lightweight**  
Maximum fuel economy
- **Rust-Free Durability**  
Higher resale value
- **Detail Driven Design**  
For car enthusiasts



Canfield, OH  
Toll Free: 1-800-282-5042

[www.trailex.com](http://www.trailex.com)

view. I have the data and details and the drawings from the original engineer. We are going to make a part that we are proud to have our name on. We're also proud to be a licensed Ford manufacturer.

**MT:** What was your first Mustang?

**SD:** I still have it, a 1965 Fastback., I paid \$300 for it in 1974. The car was absolutely trashed. It had 13 colors on the exterior, a chrome chain steering wheel, shag carpet for a headliner, was repainted with an avocado green color, etc. My wife, who was my high school sweetheart, and I dated in the car, we have fond memories. We've restored it, obviously.

**MT:** Give us your background in the parts business.

**SD:** I worked for my brother, Bob Drake. He manufactures parts for 1934-'48 cars. I learned to build and create parts from my father and my brother. My passion is Mustangs and muscle cars. Bob and I don't compete. We learn and complement each other.

My father was a skilled craftsman, a body and fender man. He worked on many cars that I still see today, where his work has held up. I used to go with my father to swap meets all over the U.S. You never know what you may say to your children that may result in a life lesson. Once, when I was about 12 or 13, my dad told me at a swap meet, "If you buy these washers for this Model A (they were a floor board washers) clean them and put them in a sandwich bag, you can resell them at a different swap meet." I did what he suggested and made about \$40 from a \$10 investment. That was a real life-lesson for me; I'm still doing the same work today that I did when I was 12.

**MT:** I know you have children, are they following in your footsteps?

**SD:** We have two children. Our daughter is one looking at colleges now; she's interested in computer graphics and animation. Her name is Shelby. We never realized that 17-years later we'd be working with Shelby Automobiles.

Our son, Troy, was born with Downs Syndrome. He's so happy, joyful, and loving. He's really a good kid and delightful to be with. He does like cars, and helps in the garage with my cars.

**MT:** So, now that the "Payback" and "Pay It Forward" projects are completed, what's next? Do you have plans for a new project?

**SD:** Yes, we will surely have a new project after this one. We're tossing around ideas, but we've not finalized anything. So, we're not ready to announce anything just yet.

The final step in the "Pay It Forward" project was on January 24, 2010, at the

Barrett-Jackson auction in Scottsdale, Arizona. The car came across the Auction block on Sunday, just about noon, and sold for \$42,000.

On hand was Scott Drake, the Restoration Team from the East Texas Mustang Club, and Lana Peacock Executive Director of the East Texas Crisis Center, a woman's shelter who will benefit from the proceeds of this auction.

It's always gratifying to be a part of a project like this. My small role was certainly a memorable experience for me. I encourage each Regional Club of the MCA to participate in a similar project. It doesn't have to be on this scale, but as Scott Drake stated, "If we can bring this concept into everybody's life, we can make a difference one person at a time."

We can hardly wait to see what project Scott Drake comes up with next time. **MT**



▲ The "Pay It Forward" Car was presented to the public for the first time at the 2009 SEMA show in Las Vegas, Nevada. Here it's surrounded by the East Texas Mustang club's Restoration Team, yours truly, and Scott Drake.



▲ The "Pay It Forward" 1966 project car on the auction block at Barrett-Jackson on January 24, 2010. It sold for \$42,000.