

PATRICK'S *Dream*



A Tribute To Our Son

By Paul Bledsoe

My Mustang is a modified 1988 GT Hatchback. It is very special in two ways: It was my oldest son's car, and it turned out to be an amazing show car. Its history began in 1996, when I bought it for my son, Patrick, who had just turned 16. The Mustang was in need of a lot of work and had 140,000 hard miles on the odometer.

Not long after starting high school that year, Patrick seemed to change. His behavior was being affected by a mental illness that eventually caused him to take his own life, after many torturous experiences.

That was in 2000. The Mustang sat behind the house for over a year, before I first unlocked it to look inside, thinking I needed to get rid of it. Somewhere in 2002, between getting it ready for a quick paint job and buying new tires and hoses, the car somehow seemed to be telling me that I shouldn't sell it.

I thought about what I would do and soon realized the Mustang was the most significant thing I had left to remind me of my son. He had a natural talent for fixing things and loved that 'Stang. He had talked often of fixing it up, either to race or as a head-turning street machine. I recalled a conversation we once had, when he was lucid and in good humor, when he stated that he wished he had lots of money so he could turn the car into something to be proud of and show off to his friends.

With that memory, in 2002 I set out to build his dream—Patrick's Dream. I disassembled the entire car, down to the shell. I did all the body work and prepped it for paint. I selected a dark blue I saw on a new Porsche. It had metallic and pearl in it and seem to change color from dark blue to silver, depending on the sun's brightness and shadows. The local paint shop I selected took five months to do the work, because the paint was so difficult to mix and get different batches to match. On his own, the shop owner re-

painted some parts of the car more than once, but only charged me the agreed-to price. During the five months the car was at the paint shop, Hurricane Katrina hit, causing me much anxiety, but the car made it through fine. It was delivered to my home in late 2005.

By this time, our other son, Stuart, was 18 and began to take an interest in helping. His involvement made assembly work much more fun.

Assembly took more than one year of weekends, nights, holidays, and vacation days. The entire build period was filled with visits by family, in support of this tribute to Patrick, as he was dearly loved by all. Many a night I would think about him and ask him if I was doing a good job for him. I felt good vibes all through the job. As I built it up, things got more complex and elaborate. To shorten this story, the results speak for themselves, with the photos you see.

I can clearly recall the first time I fired up the new engine. What a thrill—equaled only by the first time I drove it around the neighborhood. Patrick's spirit rode with me. I was so proud to have fulfilled his dream.

In late 2006, I entered "Patrick's Dream" in its first car show. In the winter of 2007, I made about 30 modifications, after a few dozen car shows, learning what was "working" and what wasn't.

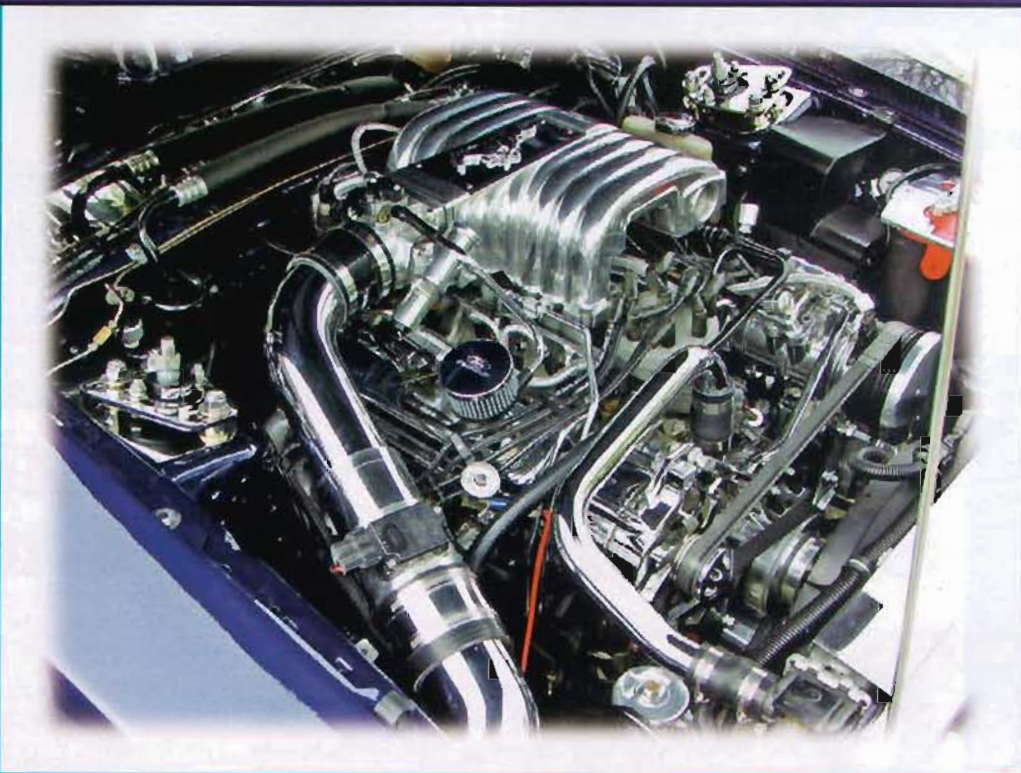
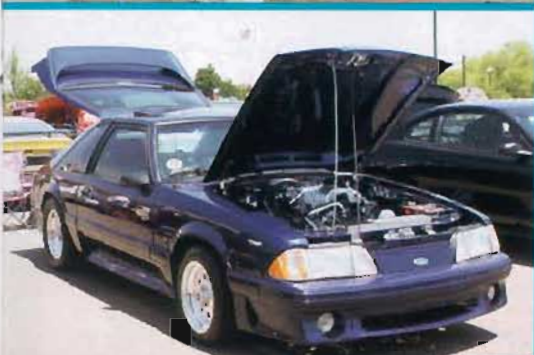
In 2008, it won a Best of Show at a Fun Ford Weekend Show.

In 2009, the car won a plaque in the 1979-1993 Modified class at the 45th Anniversary celebration at Barber Motorsports Park.

In March 2010, it won a First Place, 1964-1200 Modified class at the MCA National show in Pensacola.

In June, I took the '88 to Mustang, Oklahoma, for the next National MCA show. To have Patrick's Dream in the *Mustang Times* would be the ultimate honor for me and the ultimate tribute to my son and our enduring love for him.

MT



MODS

- Billet shifter knob, switch covers, knobs
- Pioneer 50 watt stereo
- 6 Alpine Speakers
- CD, MP3, Bluetooth
- Grant polished steering wheel
- White face gauges
- Custom black seats and door inserts
- Fiberglass hood with 2.5-inch cowl
- Porsche Lapis Blue Pearl Metallic Paint
- LX Taillights
- Black shorty antenna
- 15-inch Weld polished Draglites
- Bulldog remote trunk/hatch release
- FRPP camshaft
- Upper intake port matched to polished 70mm throttle body
- Chromed cold air intake
- Two-inch phenolic spacer
- 733mm C&H Vortech polished aluminum mass airflow meter
- FMS aluminum 3-row radiator

- Chrome steel hoses
- Polished aluminum overflow/recirc
- March clear-coated aluminum pulleys
- Maximum Motorsports camber plates
- R134A a/c system, polished compressor
- MSD Coil
- Taylor 8mm silicon plug wires
- 135-deg. boots
- LED lighting/engine compartment
- Custom Vacuum reservoir
- Tremec T-5Z world Class Tranny
- Steeda Tri-Ax short throw shifter
- Ford Racing aluminum driveshaft
- Ford Racing King Cobra clutch
- Sub-frame connectors
- BB sport progressive lowering springs
- Hotchkiss tubular rear control arms
- Mac H-Pipe exhaust
- Magnaflow Stainless, fully polished cat-back exhaust and mufflers
- Russell stainless mesh flex lines

- Chromed or polished stainless:
- firewall cover plate
 - wiper motor cover
 - upper intake
 - throttle body
 - cold air intake
 - SS ARP bolts
 - hood prop rod
 - Hood latch assembly
 - hood hinges
 - dipstick
 - thermostat housing
 - A/C & P/S brackets
 - water pump
 - battery hold down
 - caster/camber plates
 - oil cap
 - brake res. cap
 - alternator
 - distributor body and hold down