

Walton: luster restored one automobile at a time

Continued from WALTON, Page 1

Walton's love of automobiles, however, developed many years prior to his time at the college. In fact, it arose before he was out of high school, when he bought a hot rod with which he became enamored.

"My first car was a 35 Dodge pickup my dad gave me when I was 16 years old, and the first thing I did was chop the top off before I was old enough to drive it," he said. "It wasn't the most beautiful metal work."

From there, he self-described himself as a "tired" student. Walton proved himself astically in the field of metal and automotive work. Three hot rods that he created have graced the covers of automotive elite magazines, and there have been highlights in them. Others that he has sold have brought in large sums of cash.

In the classroom, though, Walton walks from student to student, helping each of them restore a bit of the luster that their aged cars have lost over the years. He moves from assisting an owner with a Volkswagen Beetle that has a little more rust than they first thought, to an old Ford boat of a vehicle that has seen better days and has the worn paint to prove it.

His personable attitude and love for his job has made him a favorite among students. "Harold's a real knowledgeable guy," said student Jerry Foster. "You can ask him anything, and he's pretty much done everything as far as automotive goes."

Today, teaching seems to be a natural fit for Walton, and just another skill at which he has excelled, but up until a couple of years ago, he was simply another per-

son going to school.

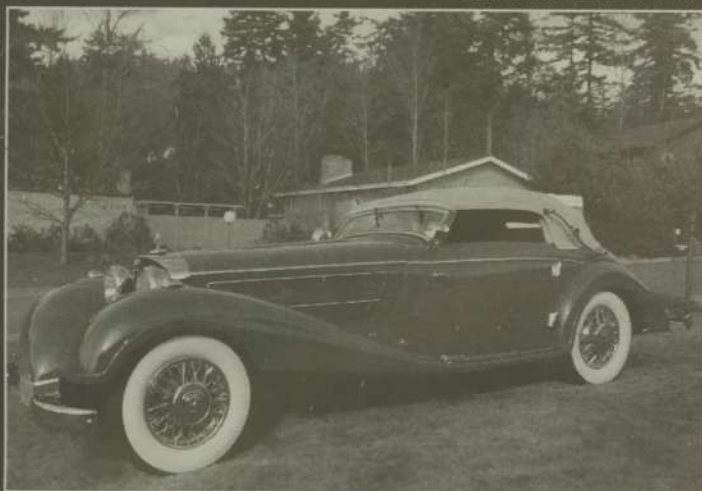
"Dave Bradley (automotive department chair) asked me, 'Would you be interested in a basic metal-forming class?' he recalled. "I said, 'Yeah, I would like to take it.' He said, 'No, we would like you to teach it.' So I've been teaching ever since."

But in Walton's view, Clackamas isn't merely about its teaching opportunities. He still enjoys some of the classes that initially brought him to the college, such as blacksmithing, which he describes as a metal-working process unlike the method with which he is familiar.

Numerous instructors at the college contribute countless real-world experiences to their courses. For Walton's class, it has given students extra motivation to work on their cars, and in a manner that they may have been frightened to try on their vehicles before.



John Shufelt Clackamas Print



CONTRIBUTED

ABOVE: Harold Walton (left) hammers student Dennis Proctor's Volkswagen Beetle hood.

BELOW: Walton's work helped restore this 1937 540K Mercedes. Much of his work goes uncredited.



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