

## Eastern Oklahoma MBCA Profiles by John Kushnerick

This is our fifth edition with Profiles of one long standing member and one recent new member. It is our hope that this encourages everyone to get to know our fellow members. We all need to realize it takes a long time and many experiences to get to know someone. *These articles and all of the club activities are intended as opportunities to make long term friends.*

### Dave Hinnant

Tulsa OK

Member since May 1997

I dare say that there are very few people in Tulsa who have owned as many Mercedes Benz automobiles as Dave. During his lifetime he tells me he has owned about 17-20. Currently Dave owns a 1977 450sl, 1967 230 sedan, 1972 280sel 4.5, 1972 350sl, a 1966 200D station wagon and a 1990 Unimog military truck. This does not include the several others he has in parts or storage.



#### My first Mercedes Benz

Dave grew up in Tulsa. He acquired his first Mercedes when he offered to paint a neighbor's house in exchange for her car. The car was a 1961 220sb. "The lady needed her house painted and I needed a car". So Dave pulled out the ladder, scraped the old paint, and put a fresh coat on the house. The car needed a clutch and other fixes.

"I figured I needed to know how to fix my car so I went to work in late 1973 working for Siggie Grimm at his dealership at 2515 East 11th street. (Note: This was the location of the original Mercedes Benz/Studebaker dealership - Richardson Motors.) "We called the place the 'old lumberyard' since the building looked like one. I started by sweeping floors, running for parts, and anything they needed. I apprenticed under the two senior Mercedes Benz mechanics, Ed Garrott and Gerald Moore. I learned the ropes from them and after two years became a Technician." In 1976, the business moved a few blocks away to a new location at 2007 E 11th street. "I attended factory training and worked on repairs and alignments there till 1986." Dave then moved to Tristar Automotive in Tulsa till late 1996.

In mid 1997, Dave, Sid Overturf and Denny Holden pooled their tools, resources, and skills to open up Benzin Motor Works. "We started out small. We didn't even have a lift." With patience, skills, and a passionate customer base, the business grew. "Our slogan was: Just honest service with a personal touch."

In 2010 the business expanded to its current location on E 38<sup>th</sup> street. The shop now works on Mercedes, BMW and Hummer H1. Dave is **President / Parts Manager** but still works on the older cars. "We lost Sid in 2011". "His passing has left a big hole. We all miss him."

Dave went on to tell me stories about a few of his early Mercedes purchases after the 1961 220sb. One of the most interesting cars was a 1972 350sl. This was the first year of the R107 body style for USA. Dave and his wife used the car on their honeymoon driving out to the western and mountain states. He sold the car and bought the car back years later. It sits in storage waiting to be restored. His newest car is a 1977 450sl in Signal red. "This car is a project car. I have so far spent a fair amount of time and money on the car and keep working on it when I get a chance."

#### Dream Car

Dave's dream car is a car most would enjoy to look at but would be intimidated by its service. A 1965 300se sedan. "The car has the fin body, 4 door sedan, big chrome, air suspension and was the high end top of the line finback or 'heckflosse' sedans in 1965. I have always had a place in my heart for the 50's and 60's models." (see: <http://mercedes.heckflosse.nl/>)

A unique thing about Dave is that he is a drummer in a band. "We practice twice a week. We love Beatles and late 60's music". They play at parties and other occasions.

Dave was a member of the Mercedes club in the 1970's. "I was 21 years old in 1976. When I joined the club I was by far the youngest member. I lasted one year and then came back in 1997 when I was older."

With his busy 12 hour days in helping to run a business, Dave wishes he could participate more in club activities. But "Extra time is tough to come by".

"One thing I can say is that I have met a lot of nice people in this business. People come and go but if you do the right thing and are honest, you will build lasting relationships".