

A Special Man of his Word, With A Special Model A

by Rudy Perez

To start this story out, I have to go back 40 years. Anyone that knows me now, knows that I am always on the lookout for cars, antiques and a good deal, and in 1973 it was the same. While exploring a garage, I came across a 1931, natural wood, Special Delivery 255-A, alongside three other Model A Fords. I knew even at that time, that that was a rare find. In December 1930, there were only 19 made and when they stopped being built (by Baker-Raulang Co.) in 1932, the total manufactured was only 900. I was able to speak to the owner and asked if he would sell it, and he said yes, it was for sale. He was asking \$1500.00 for it. Boy, that was exciting news!

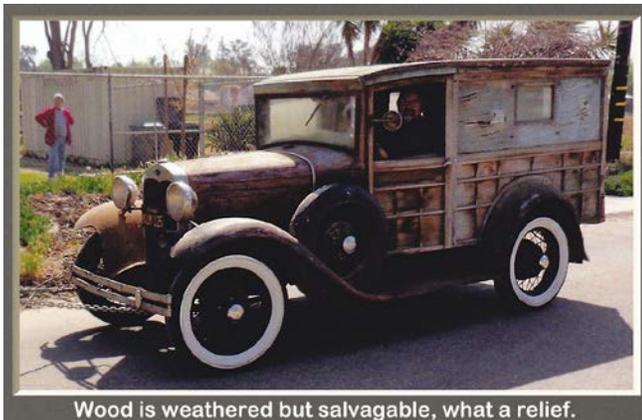
But, as things happen, just starting out as a young couple, my wife Lori and I had that exact amount of money tied up in an escrow process, so I had to leave the garage without that car.



Watching her move for the first time in 40 years!

introduced myself, and found out his name was Gerry Miller. With sagging shoulders, I headed home, where I told Lori that I had missed the purchase of the 255-A by 60 minutes, she answered, "Well, it just wasn't meant to be, there is probably a reason why and in time we may discover the answer."

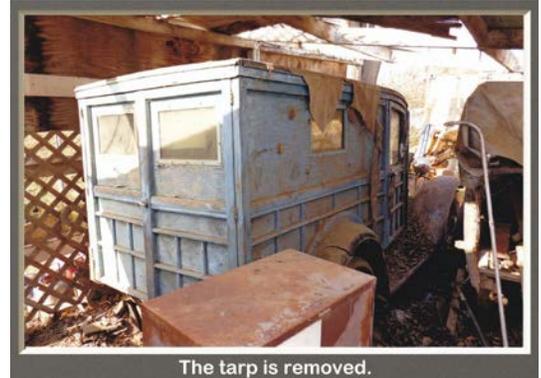
As time went on, Lori and I opened a business, Meets Early Auto, selling reproduction Model A parts, where we met and formed many relationships that turned into good friendships with other Model A enthusiasts.



Wood is weathered but salvagable, what a relief.

One of those enthusiasts, that became a good friend, was the owner of that Special Delivery, Gerry Miller. As our friendship developed, I discovered that he knew Model A Fords very well, and that his friend, Dave Kitchen, who was a premier restorer (restoring show cars to compete at National Meets) and a Senior Judge of Model A's, during the 60's, 70's and 80's, was to help him with the restoration.

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The tarp is removed.

During that week though, there was a glitch in the sale of the house and the escrow process fell through. With no deal on the home and our money free, I told Lori I was going to go buy that Model A. Luckily for me, she told me it was okay.

But, that's where my luck ended. I went back to see the car and ask if it was still for sale. The owner had just sold the car an hour before I got there! The new owner was in fact, still there. I went over,



Tractor pulls her out into the sunlight.

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rude, I just wanted to know. And, Gerry being a patient man, would just answer okay. Then he told me that *if* he wanted to sell the Special Delivery, I would be the first to know. More time went on, and one day while talking to Gerry on the phone about Model A's and other matters, he mentioned that he thought it was

time to sell me the 255-A. I was in shock and could not believe it. All I could manage to say was, yes, and thank you, and again, yes, and thank you. Gerry, being a man of good character had kept his word. He felt that the time had come, and knew that I would do a good job putting this amazing vehicle back on the road. And now, I am excited and eager to do just that, since it is one of only 10 originals known to exist today.

While signing the papers to transfer ownership, Gerry joked that he had stored the car long enough for me. What a good sense of humor he's got! He also told me that he remembered, after all those years, my sagging shoulders and the look of disappointment on my face as I walked away, when I learned that he had bought the car.

The day that we went to pick up the 255-A was really a family affair. It was my wife, Lori and I, my son-in-law, Dana Tolman and my 14 year old grandson, Kalei. I really wanted Kalei to come along, so when I asked him if he wanted to go with us, it made me so very proud and happy when he gave me a big smile and said, "Yes, Grandpa, I want to help!"

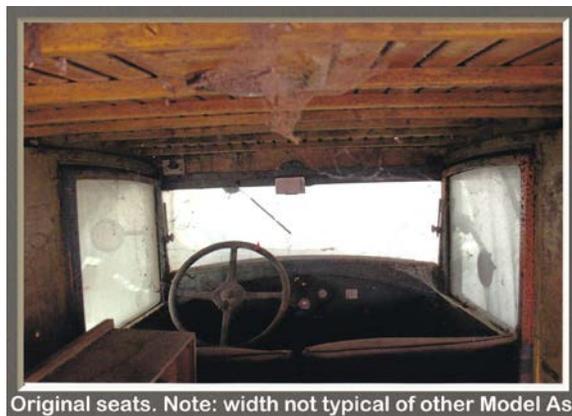


Unique to the 255-A, window regulators!
Not seen in any Ford Station Wagons until 1936.

Gerry's neighbor, Rick, came over to help with a big backhoe tractor, and the first job for the backhoe was to remove a small tree that Gerry had planted in front of the Special Delivery as a theft deterrent. Rick appeared to be just as excited as the rest of us, as he carefully pulled the 255-A out of her resting place. The tires were flat, but she rolled out easily with the backhoe. With the help of my son-in-law and grandson, we replaced the wheels with good roll around white walls. Even though she sat for 20 plus years and with the weathering effects from Mother Nature, she looked great! She was still complete and had never been taken apart, and one of her many unique features, roll up windows in the wooden doors, were still intact. Still a fabulous lady...and now a very special part of our Perez family.

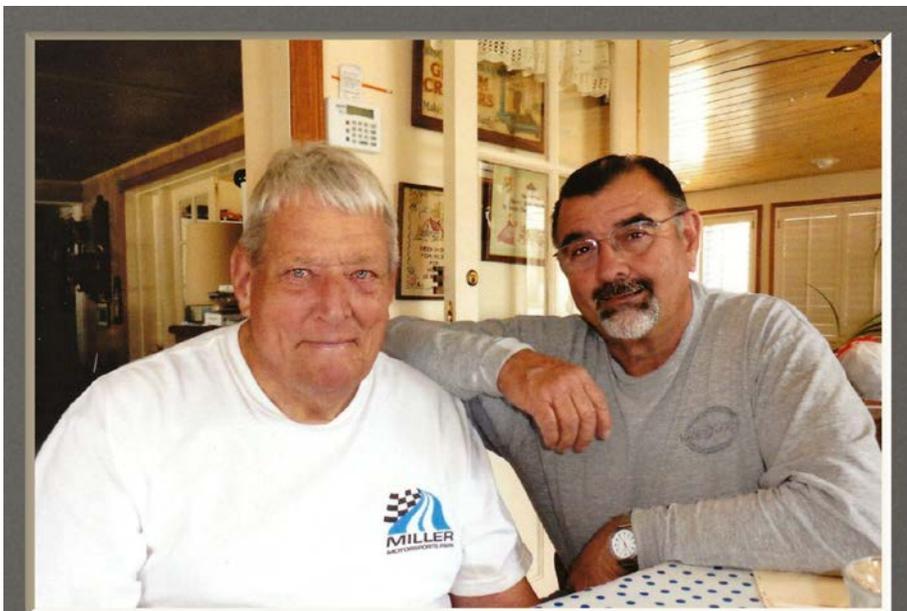


Good wood inside, original dome light and properly placed switch on drivers side front.



Original seats. Note: width not typical of other Model As.

In closing, this story isn't just about a 1931, Special Delivery, but, also about a man of integrity, who kept his word after 40 years. All in all, this sale was one of respect, friendship and integrity, something that the world needs a whole lot more of these days. And to you, Gerry Miller, I say a big thank you for being a man of your word and for storing my car all of those years.



Gerry Miller & Rudy Perez