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OUACHITA
BAPTIST UNIVERSITY



NEWS

From the "Ouachitonian": Ryan Wheeler



By Angela Web

October 17, 2022

For more information, contact OBU's news bureau at newsbureau@obu.edu or (870) 245-5208.

ARKADELPHIA, Ark. – Ever since he was young, Ryan Wheeler obtained a passion that would follow him the rest of his life.

Wheeler, a freshman business administration/management major from Little Rock, Ark., grew up in his family-owned used auto industry called Rock City Classics. His dad was also a pilot who flew major auto dealers from throughout Little Rock. These experiences allowed Wheeler to be influenced by the auto industry.

At the age of 8, Wheeler received his first car: an orange 1955 Mercury Monterey. He now owns around 18 cars and plans on restoring many more in the future. Some of his cars have been on display in shows around Arkansas including the Petit Jean Car Show. The car he used as primary transportation, a 2014 Mercedes ML-63-AMG, was an asset for his restoration business.

“Seeing a car go from such a sad state to its renewal was a very proud moment for me,” Wheeler said. “The man who purchased one of the cars flew all the way from California to pick it up. Giving the car to someone who is going to appreciate it instead of letting it rot in a shop brings me a great deal of joy. I love getting to pair the cars with the owners.”

Aside from cars, Wheeler has also worked on restoring boats. He stumbled across a \$500 boat he found that had been buried in the woods for 12 years. The boat was in horrible condition, but it did not stop Wheeler from working hard to restore it. His philosophy, inspired by his dad, is “eat the elephant one bite at a time.”

Some of his favorite projects include restoring a 1989 Mercedes 560 SL Roadster. One of the boats he worked on cost about \$12,000 to restore. He sold it later for \$24,000.

“Many of the youth today don’t appreciate old cars and old things in general as much as they should,” Wheeler said. “If we don’t take care of these antiques now, they are going to be forgotten like they never happened. It hurts my heart imagining cars, especially older models, sitting in a shop not being used. I feel like each car I ride or drive has a different personality, and you should keep its spirit alive and well.”

Wheeler admits that as many successful restorations there have been, he had just as many, if not more, project failures. He claimed that he has learned so much about the auto industry because of the mistakes and success and has gained valuable marketing analytic skills from his 11 years of experience.

While Wheeler earns a good amount of money from selling his cars and boats, he generously gives them to the church, which is another passion behind his projects.

“I love the car business, but I love God more,” Wheeler said.

Photo by Levi Dade