

FROM THE PUBLISHER



Testing the 1996 Saab 900 on the Atlanta Motor Speedway.

A

ll my life I have researched the history of the world, of African-American people, and my family. Today, as a publisher, I have the golden opportunity to record history. As we observe "Black History Month" this February, we are delighted to bring you a snapshot from the largely unknown contributions of African Americans to the auto industry. Our retrospective coincides with the planning of a year-long celebration of 100 years of car making in the U.S. This is a perfect time to remind you of the role blacks played in the development of America's most powerful industry.

I have mentioned the topic of our cover story to several people, and to my surprise, none were aware that a black family manufactured cars and buses during the 1930's. The Patterson family could have become a major auto manufacturer if it had secured adequate financing. Generations of black families have worked in the industry. Their stories span decades, from a migration from the South to Detroit to work in the foundries, to becoming some of the

brightest engineers, managers and designers that the auto industry has to offer. Their valuable achievements in the industry have somehow been lost or edited out of the history books. We are correcting that oversight.

As you drive around town, especially during Black History Month, it is good for you and your children to know that blacks were involved in the development and the production of your vehicle.

This issue also brings you our long-term vehicle test review. Our Detroit correspondent and Associate Publisher, Myron Stokes, test-drove the Oldsmobile Aurora and the Ford Contour for several months and gives his assessment of both. Light compact trucks are the focus of this edition's Urban Picks. If buying one is on your shopping list this year, read what our writers have to say about them before you dash to the showrooms.

Randi Payton

The letters and E-mail you have been sending since our first issue (May 1995) have opened our eyes even more to the vast untapped African-American carbuying market and strengthens our commitment to our mission. The many suggestions you have offered will not go unanswered. Black motor sports, drag racing, minority dealers, car repair and service, are just some of the many topics you requested that will be included in future issues.

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