



# Q&A With New Chairman Mike Weseloh



## How did you become a car dealer? Did you always aspire to be part of the automotive industry?

I was born into a car family and am the oldest of six children, so I had the first opportunity to join the family business. I knew from an early age that I would work in the dealership — not necessarily that I would be the dealer — but the business meant so much to our family. I just knew that it would be my career. I started working at the dealership the summer after the eighth grade, and each summer after that in a different department through my college years.

My grandfather was Charles (Charlie) Weseloh, and he started the business right around 1926 in Ramona, California. We called him Gramps. In those days, the business was a road-side garage with one service bay. Gramps would sell whatever he could; gas, oil, a blanket, a picnic basket, and, at some point, a car. He arranged with a Chevrolet dealer in San Diego to keep an inventory of one car at his garage.

After he sold the one car he had, they would bring him another. If he

couldn't sell the car, he had to return it to the dealership in San Diego and get another. In those days, that was an all-day drive from Ramona and back, over rutted dirt roads. You can imagine. My dad, Ben Weseloh, used to ride with Gramps on those trips; he was probably 8 or 9 at the time. When Gramps was returning a car, it was the quietest and longest road trip ever. Gramps wasn't big on failing, and returning a car was a big fail for him. Sunday was always the day for returning a car and picking up a new one to sell because that was Gramps' only day off. He worked six days a week, from sunup to sundown. One year, during the depression, his net was \$100.00 for all of his work for the entire year.

Eventually, Gramps was able to start a Chevrolet dealership in Ramona. In 1936, he moved to Escondido and, in 1940, opened a sister Chevrolet dealership in Oceanside. My dad served in the Navy in WWII, and also served during the Korean War and joined the business after leaving the Navy in the mid-50s. Right after college, I came to work in 1975. The Oceanside dealership relocated to Car Country Carlsbad in 1976. We are still there.

