

Motoring Memories Winner – 2023  
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Kansas City, MO  
Entry #133  
1962 Thunderbird

In October of 1962 my father bought my mother a brand-new Diamond Blue Thunderbird Sports Roadster, it was her pride and joy from day one. Through the years our three siblings and our parents got to enjoy the T-Bird and create quite a few stories—some good and others never told. My mother continued to cherish her T-Bird and was known around town as she drove her convertible to her many civic projects. In 1997, my mother reluctantly sold her pride and joy and regretted it ever since.

Some years later, I was able to track down her Thunderbird from the transport receipt from the buyer. Surprisingly, the buyer had the same land line as in 1997. Unfortunately, he was not interested in selling the car back to me. After many years of persuasion, he finally agreed.

On November 23, 2021, I drove to Janesville, Wisconsin to pick up the car. My return trip on the next day, Wednesday, November 24 was an all-day drive but I got it to Kansas City in time to show it to my mother on Thanksgiving Day at our annual family gathering. She came out the front door and saw the car and exclaimed, “It’s just like my car.” In fact, it WAS her car. She was elated. At 103, she was so ecstatic and said that she felt 10 years younger just seeing it again when got in for a ride.

The initial excitement was short lived when just three weeks later the car was stolen. Using every resource we could muster in the media, social networks and law enforcement, we conducted a blitz of stories and outreach. One week after it was stolen, we received a call from a reporter who had done a story on the car saying that it was found. We immediately called the police to make sure they were pursuing the return and they were already on the scene.

The car was found unharmed at an apartment complex about a mile from our home. The car had been covered with a tarp and left in the parking lot. The wind blew off the tarp and the security guard realized he had never seen that car before. He contacted the resident and one of the, told him that he had seen a story on the news about the car and that it was stolen. The security guard was the one that contacted the police.

The car is back in our possession, and we celebrated by taking mother for a ride for her 104<sup>th</sup> birthday! I will continue to display it at local car shows. You can’t miss it -see you there!

*P.S. Mother passed away June 12, just she of her 105<sup>th</sup> birthday in August!*