



William Clay Ford, Sr. – with Edsel Ford II, left, and William Clay Ford, Jr. – sits in a 1903 Ford Model A.

## Bill Ford Sr.'s Driving Instructor Was Founder Henry Ford – When Bill Was 10

William Clay Ford, Sr., who died March 9 at the age of 88, linked Ford Motor Company's past and future as the last surviving grandchild of company founder Henry Ford and the father of current Executive Chairman William Clay Ford, Jr.

Mr. Ford was born in Detroit on March 14, 1925, the youngest son of Mr. & Mrs. Edsel B. Ford's four children. He attended Detroit University School in Grosse Pointe, Mich., and the Hotchkiss School in Lakeville, Conn.

Mr. Ford enlisted in the Naval Air Corps in 1943 and attended the University of Michigan as part of his naval training. He was in flight training at the time of his discharge two years later.

He then enrolled at Yale University, where he graduated in 1949 with a bachelor of science degree in economics.

Mr. Ford in 1948 embarked on a career and association with the company that would span more than six decades, including the company's celebration of its centennial in 2003.

At the annual meeting that year, he shared his unique perspective on the company's history with shareholders, including stories about being taught to drive by Henry Ford and taken for his first airplane ride by Charles Lindbergh in a Ford Tri-Motor.

It was a rare moment of public reflection for Mr. Ford, who once characterized his key contributions to the company as helping the Design department and providing a stabilizing influence on the company's board of directors. He was also proud of the Ford family's role in building and sustaining the company.

"I don't have a crystal ball with me, so I can't see into the future," he told shareholders at the company's centennial annual meeting. "I just want you to know that we have tremendous pride in the Ford name."

"We have a spirit of working together, and we have a passion for cars. And we also have a great desire to see the Ford name in the forefront of world transportation."

Mr. Ford had a special relationship with his grandfather. When he was 10 years old, Henry Ford gave him a driving lesson. The youngster sat on his famous grandfather's lap, steering the car and controlling the speed by

throttle while Henry Ford took care of braking and shifting gears.

Unfortunately, while driving 70 mph down a rural road outside of Dearborn, the two were stopped by a police officer. The officer let the elder Ford off with a lecture. Then, unbeknownst to Henry Ford, the officer phoned his wife, Clara Ford, who was waiting for her husband and grandson when they arrived back home. "Her first words were, 'Billy, you go to your room, and Henry – I want to talk to you,'" Mr. Ford said. "After that, anytime we left the property, I was in the passenger seat."

Another time, a young Mr. Ford was confined to his bedroom with an illness while the extended family celebrated Christmas. When it came time for the meal, Henry Ford was discovered upstairs with his grandson, who had rigged up a special pulley system with a nearby tree so he could shoot paper targets from his bedroom window.

"He thought that was great," Mr. Ford told The Henry Ford Museum during an interview in 2001. "He came up and joined me. He was up there for about an

hour."

Mr. Ford enrolled at Yale University in 1945. At Yale, he captained the varsity soccer and tennis teams, earning seven varsity letters.

After graduating from Yale, he joined the company's Sales and Advertising Staff in 1949. He later served on the Industrial Relations Staff, where he was a member of the committee that negotiated the company's 1949 contract with the then UAW-CIO.

In 1951, Mr. Ford became quality control manager for the Lincoln-Mercury Division's jet engine defense project.

In 1952, he was appointed manager of Special Product Operations for advanced planning of the Continental Mark II, later considered by many to be one of the greatest cars ever built.

An avid golfer, made seven holes-in-one in his career. In 2003, *The Detroit News* honored Mr. Ford as a Michiganiaan of the Year, an annual tribute to select citizens who made significant contributions to the state or local community. In 2005, he was inducted into the Michigan Sports Hall of Fame.

## Automotive Icon, NFL Owner William Clay Ford Dies at 88

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chairman of the Executive Committee and appointed a member of the Office of the Chief Executive. He was elected vice chairman of the Board in 1980 and chairman of the Finance Committee in 1987. He retired from his post as vice chairman in 1989 and as chairman of the Finance Committee in 1995. He retired from the board and was named Director Emeritus on May 12, 2005.

Mr. Ford is survived by his wife of 66 years, Martha Firestone Ford; daughters Martha Ford Morse (Peter), Sheila Ford Hamp (Steven), and Elizabeth Ford Kontulis (Charles); son William Clay Ford, Jr. (Lisa); 14 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

"My father was a great business leader and humanitarian who dedicated his life to the company and the community," said William Clay Ford, Jr., executive chairman, Ford Motor Company. "He also was a wonderful family man, a loving husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather. He will be greatly missed by everyone who knew him, yet he will continue to inspire us all."

"Mr. Ford had a profound impact on Ford Motor Company," said Alan Mulally, Ford president and CEO.

"The company extends its deepest sympathies to the many members of the extended Ford family at this difficult time. While we mourn Mr. Ford's death, we also are grateful for his many contributions to the company and the auto industry."

Mr. Ford had numerous associ-

ations and roles outside of Ford Motor Company. He became president of the Detroit Lions football team in 1961. He purchased the team in November 1963 and served as its chairman until his death. He also was a dedicated and generous philanthropist and community leader.

He was chairman of the board of trustees of the Henry Ford Museum from 1951 to 1983, after which he was named chairman emeritus.

Mr. Ford served as a director of the Detroit Economic Club, was an honorary life trustee of the Eisenhower Medical Center and a national trustee for the Boys' and Girls' Clubs of America.

He also was an honorary chair of the United Way for Southeastern Michigan and served on the Texas Heart Institute National Advisory Council.

In 1996, Henry Ford Hospital opened The William Clay Ford Center for Athletic Medicine, a leading sports medicine treatment and research institution.

In 1997, the outdoor courts of the University of Michigan's new tennis center also were named in his honor.

The largest donor in history at the Henry Ford Museum, the Great Hall of the museum – The William Clay Ford Hall of American Innovation – also was named in recognition of his support.

Funeral services were held privately.

In honor of Mr. Ford's memory, Ford Motor Company locations in the U.S. are lowering their American and Ford flags to half-staff for a 30-day period. Ford locations outside of the U.S. will follow local custom.

## Ford's \$1M in Scholarships To Honor William Clay Ford

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The grant will be paid at the rate of \$50,000 a year during the next 20 years, awarding five \$10,000 scholarships annually to outstanding college sophomores or juniors pursuing a degree in automotive design, said Ford Dealer Communications Manager Elizabeth Weigandt. Details of the program will be announced in the coming months.

Ford Motor Company Fund is an established supporter of the arts, as well as design and arts

education, Weigandt said.

Longtime partnerships include the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibits in Washington, D.C.; Detroit Institute of Arts and College for Creative Studies in Detroit; and Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, Calif.

At the high school level, Weigandt said, the Ford Fund is a founding sponsor of Henry Ford Academy in Dearborn; Henry Ford Academy: Alameda School for Art and Design San Antonio, and Henry Ford Academy: School for Creative Studies in Detroit.

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