



## Official News Release

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### **Students' Work on Electric Studebaker Catches International Eye**

WILLIAMSPORT, Pa. – “When this car was new, the Titanic wasn’t even built yet,” instructor Roy H. Klinger reminded Pennsylvania College of Technology students as they applied the finishing touches to a 1908 Studebaker in late winter.

His protégés didn’t know it at the time, but that historical reference would soon be eclipsed by a milestone of their own making: an award for the first college project ever judged at the renowned Amelia Island (Florida) Concours d’Elegance in March.

Affectionately known as “Tommy,” the electric vehicle was one of a pair that shuttled federal legislators to and from the U.S. Capitol shortly after the turn of the 20th century – including such literal heavyweights as President William Howard Taft. It was honored with an Amelia Award in the Horseless Carriage (Electric) category, coinciding with the show’s celebration of a technology that has re-emerged in today’s automobiles.

The recognition was termed “truly remarkable” by Klinger, who praised students and faculty members – both within the School of Transportation & Natural Resources Technologies and down the hall in the School of Industrial, Computing & Engineering Technologies – who worked tirelessly to prepare the vehicle for its March 9-11 southern excursion. “It really makes a statement about the program’s goals and the dynamics involved in getting there.”

The interdisciplinary collaboration between students and faculty in additive manufacturing and automotive restoration technology classes prepped “Tommy” for the 23rd annual Amelia Island event. As part of the restoration process, they employed three-dimensional printing techniques on a singular piece of American history, readying the Studebaker for display.

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Applying today's technology to yesterday's transport is par for the courses offered at Penn College.

"Additive manufacturing technologies have excellent uses in historical vehicle restoration," noted Eric K. Albert, associate professor of machine tool technology and automated manufacturing. "Two components of the vehicle needing replacement were part of the contactor switch that chooses forward, neutral and reverse. There is a switch on each side of the vehicle and, thankfully, representative parts were available to copy."

Benjamin T. Steimling, of Danville, an engineering design technology student in Albert's Additive Manufacturing class (who also graduated in May), measured the original part and created a parametric model that was 3-D printed in engineering plastic. With minor hole-drilling and finish paint, it was a perfect substitute.

The pre-Florida assignment was the second go-around for automotive and restoration majors involved with the Studebaker since its arrival on campus in June. While a cosmetic makeover had been done in the 1950s, Penn College students were tasked with returning the vehicle to roadworthiness for that month's Concours d'Elegance in Hershey.

While touting the crosscurricular cooperation, Klinger also singled out the college's partnership with the museum and Patricia B. Swigart, its generous owner who joined the Penn College group at the prestigious show.

"Students from Pennsylvania College of Technology worked on the car and got it running for the first time in 25 years and were there to help us accept the award," the Swigart website says in appreciation.

"Being involved in the Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance was truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience," said student Luke C. Miller, of Grasonville, Maryland. "I got the opportunity to drive the Studebaker Senate Car through the entire event in front of the entire antique automotive industry."

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Miller earned a two-year degree in automotive restoration technology on May 12, and will return to campus in the fall to continue toward a bachelor's in automotive technology management.

"I've been working hard to try to get myself known to everyone who attends those events," Miller said. "Having the honor of not only having a car on the field, but also driving it, telling everyone the significance of the car and winning an Amelia Island award, was a blessing. Of all the years Mrs. Swigart has attended the Amelia Island event, she had never received an award and I am honored to have worked on the car that had received an award."

Miller said driving the Studebaker was fun, but also quite difficult: "It's the oldest car I've driven – and the first electric car – so it was important to be delicate when operating. The car was also only designed to travel on flat grounds in a straight line, so traveling over the slopes of the golf course was new territory to 'Tommy.' But, because we had completely mechanically restored the car, it had no troubles cruising around the event.

"I can't thank everyone enough on the research and restoration of the vehicle; without them, we wouldn't have made it to Florida."

For classmate Michael R. Krukowski, another May 2018 graduate of the college, the experience was better than he could ever have imagined.

"I found it interesting to be a part of setting up the Studebaker in preparation for judging. I saw how a vehicle should be cleaned and polished for an event such as Amelia Island," the Fairfax Station, Virginia, resident said. "It was a great day with beautiful weather and equally beautiful cars ... It was an amazing event and I would love to go again someday."

Pennsylvania College of Technology, a special mission affiliate of Penn State, is geographically located in the heart of SDC's Keystone Region Chapter Inc.

"Pennsylvania was always strong Studebaker country," according to Larry L. Michael, a Penn College retiree who has been a member of the Studebaker Drivers Club since 1969 and continues as an active member of KRC.

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“Our club is fortunate to have this high-quality program in our region and we were pleased last year to sponsor a scholarship to support a student in the automotive restoration technology major,” Michael added. “It is extremely rewarding to see our youth involved in professional automotive restoration and that one of their major projects has been this rare piece of Studebaker history.”

The Studebaker National Foundation awards financial assistance to young men and women within its community who are pursuing automotive careers; more information is available at [www.studebakernationalfoundation.org/scholarships](http://www.studebakernationalfoundation.org/scholarships).

Anyone interested in specifically supporting Penn College’s automotive restoration technology major should email [giving@pct.edu](mailto:giving@pct.edu) or call the Institutional Advancement Office toll-free at 866-GIVE-2-PC (866-448-3272).

For more about the college, a national leader in applied technology education, visit [www.pct.edu](http://www.pct.edu), email [admissions@pct.edu](mailto:admissions@pct.edu) or call toll-free 800-367-9222.

Photo captions follow ...

(Unless otherwise noted, all photos provided by Pennsylvania College of Technology)



A piece of history, ready for its close-up outside Penn College's Parkes Automotive Technology Center.



Luke C. Miller (in period-appropriate attire) chauffeurs owner Patricia B. Swigart during the Studebaker's trip to Hershey in June 2017. (Photo courtesy of the Historic Vehicle Association)

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