

# The Way of the Lincoln V-12

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We learned recently of the passing of one of our most esteemed members, Jake Fleming, of Dallas, Texas. Jake served the club as our Technical Director for more years than anyone cares to remember. He was our "go-to" guy for getting those pesky distributors or coils or radios working. Who can ever forget Jake in his lab coat conducting a technical discussion at a national meet. And he drove that black pre-war coupe everywhere. He was a real treasure and will be sorely missed. There will no doubt be a more appropriate remembrance in our next Way of the Zephyr, but I felt compelled to offer a note of respect and fond reflection here. Jake, we will miss you. Rest in peace with your beloved Maxine, dear Zephyr aficionado.

Here is his Obituary from Dallas:

William Jake Fleming was born January 3rd, 1925 in Mount Pleasant, Texas In Titus County and died peacefully on December 17, 2019 at Methodist Hospital in Dallas, Texas. Jake was born to parents Edward Neil Fleming and Annie Marie (Lanier) Fleming.

As a young boy he developed a propensity for inventing and technical interests that would lead the way for his formative years and adult career path. Jake also realized at an early age his love of music. His father got him a fiddle, which became a big part of his life. He even imagined life as a musician idolizing the likes of, most strongly Hank Williams. He deeply felt the rhythms of country music and played in bands early on and even continued to play at any opportunity well into his 80's. He related to the music coming out of that small box and combined with his musical talent took him to another place in time. Upon completion of his school curriculum, Jake enlisted in the service in 1943 serving in the US Navy aboard the USS Gilmore in the Aleutian Islands during WWII. Jake was most proud of his service in the Navy and recanted many lively stories most notably his ships role in the sinking of a Japanese submarine. It was during his service in the Navy Jake developed further his expertise for communication engineering. After a successful Naval service tour of duty Jake began his lifelong quest to be the best at everything he did. With the invaluable skills he learned he returned home to continue his education further honing his craft.

With a friend from the service he found his way to Dallas, Texas where he would soon meet the love of his life Maxine Wade. In 1951 they married on February 1st and he started his career with RCA Victor, the Radio Corporation of America. Jake spent many years as a senior level technician handling some of the most complex systems on the market. As time went on Jake also took his talents into the automobile industry by initially restoring and fabricating a legendary 1941 Lincoln Zephyr that won numerous trophies and awards. This

labor of love would prove to be a lifelong passion and driving force in his life that saw him reach national acclaim as an expert on Zephyr's and other Lincoln products as well. His Zephyr was featured in several movies most recognizably, "A Trip To Bountiful" where he also was an extra in the film. Finally reaching the position of technical adviser for the Zephyr club was one of the biggest highlights of his life. Jake's prowess in his field was unparalleled and as his repair business grew after his retirement he found himself to be the preeminent remanufacturer of ignition coils for 30's and 40's Lincoln and Ford automobiles, receiving items needing repair from all over the world. He also reworked pneumatic lifters with high precision and radios from all vehicles as well as vintage bench radios of all brands with amazing results. One of his most prized possessions was his personally repaired RCA Berkshire console tv, radio and phonograph encased in mahogany that was recently donated to the Texas Broadcast Museum In Kilgore, Texas of which, there are no other known working models.

Jake was a one of a kind individual who never met anyone who he wouldn't offer to help and even the last week of his life, from his hospital bed, he diagnosed over the phone an unknown callers car issue that enabled them to successfully repair, sight unseen, and he was excited when they asked if they could call him back again soon. Jake was a Christian and a member who served for many years at Tyler Street United Methodist Church. He had a steadfast rule. No work on Sunday!

Jake is predeceased by his wife of 47 years, Maxine, a sister Kathryn, his parents and many aunts and uncles. He is survived by his daughter Shirley and husband Don Weeks, daughter Donna and husband Steve Rozenburg, son Mark Fleming and son David Fleming. Grandchildren Brandon, Sean and Shannon, and a great grandson Gaven. As well as many cousins, nieces and nephews. His favorite line was "let me tell you a story" and he had a million great ones!

He will be greatly missed.