McPherson College Automotive Restoration Program Timeline

Jan. 8, 1975: Gaines H. "Smokey" Billue donates $1.5 million to begin the Automotive Restoration Technology Department at McPherson College.

May 1978: A 1927 Ford Model T touring car, the program's first restoration project, is completed. The first students in the program graduate.

1998: McPherson College appoints the first national advisory board for the Automotive Restoration Program; Jay Leno works with Popular Mechanics to establish a scholarship for a sophomore.

May 2001: McPherson College begins to offer four-year bachelors of science degrees in the Automotive Restoration Department.

August 2003: At the Detroit Auto Show, Mercedes-Benz USA announces a $100,000 Maybach grant to McPherson College.

2010: McPherson College adds a motorcycle restoration major to its Automotive Restoration Department, bringing the total number of majors in the department to six.

1975 | 1980 | 1985 | 1995 | 2000 | 2000 | 2005 | 2010

August 1976: The first class of students in Automotive Restoration enroll at McPherson College.

April 4, 1997: Jay Leno establishes the Fred J. Duesenberg Scholarship to assist automotive restoration students with college tuition.

June 1999: Advisory board member John Hollansworth participates in the History Channel's Great American Race in his 1917 Peerless "Green Dragon."

February 2002: Mercedes-Benz, U.S.A., establishes an internship at the Mercedes-Benz Classic Center in Fellbach, Germany for a McPerson College automotive restoration major.

2005: Collectors Foundation begins a financial commitment to fund scholarships at McPherson College. Another commitment was announced June 2010, bringing total giving to about $440,000 and allowing for eight $5,000 scholarships at the college.

May 2011: The Pebble Beach Company Foundation Phil Hill Scholarships are established at McPherson College, funding scholarships totaling up to $20,000 annually for students enrolled in auto restoration.