

# Meeting a Legend



Carroll Shelby was one of my car guy hero's when I was a young lad getting interested in cars and racing. I read about his exploits in *Road & Track Magazine* and *Competition Press* before it became *Autoweek*. I was fortunate to meet Carroll Shelby on November 4, 2008, at the SEMA Show (Specialty Equipment

Manufacturers Association) event at the Las Vegas Convention Center. Mr. Shelby spent the better part of an hour meeting people and signing autographs at the Ford Motor Company display stand. He was accompanied by his wife, Cleo, and two Shelby execs.

The line of folks wanting an autograph formed quickly. I happened to be behind a man and woman both dressed in business suits representing an aftermarket company from back east. They kept me entertained while standing in line. As we got closer to the Ford display stand, the woman was searching for something for Mr. Shelby to autograph. Each item she pulled out of her large convention bag, her companion would say, "not that Phyllis". At one point, she pulled out an old framed photograph of a classic Corvette. Her companion looked at her and said, "He won't sign that, he's a Ford guy". Her companion turned to me with a sly grin on his face and winked. At this point, she was completely frustrated. He was pulling her chain and she was falling for it.

Finally her turn for an autograph came. She walked up to Mr. Shelby and handed him an item for him to sign. Carroll looked at what she had handed him and had a puzzled look on his face. He looked up at her and said, "Where did you get this," she responded, but I could not hear what she said. He turned to one of his execs and told him to look into the item she had handed him, he in turn said, "I never authorized this". He handed the item back to the woman without signing it. She left with an embarrassed look on her face. My turn came, I walked up to Carroll and said, "hi Mr. Shelby." He looked at my SEMA badge and in his Texas drawl said, "hi Ron, how ya doing," He signed my photo card of the 2008 Shelby 500 GTR and handed it back to me with a handshake.

The legend, Carroll Shelby, who was sometimes a hell raiser, racecar driver, entrepreneur, and American icon passed away on May 10, 2012. I will never forget meeting him.

Happy Motoring... Ron Couturier