**More than just a car dealership**

**Howard Hubler shares his memories from serving the Southside of Indianapolis over the years**

**By Todd Travis**

Howard Hubler and his family are well-known on the Southside for the Hubler car dealerships. But if you listen to Howard's story, you'll see how he and his family have done so much more than just sell cars. Their community focus has led them to help shape and grow the Southside of Indianapolis over the last several decades.

Hubler's uncle came to Indianapolis in 1957 to open a dealership near Keystone Avenue and 52nd Street. Hubler’s dad also moved to Indianapolis to work with his uncle. When Hubler graduated college, his dad asked him to train to run the dealerships himself, which he did. Around that time, Hubler remembered a particular event that helped put the Southside of Indianapolis on the map. "The one thing I remember is we had the Greenwood Park Mall, which was declining because it was an outdoor mall in an area of indoor malls. The Simon Incorporation decided to build an indoor Greenwood mall, which is now the largest mall in the state – over a million square feet," Hubler mentioned.

Hubler recalls some of the changes that came with the indoor mall. "With the infusion of this new mall, the Southside grew from a rural farm community to a 50/50 farm and executive community. Eventually, it came to an executive and middle-class neighborhood and the farms became less and less, which was kind of bittersweet," he said. "Indianapolis first grew north and then later on grew south. Center Grove was part of the driving force for the growth, and it was a big deal when the Center Grove football team beat the Carmel football team because it showed that the Southside isn't just some funky backwoods town," Hubler joked. "We really felt affirmed as a town when we got a TGI Fridays and some of the other franchised restaurants. Today, it's a bigger deal when a local chef risks his own money and opens up a restaurant," he added.

If you ask Hubler, he is most proud of the way his dealerships were able to partner with the local community and contribute to the betterment of the area. One significant way he was able to do that was when he came to the aid of the YMCA after its building was hit by a tornado. "What it did was it took off several of the outside walls and destroyed the interior. So they needed a place to go. So we worked out some very modest financial situation and became the YMCA for about two years," Hubler explained. "In the meantime, they asked my wife and I to do a campaign to help them raise money for a new building. We had done fundraisers for Mike Pence, for some international ministries and schools and a variety of other things so we agreed. We raised money by throwing parties and meeting businessmen for lunches and praise God we were able to raise the $5 million they needed. If you go to the new YMCA today, you will see big windows on the second floor overlooking the street. That was a carryover from the windows that we had in the dealership while the YMCA used it because people liked to look out the windows and see the changing seasons," Hubler concluded.

Today, Hubler has continued his legacy through his children. "I sold my position to my brothers, and then I wanted each of my kids to have their own dealership that they own. So I've partnered with my kids and my son Greg has Greg Hubler Chevrolet along with a few other locations. My daughter Christi has Christi Hubler Chevrolet in Crawfordsville, Ind. and my son Russ has Russ Hubler Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram in New Castle, Ind. and Russ Hubler Ford in Greensburg Ind. I've got one kid to go and it's going to be interesting to see what he does," Hubler stated.