



From generation to generation, Roberts family spreads message of hard work, perseverance

by Madelaine Gerard, Staff Writer
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ALTON – As a father, ensuring that you have instilled fundamental characteristics such as perseverance, dedication and good old-fashioned hard work in your children is all in a day's work.

For **John Roberts** of **Robert's Motors in Alton**, his father Samuel made sure that his son put in the time and elbow grease necessary to become a fulfilled, experienced and always gracious man.

In the mid 1960's, **Samuel Roberts** came into the automotive sales business after showcasing his work ethic while operating a grocery store on Washington Square in Alton. Seamlessly, as the previous owner's name was also Roberts, Samuel has been a top name in the market ever since.



Now, John has raised a daughter of his own with his wife, Tonya with the same principles, and nothing has been more rewarding.

“In the car business, owner's or dealer's sons always kind of get a bad rep because some of them are lazy,” Roberts said. “They don't really work or they haven't earned the right to be where they are. My dad never took that route. His opinion was that anything that needs to be done around here, I need to be able to do it just as well as the next guy. So, I've cleaned cars, the shop, the sewer drains, mowed the grass, pulled the weeds, sold cars, worked as sales manager helping people sell cars — he's pretty much put me through all of it. Any level of work he expected out of anyone else, he expected a little more from .”

When originally arrived at **Southern Illinois University Edwardsville** to receive his own education, Roberts initially pursued electronics. Ultimately deciding that the trade was not for him, he looked toward the family business, where he was working at part time with his brother and father, and realized the magnitude of the opportunity at hand.

“I changed my major to business and have been here ever since,” Roberts said.

Overall, John is extremely grateful for the skills that his parents, especially his father, have embedded in him throughout his life.

“It’s been demanding, but I wouldn’t change it for anything because it’s made me who I am. If he had been too easy on me or had let me float along, I wouldn’t have learned everything I’ve learned or have been as prepared as I am,” he said.

Happily married to his wife Tonya, they raised one daughter, Stephanie, who has recently graduated from **Fontbonne University**. Later in the year, she will be getting married. As a father, these moments have been his crowning glory.

Along with the numerous life lessons, Roberts’ father stressed the importance of getting a college degree since he didn’t earn one himself and ever since then, John always knew that he had to do the same for his own children.

“Those are all things that me and my wife have instilled in our kid and she’s just finished her college education. I’d say my proudest moment has been seeing her graduate. She had her mind set on a degree that she wanted, accomplished it, did well and already has a job lined up,” he said. “It’s hard to say you’re successful because it sounds kind of egotistical, but if you feel like you’ve done well for yourself, it’s nice to have a kid do that as well and see that. I still believe a lot of it is in them.”

Like most dads, John’s favorite Father’s Day memory has to be his first; rather, his first day as a father entirely.

“To me, there’s nothing that made more a difference on me than when she was born when the doctor said you can take her down to the nursery. I walked out of that room with her in my hands, and when I turned down the hallway to the nursery, there’s my family,” he reflected. “They’re all standing there. You can’t beat that, it’s amazing. It’s an incredible feeling. Then you watch them grow and become who they are and excel themselves and it feels really good.”