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Local couple's love of cars, each other featured in upcoming Detroit car documentary

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GENOA TWP. — A new documentary exploring the people that make up Detroit's car culture — including a local couple — will premiere on June 19 at Emagine Theater in Novi.

"[Detroit: The City of Hot Rods & Muscle Cars](#)" is produced and directed by Keith Famie, celebrity chef and finalist on 2001's "Survivor: The Australian Outback." Famie said that after his father passed away in 2003, he decided he didn't want to be on camera anymore and ended up starting his career in documentary filmmaking.

"I hung up the apron, put on the director's hat and said 'I'm going to be telling stories,'" he said.

"Detroit: The City of Hot Rods & Muscle Cars" is a look into the people who make up the culture around cars in the Motor City. A local couple, Gary and Ruthy Bedard from Genoa Township, is featured in the film. Famie met Ruthy at a women's classic cars event in Milford and was inspired by her refusal to let her Parkinson's disease stand in the way of her hobby.



“We hit it off immediately, but I was drawn to her,” Famie said. “Here’s a woman that has a very difficult time walking and she’s very open about her Parkinson’s. I said ‘you’re still driving?’ and she said ‘I cruise, Parkinson’s does not define who I am.’ I thought ‘I love that.’”

The film explores Ruthy’s life with Parkinson’s while diving into the story of her relationship with her husband Gary. The two met at a car show in Detroit in 1992, Ruthy with a 1939 Ford Coupe and Gary with a red 1950 Radical Mercury.

“She liked the look of my car and said ‘anybody who can put that much effort into making a car look that nice, must be good at a relationship,’” Gary said. “So that’s how it started off and we’ve been together ever since.”

Since then, Ruthy has traded in her 1939 Ford Coupe for her dream car, a 1936 Ford Coupe. Gary still has his Mercury and the couple has a total of 14 cars.

As her Parkinson’s has progressed, Ruthy has lost more mobility and can now only drive short distances. That hasn’t stopped her from enjoying cars or attending events with other enthusiasts.

“It kind of keeps her going, gives us something to do, go somewhere, it’s easy,” Gary said.

In addition to Gary and Ruthy, the film will feature Tim Allen, Bob Lutz, Danny Koker, Bill Collins and Chip Foote, among others. Famie said the film revolves around fathers and kids.

“There’s a big, strong thread throughout the film about fathers and the impact they’ve had on sons and daughters. Because during the ‘60s and ‘70s, just about any car guy or gal that works on cars, they’ll tell you their first entrée into cars was dad, being in the garage,” Famie said. “Many of us grew up with a World War II generation father, who maybe didn’t have that same compassionate, empathetic conversation that maybe we have with children these days. So their language was in the garage.”

The film also focuses on the history of Hot Wheels and kids’ love of cars. At the premiere, six charity organizations, several of them children’s foundations, will have booths set up — The Rainbow Connection, Kids Without Cancer, Heroes Circle, Camp Casey, Gilda’s Club of Metro Detroit and Michigan Parkinson’s Foundation.

“During my era growing up (in Detroit), we didn’t know we were in the middle of car culture. We had no idea that in the middle of what we were was ground zero, if you will, for the automotive industry,” Famie said. “So I think that for kids today, and when they see this film, I hope that they are, as we all are, proud of what the Motor City has brought to the world.”

"Detroit: The City of Hot Rods & Muscle Cars" will launch at 8 p.m. Friday, June 23, on DPTV/PBS.

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