

## Gordon Davis- Forward Look Designer

G. Gordon Davis was born and raised in Ludington, MI during the Great Depression. As soon as he could hold a pencil, he drew cars. He was still drawing cars when he was accepted into the University of Notre Dame in 1953. His sketches from that time were discovered by Bob Bourke, then Director of Design at Studebaker in South Bend, IN. At Bourke's suggestion, Davis transferred to the Art Center School in Los Angeles (now the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena CA) where he studied automotive design.

As an Art Center alumnus, Davis was hired by Director of Design, Virgil Exner, at Chrysler Corp. It was fortuitous, as it was the dawn of the legendary Forward Look era. First assigned to the Advanced Design Studio, Davis contributed to Chrysler's turbine concept designs. He was soon transferred to the Chrysler Studio where his 1957 Forward Look that visualized future concepts inspired Exner's Ghia-built XNR prototype. The XNR in turn influenced Chrysler's early 1960s product lineup.

By late 1957, Davis was assigned to the DeSoto Studio where he designed the exterior trim for the 1959 DeSoto. Although the '59 DeSoto's sheet metal had been approved by 1957, the "jewelry" had not. Davis designed the eagle medallions that appeared on the front bumper and deck lid, the DeSoto lettering, the Firesweep side moldings, the "turbine" wheel covers, and the optional bumperettes.

Davis was one of three Chrysler designers recruited by Exner's second-in-command Wm. Schmidt, when Chrysler management gave Schmidt a contract to design concepts independently of Exner. Future American Motors VP of Design, Dick Teague, was one of the three designers. When that assignment ended, both Teague and Davis joined American Motors. Davis also freelanced and designed motorcycle and auto accessories, construction equipment and RVs.

Davis and his wife now make their home in Southern California. They have four children all grown, gone, and successful. Davis is also a published author. You can find his "Road" trilogy on Amazon [here](#).