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## 1939

### Davis Motor Sales Opens

At 16 years of age, Edward Davis began his career in Detroit's auto industry working first at a car garage and then a small car washing business. After graduating high school, he worked at Dodge, first in the foundry, and soon after in the machine shop. In 1936, the plant superintendent offered him a job selling cars at his son's Dodge Dealership. Davis eagerly accepted and soon became the top selling and most popular car dealer. In 1939, he opened Davis Motor Sales, becoming one of the first black franchised car dealer. He sold used model Studebakers to the Detroit's black community. After many years of struggle, racism, and negotiations Davis opened a Chrysler dealership in 1963.

<sup>1</sup> Ed Davis

Courtesy of the Edward Davis Estate

<sup>2</sup> Studebaker Dealership

Courtesy of the Edward Davis Estate

<sup>3</sup> Chrysler Dealership

Courtesy of the Edward Davis Estate

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### Credits:

Davis, Ed. *One Man's Way*. Detroit: Edward Davis Associates, 1979. Print.

### Keywords/Topics:

Business

### Questions:

1. Why did Edward Davis move to Detroit?
2. What jobs did Edward Davis have before selling cars?
3. Why is hard work important?
4. Could you have done what Edward Davis did?

### Links to Internet Websites:

<http://www.aacardealers.org/>

<http://www.answers.com/topic/ed-davis>

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*Courtesy of the Edward Davis Estate*

Ed Davis grew up in a family of ten in segregated Shreveport, Louisiana. After receiving permission from his father, he moved to Detroit, Michigan and lived with his aunt and uncle. His father knew that there were better opportunities in Detroit than in Shreveport. He attended Cass Technical High School at night, aiming to combine his love for cars with solid business training. During his last year in high school, he worked part time in a car garage. Ed Davis' strong work ethic gave him the foundation he needed to build a successful career.

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*Courtesy of the Edward Davis Estate*

Studebaker had only two percent of the car industry and only two blacks owned Studebakers in Detroit. Many members of the African American community supported Ed Davis by purchasing their car from him.

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*Courtesy of the Edward Davis Estate*

After years of oppression and racism, Ed Davis finally opened his Chrysler Dealership in 1963.

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