



For immediate release

Contact: Patrick Keeffe

631-854-5562 – office

info@vanderbiltmuseum.org

Vanderbilt Museum to Sell Rare, One-of-a-Kind 1937 Chrysler Imperial, Commissioned by Walter P. Chrysler for his Daughter

Bids Being Accepted for a Singular Piece of American Automotive History

CENTERPORT, NY (November 4, 2011) – The Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum today released a prospectus that solicits qualified bids for the sale of an extremely rare automobile. The vehicle, a 1937 Chrysler Imperial Town Car, was donated to the museum in 1959 and was de-accessioned from its collection in 1992. Proceeds will be used to establish an endowment for the care and maintenance of the museum's historic archives, collections and exhibitions.

The Chrysler is a masterpiece of Art Deco automotive design. Commissioned by Walter P. Chrysler for his daughter, Bernice Chrysler Garbisch, the car is made of hand-worked aluminum (no factory-produced body panels were used) and has her initials, BCG, inscribed on its rear doors.

The 8,000-pound, seven-passenger car is 19 feet long and has a 130-horsepower, eight-cylinder in-line engine and a three-speed manual transmission. The odometer reads 25,501 miles. The Chrysler has coachwork by LeBaron, leather interior and upholstered seats.



1937 Chrysler Imperial Town Car
in Vanderbilt Mansion courtyard, circa 1986

Qualified bids will be accepted through December 23, 2011. Bidders can obtain a copy of the prospectus on the Vanderbilt website (vanderbiltmuseum.org) or from the director of the museum, Lance Reinheimer, by phone at 631-854-5550, e-mail at director@vanderbiltmuseum.org. Minimum bid: \$125,000.

The car was donated to the museum in December 1959 by Harry Gilbert of Huntington, NY. (In that same year, Gilbert also gave the Vanderbilt a 1909 Reo Gentleman's Roadster, which was restored recently and is now on display at the museum.) The Chrysler, which was on display at the Vanderbilt for an undetermined number of years, was later transported to the Long Island Automotive Museum in Southampton, where it remained until June 1992, when it was returned to the Vanderbilt.

The Board of Trustees voted on November 15, 1992, to deaccession the Chrysler from the museum collection, since it was neither original property of the Vanderbilt family nor relevant to the museum's holdings. In April 1994, after nearly two years at the Vanderbilt Museum, the car was transferred to a Suffolk County garage, where it remained until 2006. The car was then moved back to the museum and has been stored since in a garage on the estate grounds. The condition of the car, which has most of its original parts, has deteriorated because of a lack of environmental control in its various storage environments.

In early 2011, Brandt Rosenbusch, curator at the Chrysler Museum in Detroit, verified that this is the one-of-a-kind automobile built for Bernice Chrysler Garbisch and provided the Vanderbilt with images of the newly fabricated automobile from his museum archives.

The Chrysler has attracted renewed interest and was featured in the July 2011 issue of *Hemmings Classic Car* magazine in an article by Water Gosden entitled "Custom Chryslers." Gosden is a renowned automobile historian, coachwork expert and widely published author on classic automobiles.

###