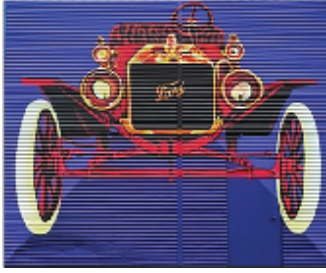


DOCENT NEWSLETTER



Docent Corps of the California Automobile Museum

Notes From the Dashboard...

Volume 25, No 5 September - October 2023

We are deep into the dog days of summer now and we are enjoying having the Glamour Road exhibit center stage. It has impressed many people already and been enjoyed by visitors who have traveled from around the country and world who put CAM on their itinerary along with our visitors from the Sacramento area. It has been a busy and successful summer. Thank you to everyone who assisted putting the exhibit together.

It's time to look ahead at the two major events coming up: CruiseFest and the Docent Council Election.

CruiseFest

The major public CAM event of the year is also the major fundraising event on the CAM calendar. This year the 12th Annual CruiseFest is on Saturday, October 7, from 3 to 7 pm. This is a really big and very popular annual event for both the museum and for Sacramento. Volunteers are needed. If you haven't been there or helped with it before, this is the year to take the leap. There is an opportunity that will fit your interest, ability and availability to help in some capacity in the days and hours before the event, during the event and/or at the end of the event to wrap it up.

- If you are able to help on the day of the event, please contact John Smith jkjjsmith@aol.com. to schedule a time. There is an important job waiting that will fit your availability and willingness to help. We could really use your assistance there.
- If you are not able to help the day of the event, you can still be a tremendous help: Assistance is also needed in the office in the weeks and days ahead in preparation for the event. Please call the museum office to offer your assistance soon to offer your assistance. It will be greatly appreciated.

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Upcoming Events

Fall Craft Fair.....Sat & Sun, Sep 2, 3
 Evening With the Authors....Sun, Sep 17
 CruiseFest.....Sat, Oct 7
 Annual Fund Raiser.....Fri, Nov 10

Board MeetingLast Thurs, 5:30 pm
 Docent Council.....2nd Weds, 1:15 pm
 Exhibits.....2nd Thurs, 1 pm
 Library.....Weds, 10 am
 Road Crew.....1st& 3rd Weds, 1:15 pm

IN MEMORIAM

CAROLYN HUNTLEY

DEC 24, 1938 - JULY 23, 2023
DOCENT CLASS OF 2011
CAM DOCENT



CALIFORNIA AUTOMOBILE MUSEUM



2200 Front Street
Sacramento, CA 95818
916.442.6802

www.calautomuseum.org

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Carolyn Spencer-Huntley (Waters) left her loved ones on July 23, 2023.

She is survived by her loving husband Ernest Huntley Jr. They met at the Museum in 2014 and were married in 2015. She is also survived by her son Matthew Waters, her sisters Barbara Damion, Sarah Ruana & Marjorie Aptakin, and her grandchildren. Carolyn will rest with her mother at the Sunset View Cemetery in El Cerrito.

Carolyn was a docent at many Sacramento museums: The Crocker Art Museum, the California Railroad Museum, and The California Automobile Museum where she met Ernie and fell in love. Carolyn was an accomplished equestrian and beloved as Mrs. Santa on the Polar Express in Old Sacramento. She will be missed dearly. 🇺🇸

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Docent Council Election

The Docent Council Election is also coming up soon for the four elected positions. Every docent has had the opportunity to participate in both the nomination and voting processes. Any docent that would like to nominate him/her self or another docent (with his/her permission only) for any of the elected positions may do so. Elected positions are: Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer.

You can use the form that has been published in recent issues of Inside CAM to submit your own name or that of another person to nominate for a position. Just click on the link in Inside CAM to bring up the form, fill in the name and submit the nomination(s). Voting will take place using the same method.

You are invited and encouraged to attend any Docent Council meeting anytime but particularly now if you would like to

DOCENT COUNCIL ELECTIONS

This year we are attempting something new for CAM. Picking the officers of the Docent Council has recently been done on paper and counted at the Christmas Party. We have the technology to run the election process entirely electronically and therefore we are asking all of the Docents and Volunteers to participate in this and nominate the people you want to lead your Docent Council. The nomination process is open now. Hit the link below to make a nomination. Later this year we will set up the election the same way, by a link in this newsletter.

We don't want to overlook anyone who is interested in serving or is an excellent docent candidate that you might know of. We have a tremendous collection of talent and experience among our docents. We are hoping to have at least two or more candidates for each office. You can nominate yourself, or a person other than yourself but please be sure to do so only with their knowledge and permission.

About the positions:

The Docent Council meets regularly on the second Wednesday of each month at 1:15PM. Meetings are about 60-90 minutes long.

- **CHAIR:** Shall preside over all meetings of the Docent Council and attend the CAM Board of Directors monthly meeting (on the last Thursday of the month at 6 PM). Board meetings are usually about 60-90 minutes long.
- **VICE-CHAIR:** Shall assume the duties of the Chair whenever he/she is unable to perform such duties and is also responsible for the CAM Cares program which responds to situations of injury, illness or the death of CAM docents or volunteers or their significant others by coordinating with CAM staff to send cards, flowers or other appropriate expressions of sympathy and support.
- **SECRETARY:** Shall maintain the Minutes and record of all Docent Council meetings and actions and perform all correspondence activities for the Docent Council and Corps.
- **TREASURER:** Shall maintain records of all financial transactions of the Docent Council and Corps. The Treasurer consults with Office Manager as needed.

WINTER IS COMING

We'd like to give folks an update on what's going on with the heaters: In a nutshell, we raised enough at the Fundraising Dinner for 8 heaters but then discovered it would be nearly \$100K to install them because they have to move all the gas lines, go through the ceiling, etc. We are exploring other alternatives including electric heaters, installing them where the lines currently are, etc.

Exhibits & Education



HARLEY EARL'S "DAMSELS OF DESIGN"

American women enjoyed a newfound status in the years after WWII. Their social and economic impact rose dramatically, and many industries took note. Harley Earl, head of design at General Motors since the late 20s realized that women designers could have a real impact on the cars GM was designing for the post war market.

Harley Earl had a secret weapon, but he fumbled—he kept it too secret. Harley probably wasn't specifically looking for a female designer in 1942, when he ran an ad in the New York Times looking for a "designer of fashioned materials"—he was only looking for a talented designer. And he got one. Her name was Helene Rother. Her path to Detroit was circuitous. She was born in 1908 in Leipzig, Germany, known at the time as an artist's enclave and home to the Grassi Museum.

Earl was impressed with Rother's portfolio and sketches, and soon she moved once more, this time to Detroit. She was tasked with bringing a woman's touch to the interiors for the Buick, Chevrolet, Cadillac, and Pontiac divisions, focusing on interior colors and textiles, hardware, and lighting. She was extensively involved in the 1944 Train of Tomorrow concept and did considerable design work on interior of the all-new 1948 Cadillac, including a daring new instrument panel.

Hush-hush was not a phrase that translated well to Rother. She soon realized that her opportunities lay elsewhere and left GM in 1947. She opened her offices on the 16th floor of the Fisher Building, directly across the street from GM headquarters. Her first automotive client was Nash-Kelvinator, and she had a long and successful relationship with them. Nash had no interest in hiding their involvement with Rother; rather, she became an industry celebrity instead—even to the point of becoming the first woman to address the Society of Automotive Engineers in November 1949.

Over at GM, Harley Earl had evolved his position. It's quite possible that he came to realize that Helene Rother was a missed opportunity, and that may have led directly to him hiring Mary-Ellen Green in 1950, but her rapid departure for financially precarious Packard led him to change his approach. He wanted to make his cars more appealing to women by involving them in the design process, but he apparently realized he needed a team of them to stay afloat in the male-dominated GM culture. So, in 1955, Earl reached out to Alexander Kostellow at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn to find suitable candidates. There he recruited seven of the nine designers that would become his original "Damsels of Design." Three of the women worked on displays and Frigidaire assignments, and six would work in the automobile interior studios—two at Chevrolet and one each in the other four studios.



The job was really a blend of full-time design and occasional public relations. The women assigned to Frigidaire worked on the "Kitchen of Tomorrow" as well as displays and details for production studios. In the divisions, they were all assigned to interior studios and worked with color and trim and interior detailing. Earl was not hesitant to put the "Damsels" in front of the camera for photo-ops and praised the contributions of the feminine eye that made the interior of the car friendlier to women, such as redesigned switches for easier use, the elimination of nylon-snagging protrusions, and even their preference for convenience options such as power seats.

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In the spring of 1958 Earl decided to showcase the “damsels” and their talents with what became known as the Feminine Auto Show. Female designers from each of the five divisions were given free rein to design and display two vehicles from their division and also to design and construct the display area in the “Styling Dome” at GM’s design center where new models were often exhibited.

Chevrolet was represented by Jeanette Linders’ Impala Martinique, with luggage matching the trunk interior lining, and Ruth Glennie’s Fancy Free Corvette, which featured seat covers that could be changed with each season of the year. Of the ten vehicles displayed only Ruth Glennie’s Fancy Free Corvette still exists.

Buick showcased the Tampico Buick Special convertible and Shalimar, a Limited four-door sedan, both designed by Marjorie Pohlman.

Oldsmobile brought the Oldsmobile Fiesta Carousel wagon, which featured a kid-friendly play area in the rear seat, and the Rendezvous 98 convertible, both by Peggy Sauer.

Sandra Longyear’s Bordeaux Star Chief hardtop, and her Bonneville Polaris convertible represented Pontiac. ⁽¹⁾



Finally, Cadillac presented Sue Vanderbilt’s Saxony convertible and an Eldorado Seville called the “Baroness”. Vanderbilt’s first design assignment started within the Chevrolet design studio team, where she became involved in many great and creative projects for instrument panel designs.

As her career would continue with General Motors, Vanderbilt moved from Chevrolet interiors to Cadillac which provided a wonderful and exciting experience. Vanderbilt also became involved in General Motors’ advanced studio, where she had a small part in designing an interior part for the Firebird III concept car which was a hit at a number of auto shows that year.

Vanderbilt had designed two special Cadillacs – an Eldorado Seville coupe called the Baroness which was available with a telephone and much added compartment space for the driver and passengers. Vanderbilt’s other model was the Cadillac Saxony convertible, which was offered in a beautiful gray-green metallic color.



During the 1960s through the 1970s, Vanderbilt continued worked on many assignments and contributed a great deal to the iconic GM auto design. Later in her career, she became assistant chief designer for Chevrolet I and II studios, where she demonstrated many great leadership skills within the design studio, and completed her master’s degree. ⁽²⁾

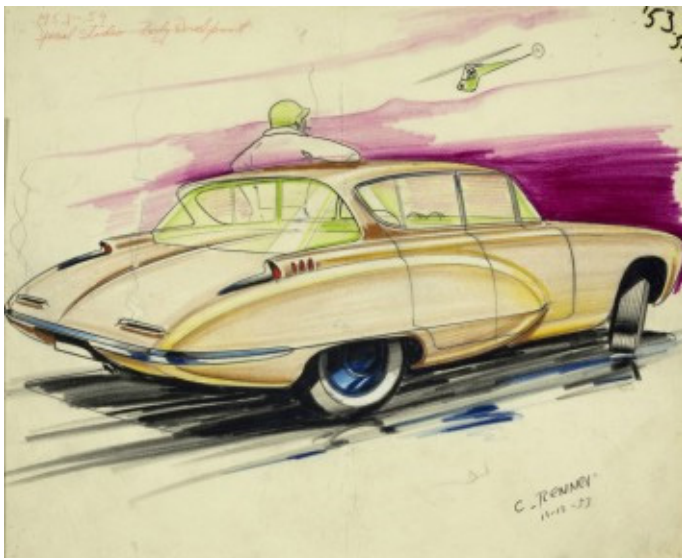
All of the women moved on to other companies and enjoyed very successful careers. The one who remained at GM was Sue Vanderbilt who went on to become the first female studio chief at GM when she took over the Chevrolet studio in 1971.

While the Feminine Auto Show was well received with GM executives flying in from all over the country to see the display, unfortunately, the women lost their benefactor when Harley Earl retired later in 1958. Earl’s successor, William “Bill” Mitchell was not a fan of female designers and made it clear he didn’t want them to stay. ⁽¹⁾ ■

1. *Damsels in Design, Women Pioneers in the Automotive Industry 1939-1959* by Constance Smith 2018
2. *The Reminiscences of Suzanne E. Vanderbilt*, by David Crippen :*Automotive Design Oral History Project*, 1985
3. *Glamour Road* by Jeff Stork and Tom Dolle, Schiffer Publishing, Ltd., 2022



Corvette Hall of Fame Inductee Carl Renner was part of the “Project Opel” original Corvette Motorama project design team. In 1945, after leaving Walt Disney’s design studio where he worked as a cartoon animator, Renner took his portfolio filled with automotive designs and headed for General Motors Styling where he landed a job as a junior designer in the Orientation Studio. GM was then beginning to turn its attention back to producing automobiles for the general public and designers were needed. He was promoted to Senior Designer in 1946 and transferred to the Chevrolet Studio. From 1950 to 1955 Renner took an active part in the entire design process of the 1952 through 1957 Chevrolet models. Other Renner design contributions include the Corvette side cove (1956), Corvette ducktail rear end (1961), the Corvette Nomad roofline and the “notch belt” fender line.



In 1954, he was promoted to assistant chief designer in the Body Development Studio. As part of the “ninth floor” crew at the Body Development Studio that Harley Earl used to work on special, private projects, the group became responsible for the basic shape of the first Opel – the future Corvette. The grille of the “Project Opel” Corvette was based on Carl Renner’s 1950 and 1951 renderings where he served as part of the project’s design team, although the answer to who is most responsible for the Corvette remains a mystery, thanks in part to the level of secrecy enforced by Harley Earl. Renner was also responsible for the Nomad which was essentially a Corvette built with an extended station wagon roof. Carl Renner passed away on January 22, 2001.

This is the first biographical summary of his career at GM, and the first book to illustrate the full range of his art. ■

Events



CALIFORNIA AUTOMOBILE MUSEUM'S FALL CRAFT FAIR!

SEP 02, 10:00 AM - SEP 03, 4:00 PM

Be one of dozens of craft vendors at the California Automobile Museum's Craft Fair! This is a two-day event with both days taking place from 10 am to 4 pm. All proceeds raised go towards supporting the California Automobile Museum which is a 501(c)3 non-profit.

Vendor Ticket (both days)
\$45.00

Time & Location: Sep 02, 10:00 AM – Sep 03, 4:00 PM
Sacramento, 2200 Front St, Sacramento, CA 95818



Evening with the Authors

featuring Jeff Stork & Tom Dolle of "Glamour Road"



Book available for pre-order!

Sunday, Sep 17
4 pm to 8 pm
\$30 for members
\$35 for non-members

CALIFORNIA AUTOMOBILE MUSEUM



AN EVENING WITH THE AUTHORS

SUNDAY, SEP 17, 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM

CALIFORNIA AUTOMOBILE MUSEUM, 2200 FRONT ST, SACRAMENTO, CA 95818, USA

Join us for an Evening with the authors of Glamour Road! The book, written by Jeff Stork & Tom Dolle is the inspiration for our new "Glamour Road" exhibit, featuring the art, fashion, and automobiles of the mid twentieth-century era.

Our Evening with the Authors event is taking place on Sunday, September 17 from 4 pm to 8 pm! Light hors d'ouvres and a paid bar will be available accompanying the presentation and a Q&A session with the two authors! Admission is \$30 for museum members and \$35 for non-members!

We're also offering the opportunity to pre-order the "Glamour Road" book until September 4! We cannot guarantee we will have any copies left on the day of the event so don't miss out.

All funds raised go towards supporting the California Automobile Museum which is a 501(c)3 non-profit.

Cruise & Show
3pm-7pm
Cruisin' 3pm-5pm

CALIFORNIA AUTOMOBILE MUSEUM

7
AT FULTON AVENUE

12th Annual
CruiseFest
on fulton avenue

Hundreds of Cars!

All proceeds benefit
the California Auto Museum

Saturday, October 7, 2023

Food Trucks • Music • Beer Garden • Free public event!

Fulton Avenue between El Camino & Marconi

Cruisers register at calautomuseum.org

Museum members \$29 Non-members \$45 Day of \$60
Museum Membership + CruiseFest registration \$75

Rain or shine - no refunds



OCTOBER 7, 3:00 PM - 7:00 P.M.
RAIN OR SHINE

Just how awesome is this event? We block off Fulton Avenue between El Camino and Marconi and you get to Cruise It! Hundreds of cars of all makes and models and thousands of spectators are only the beginning. Food trucks, music, and our beer garden round out the program that makes CruiseFest on Fulton Ave one of the biggest family car events in Sacramento.

Once again, all of the fun (music, food trucks, and beer garden) brought to one central stage! While checking out all the cool cars cruising lined up on Fulton Avenue, stop by the festival area to listen to the music, grab a bite to eat from the food trucks, and have us pour you some local beer. Please note, there will be no judging this year.

Registration: \$29 for Museum Members, \$45 for non-members, and \$60 on the day of the show. One ticket per car.

Previous events have sold out and we had to turn cars away at the cruise so make sure you pre-register to ensure your spot in this year's show.

Proceeds of the event benefit the California Automobile Museum - a 501c3 charitable organization.

SAVE THE DATE

AN EVENING WITH WAYNE CARINI

UNDERWRITTEN BY HAGERTY INSURANCE

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 10, AT 6:00PM



Wayne Carini started his career in his father's shop while still in grade school,^[3] working together on classics including Duesenbergs, Lincolns, Packards, Ford Model As and Garth Crooks Specials. Carini has served as a grand marshal at the Klingberg Vintage Motorcar Festival, conducted in New Britain, Connecticut. He was involved in the TV show *My Classic Car* and he appeared in *Overhaulin'*, a reality TV series.

With a lifetime of experience in automobile restoration under his belt, master car restorer Wayne Carini has a resume that includes body and paint work on rare car collections owned by the likes of David Letterman, tennis great Ivan Lendl and the DuPont family. He's been featured in the New York Times as well as numerous automobile magazines and starred in two one-hour television specials.

Wayne is also involved in and regularly attends many different car clubs and events to get young people involved in the car collector hobby. He believes that without young people's involvement, the car collector tradition will disappear. His latest passion is convincing families with special needs children to consider placing collector cars into a special needs trust with the hope that the cars will benefit the children in the future.

THE 2024 LE MANS EXPERIENCE

JUNE 11-23, 2024

If you have ever wanted to experience the 24 Hours of Le Mans race (one of the Motorsports Triple Crown events - along with the Indy 500 and Monaco Grand Prix), see the City of Lights - Paris, and visit Normandy for D-Day sights, Mont-Saint-Michel, and more, the California Automobile Museum alongside Good Carma Travel have an outstanding tour organized for you!

Our 14-day tour will include:

- All hotels
- All museum and sight admissions
- Ground transportation
- All guides

The full ground itinerary is round trip out of Paris as follows:

- Fly and arrive to Paris on June 11
- Stay in Paris (June 11 - 14)
 - ~ 3 nights at Hotel Des Arts Paris Montmarte in 10th Arrondissement neighborhood
 - ~ Tour of Musee des Space Le Bourget
 - ~ Free day in Paris for tourism
- Transfer to Le Mans hotel (June 14 - 18)
 - ~ 4 nights at a TBD hotel in Tours, France
 - ~ Daily track transfers for race
 - ~ Tour Musée des Blindés - Europe's largest armored vehicle collection

For the Le Mans race, we are partnering with the [The Grand Prix Club Inc](#) and leveraging their 40+ years of experience at Le Mans.

The tour is arranged in a 'modular' manner and can be tailored to your needs/desires. For example - if you ONLY want to attend the 24 Hours of Le Mans, we can arrange and price this. If you do NOT want to attend the 24 Hours of Le Mans, we can arrange and price this as well. If your travel partner wants to do everything with you EXCEPT the race, we can arrange this. Let us know what you are interested in!

While there's time to decide on some options, due to unprecedented demand for Le Mans tickets, we need to get our spots reserved ASAP. Please place your \$500 per person deposit TODAY!



- All gratuities
- All tickets for 24 Hours of Le Mans
- All breakfasts
- Several dinners
- Several lunches

- ~ Wine tasting in Loire Valley
- Transfer to Bayeux (June 18 - 22)
 - ~ 4 nights at Grand Hotel du Luxembourg in Bayeux, France
 - ~ Full day tour of American sector of D-Day
 - ~ Full day tour of Mont-Saint-Michel
 - ~ Full day tour of Bayeux, Caen area sights (William the Conqueror's castle, Bayeux Tapestry, etc.)
- Transfer to Paris Airport Hotel (June 22)
- ~ 1 night at Sheraton De Gaulle Airport Hotel
- Travel Home June 23



CAMprofiles



Personalities at the California Auto Museum

ERNIE HARTLEY

DOCENT CLASS OF 1988

INSTRUCTOR OF FIRST DOCENT CLASS IN 1987

DIRECTOR OF TOWE FORD MUSEUM (1986-1998)

Ernies was born in Ohio and attended Olney Friends School. During high school he met Kristy, the daughter of Edward and Florence Towe. All 3 of the Towe girls attended this school, where Ernie became acquainted with the family. Ernie enjoyed reading books on the Rocky Mountains. Descriptions of snow-capped peaks, coniferous forests and waterfalls brought Ernie to the point that he had to see it for himself.



In 1960 he attempted to explain to his Father why he was going to hitchhike to Montana. He enrolled in the University of Montana and worked 5 summers for the U.S. Forest Service. Ernie went from being on an engineering crew, to a Hotshot firefighting Crew, to being selected as a Smokejumper. Kristy also enrolled at University of Montana, where she and Ernie were married during the undergraduate years.

Ernie attended Duke University in Durham, NC, where he received a PhD in Plant Ecology. The market was flooded with new PhD's at that time, and jobs in the field were scarce. Edward Towe offered Ernie a job in his restoration shop in Helena. Ernie started with menial jobs, and went on to paint a 1931 Model A pickup during the 2 years he worked there. Lewis Rector the manager was a perfectionist who knew Fords. The goal was to restore a car to look and perform as when it left the factory. Edward Towe had the means, and Lewis Rector the expertise to accomplish that goal. As the car collection grew at the rate of about one per month, a facility to store them became increasingly difficult.

The collection was displayed in the Montana State Historical Society for 10 years. Then the State decided they wanted the museum space for other exhibits. While looking for a new home for the Towe Ford Collection, Edward Towe began negotiating for the purchase of an existing museum in Florida. News of that proposed move caught the attention of the historical society in Deer Lodge, Montana, who were preparing to take over the Old Montana Territorial Prison. Deer Lodge was just 55 miles from Helena. The decision was made to move the cars to Deer Lodge in 1978. By the mid-1980's, the collection had grown to the point that the Towe Ford Museum in Deer Lodge was filled to capacity.

Edward Towe, once again, was looking for a new home for his collection. Sacramento's Dick Ryder contacted the Towe family with an invitation to come to California's capitol city. An agreement was made to take part of a "World Class Collection" of cars and put it into a "World Class Museum" On October 25, 1986, 13 Hadley auto transports and several hauled and driven cars left Deer Lodge for Sacramento. Three days and 3 blizzards later, the procession of 96 cars had covered the 1000 miles to Sacramento. Ernie drove a Washington blue 1936 Ford Roadster.

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Ernie and Kristy became directors of the Towe Ford Museum when it opened on May 1, 1987. During the first year Ernie was convinced that they had made the wrong move bringing the cars to Sacramento, because of the lack of funding and a suitable museum facility. The docent class started as a small group of people who met in the front office. The lectures focused on the history of Ford, the “Man”, the machine, the times. This was the start of the first docent training program. The majority of the cars were Fords. There was no interpretive signage, but volunteers helped make it happen.

Ernie commented that they were lacking in any kind of an organized program for volunteers to work on cars. Ernie feels that the California Automobile Museum is becoming a “World Class Museum” today. There is a professional Board of Directors, an Events Committee, a Docent Council, an Exhibits Committee, and an Education Committee. Ernie commented about all the Pit Crew members who were present at Wednesday lunch. Today they get to use their expertise overhauling a carburetor or getting their hands dirty doing a tune-up on an antique car. Where else can you do that?

Ernie was very complimentary about our Docent Training program today, and the efforts of Bill Millard. Congratulations to Ernie for 35 years of dedicated service to the museum. ■■

Verle Smith Docent Class of 2011

Docent Scrapbook



WOMEN ENGINEERS LIKE LISA DRAKE ARE LEADING THE ELECTRIC VEHICLE REVOLUTION

“We want to run at a different rhythm,” says Lisa Drake, vice president of electric vehicle industrialization at Ford. “Faster, faster, faster.”

Nearly 120 years ago, when the Ford Motor Company was founded, American women didn’t have the legal right to vote. This spring, when Ford launched the F-150 Lightning, an all-electric, emissions-free version of its classic electric pickup truck, women were in the driver’s seat. Linda Zhang, an engineer, immigrant, and mom of teenagers, is the chief engineer behind the car. Women scientists made the rollout happen, like Megan Gekesky, a fifth-generation Ford worker, who serves as the program management launch supervisor. And then there’s Drake, who is helping to oversee the whole thing.

“The Lightning is one of the most important pickup trucks—vehicles, really—in history,” argued *MotorTrend*. “This truck has to convince construction workers, farmers, ranchers, surveyors, and everyday truck fans that electric pickups aren’t just viable but desirable.” *Car and Driver* called the model Ford’s “most ambitious innovation since the Model T.” Reviews have been ecstatic. The F-150 Lightnings are already so popular that demand has outstripped supply. Drake promises that this is just the beginning. “They’ve been waiting to showcase what they can do,” Drake tells *Glamour* of the engineers working on electric cars at Ford. “I’m most excited to let them shine.”

The story of electric vehicles tends to center men—the CEOs of Ford, Tesla, and Rivian are men. But endless headlines about Elon Musk and umpteen quotes from businessmen grabbing for a piece of the lucrative industry don’t tell the whole story. The electric vehicle revolution is being powered by plenty of women. They’re visioning, engineering, building, selling, and driving the cars of the future. “But there’s not enough,” says Drake. “There’s just still not enough.”

Drake joined Ford 28 years ago. In that time, she led the Ford F-150 product and launch team, served as chief engineer of global hybrid and electric vehicles, and held a position in Ford’s C-suite. She was raised by a dad who worked at a steel mill and a stay-at-home mom—not the kind of person who would ever call herself a feminist, Drake says. Label or no, her mom’s attitude was clear: “You can do anything. Whatever you want to do you’re going to do, there’s just no debate about it.” So Drake studied mechanical engineering and took a job right out of college at Ford as a power train engineer.

Power train is a particularly male-dominated area, and when Drake started there were fewer women engineers. She credits her success in part to men who helped her find her place. “I had great male mentors,” she says. “I worked hard, but they took the time. They saw my potential and they helped me.” Derrick Kuzak, a former Ford executive who nominated Drake for the Automotive Hall of Fame, which honored her with the Young Leadership and Excellence Award in 2008, sings her praises. “Lisa has one of the most active minds I have ever encountered. She is innately curious, forever probing, never satisfied,” Kuzak tells *Glamour*. “She is truly dedicated to her team, optimizing its performance and helping every team member maximize personal development.”

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Drake could use her successes to argue that gender doesn't get in the way of success in the car industry. That any woman who is smart and deserving enough can climb to the top of the biggest automotive companies. She doesn't think that way. She recalls once standing at the back of a lecture for women engineers, when the speaker asked audience members to raise their hand if they had ever been called bossy. She watched nearly every hand go up. "I realized—this is holding them back," says Drake. "And now my role, because it didn't hold me back, is to help them figure this out."

She thinks of the girls who don't have a parent, especially a mom, telling them they can do anything. She thinks about women who enter male-dominated workplaces and get harassed or ignored instead of mentored. Drake's job boils down, she says, to problem solving. And like the problem of lithium battery manufacturing or charging station access, advancing women in engineering is a problem that can be solved. Not through slogans or good intentions, but strong action that comes from the top. She lives by these words: "Policies unlock potential."

Think, she says, of the U.S. women's soccer team. Title IX, the law that makes gender-based discrimination illegal in federally funded programs, including schools, was passed in 1972. "When you look at the number of soccer players that started through programs in elementary school then high school then college teams, and now we have a four-time World Cup winning women's national soccer team—the policy Title IX unlocked all that potential," Drake says. "It was always there. That potential was *always* there. But that policy unlocked it." Not corporate lip service. Not incremental advancements. Big change.

"I think we can be doing even better than we do today at pay equity," she says. Ford most recently reported a gender pay ratio of 98.2%. "I'd love to be at 100," says Drake. "Why not? It's hard to do, but we should be at 100." She argues that it is incumbent on companies to do more than just provide ample paid parental leave. The need is for "policies that allow women to exit the workforce to start a family and then be able to come back and not worry about where they're going to be with their position," she says.

"The more women there are in leadership, the more women can help change these policies for the future," says Drake. Ford's chairman of the board is a man—Bill Ford. Ford's CEO is a man—Jim Farley. (In 2013, Mary Barra at General Motors made history as the first female CEO of any international automotive company.) According to the company's most recent data, 54% of employees with a "director" title are women, but under 25% of the company's board are women.

Drake sees work still to do. She believes that the electric vehicles industry, specifically, needs women. Engineers like Linda Zhang prove the point. "I want to show anybody who might be reading this article that you don't have to be male, you don't have to be a gearhead, you don't have to tear down an engine in your spare time to come to work at Ford," Drake says. We all know that from childhood boys are taught that their minds are more analytical, that they're better at working with their hands, that they belong to the objectively more powerful gender.

Well, two can play at that game, "If anything, our products are very emotive and they're rooted in understanding the customer and their experience and women have a real built-in natural empathy to understand people," Drake argues. "I think women sometimes underappreciate how well they can do at an auto company. And I'm here to tell them: They can do incredibly well." ■

Jenny Singer June 15, 2022