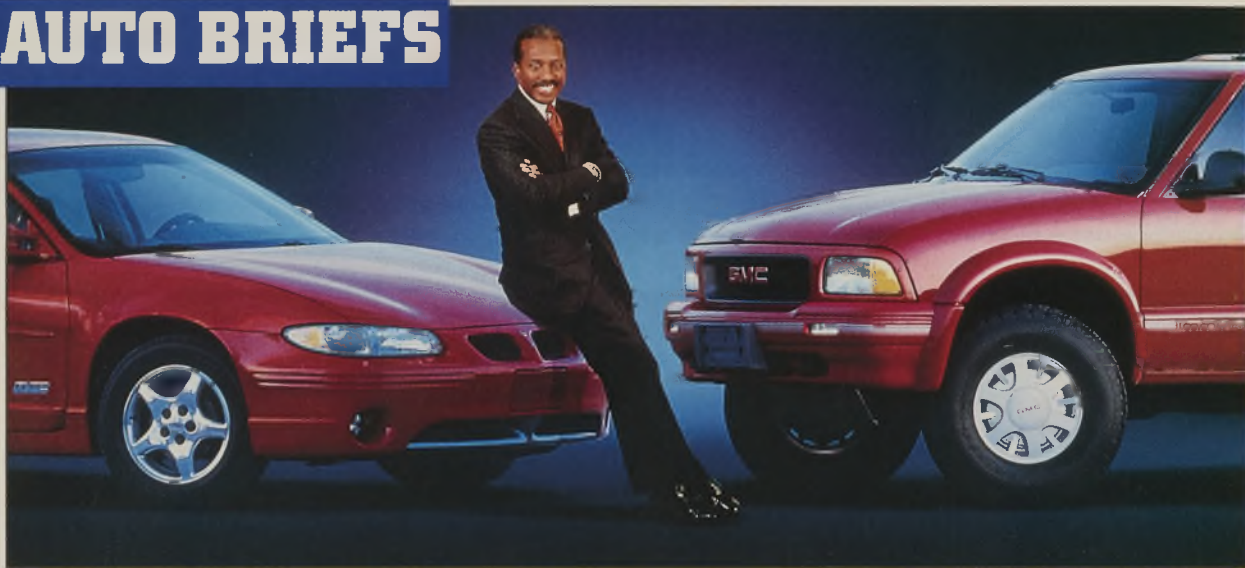


## AUTO BRIEFS

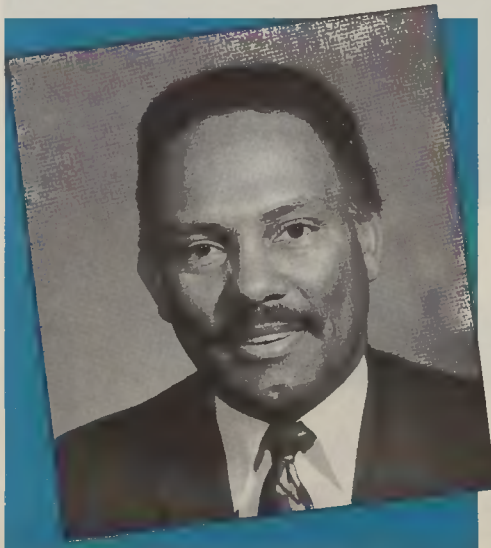


### ROY ROBERTS TO HEAD NEW GMC-PONTIAC DIVISION

When General Motors decided to merge two of its strongest divisions, it named Roy S. Roberts to head the new GMC-Pontiac division. Roberts, who has been the general manager of the GMC division since October 1992, is the only African American in charge of operations at any major car company. Roberts, 56, will take over the Pontiac duties from John Middlebrook, who will become general manager of Chevrolet division. Ron Zarella, GM vice president and group executive for North American vehicle sales, service and marketing, is confident Roberts is the right man for the job. "Roy has demonstrated outstanding leadership at GMC," Zarella said. Roberts, who has been at GM for about 17 years, said, "This is an opportunity to link two outstanding divisions and a chance for us to write a little history as we go forward." The consolidation is part of GM's overall plan to reduce its work force. Part of Roberts' task is to have all Pontiac and GMC franchises become joint dealerships. Of the 2,870 Pontiac franchises, 1,585 are already joined with GMC.

### 1ST AFRICAN AMERICAN TO HEAD SAE

Claude A. Verbal understands what it's like to be a pioneer, having integrated the engineering program at North Carolina State. On March 1, 1996, Verbal became the 91st president of the Society of Automotive Engineers, making him the first African American to hold the 68,000-member organization's top post. Prior to his appointment, Verbal had been manager of General Motors Service Parts Operations in Lansing, MI. Verbal, 54, intends to make diversity a top priority at SAE. "Outstanding engineering abilities come in all colors and genders. We must urge our membership to



utilize the diverse talent that exists, while putting programs in place to increase the minority and female ranks of engineers," he said. Verbal joined GM as a Buick suspension engineer in 1964. In 1985, he was named manufacturing superintendent at Buick-Oldsmobile-Cadillac Groups' Livonia, MI, powertrain plant. Before becoming manager of the Lansing processing center in 1995, he managed the Service Parts Operations in Drayton Plains, MI. He became the first African-American executive in the Buick Motor Division in 1987, when he was appointed General Superintendent of Quality and Reliability.

### FORD RENEWS COMMITMENT TO MINORITY SUPPLIERS

The Ford Motor Company plans to increase its annual purchases from minority suppliers by five percent by the year 2000. This effort will increase Ford contracts with minority suppliers from \$1.8 billion in 1995 to about \$2.5 billion. Collectively, the "Big Three" purchase approximately \$4 billion in parts and services from minority suppliers annually, according to Ford, which says its share represents about 45 percent. Ford also announced an \$8 million commitment to help support Detroit's Economic Empowerment Zone.