

Powell tells GM 'no thank you'

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DETROIT - Retired Gen. Colin Powell has turned down an offer to join the board of General Motors Corp., according to a published report.

Citing unnamed sources, Business Week in its Aug. 26 editions reports that Powell had been courted intensely by

GM Chairman Jack Smith and GM Vice-Chairman Harry Pearce, who serves on the Howard University board of trustees with Powell.

Powell could not be reached by the weekly magazine for comment.

Mark Tanner, a GM spokesman in Detroit, said it was not "our practice to com-

ment on such issues." Powell associate and GOP consultant Kenneth Duberstein would only say that Powell has received dozens of requests to join corporate boards and has said no to all, the magazine reported.

The GM board has 14 members of which only one is black. A seat on the board includes a \$26,000 annual retainer and stock grants.

Lexus coupe still turns heads

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though the suspension is tuned more toward luxury than sport. It's a little soft in the corners, but easy to control. Still, this is a driver's car and it begs to be driven.

The exterior is still a work of art. You've probably heard the story. The car's body was shaped from clay by the Lexus Calty design studio in California. It was never committed to paper. When shown to the head of Toyota he immediately gave the go ahead.

Talk about a no brainer. What car executive could have turned down such a stunning design? It still turns heads after four years.

The interior is as delightful. The bird's eye maple trim coupled with the optional leather

seats makes the SC a wonderful place to sit. The driver's seat is wonderfully snug. The funky dash with its electronic analog gauges wraps around the driver, giving a feeling of security as well as adding loads of style.

As perfect as I'd like to think it is, the car has a few faults, the back seat being the greatest. Actually it's more like a disadvantage. Only pets, small children or an adult dying to hitch a ride will find the space comfortable. It's beautifully done, but that's all.

Very tall people in general will not fit into the coupe very well. The low-slung profile doesn't call for a lot of head room.

And I'd love a few more horses under the hood. Actually, I'd like them to mate the SC 400's

V8 to the slick five-speed. It won't happen, but I can dream.

That's about all the negative stuff I can think of. Except maybe the price. The base price has skyrocketed to \$43,400. With leather seats, automatic dimming mirrors, sun roof, CD changer and trunk and interior floor mats, the price swells to \$48,028.

That's a lot of cash, but I anyone willing to plunk it down will be a very happy camper.

Either of these cars are fine examples of how cars should be constructed: solid, safe and exciting. You can find less expensive cars that may deliver more in an area or two, but nothing touches the SC and GS for overall balance and quality. Throw in the Lexus reputation and you've got two special automobiles. Really.

Saab sales, revenues decline

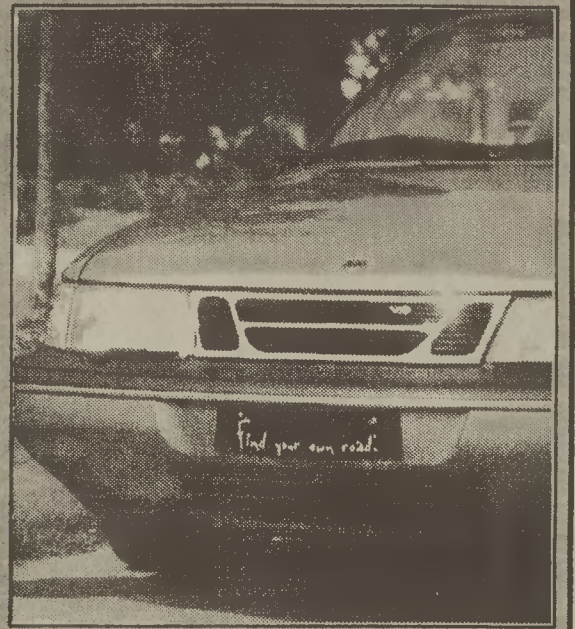
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

STOCKHOLM - Saab Automobile lost 428 million kronor (\$66 million) in the first half of 1996, a sharp reverse from its 195-million-kronor (\$30 million) profit in the same period a year earlier, the company announced Friday.

Saab, jointly owned by General Motors and the Swedish company Investor AB, attributed the losses to adverse exchange rate trends and rising costs for product development and marketing.

Sales revenue and volume also declined. The company said it sold 49,300 cars in the first half of this year, down from 52,400 a year ago. Sales revenue was 10.13 billion kronor (\$1.56 billion), down from 10.99 billion kronor (\$1.69 billion).

The sales decline was mostly at home, where Saab sold about 8,000 cars this year compared with 11,000 in the first six months of 1995.



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Thank You