

AAOW's Golden Wheel Awards

The top black automotive writers pick the year's top new car, company, minority supplier, and executive.

In this issue we honor the winners of *African Americans On Wheels'* (AAOW) first annual Golden Wheel Awards. Although our primary mission is to educate and inform African-American consumers about the auto industry and its products, we believe it is also important to recognize industry leaders for the progress they have made in the African-American community.

The presentations were made at a ceremony at the Renaissance Club on Jan. 9, 1997, in conjunction with the North American International Auto Show in Detroit. We also used this opportunity to name AAOW's "Vehicle of the Year" and "Urban Pick" winners.

A snow storm that night wasn't enough to prevent more than 350 people from showing up to recognize and honor the award winners. The diverse crowd included many individuals who support diversity within the auto industry, including media, industry, political, and community leaders.

Presiding over the awards presentation were Warren Brown of the *Washington Post* and Gerald Smith, director of Community Development at WTVS-TV, Channel 56 in Detroit. The biggest surprise of the evening came from Detroit Mayor Dennis Archer. The Mayor's assistant, Gregory Bowens, presented Randi Payton, publisher and editor-in-chief of AAOW, with a special citation commemorating AAOW for its leadership in promoting and highlighting African-American achievement in the auto industry.

Another highlight came when Mike Dale, president of Jaguar Cars North America, announced that his company would continue to sponsor an internship in conjunction with AAOW for a student seeking a career in automotive communications.

An independent panel of automotive journalists was given the task of choosing the four award winners. They included Winfred Cross of the *Charlotte Post*, Warren Brown of the *Washington Post*, Reginald Larrie of the *Michigan Chronicle*, Kathy Jackson of *Automotive News*, Earle Eldridge of *USA Today* and freelance writer Blair Walker. They made their selection based on a list of criteria and nominees in four categories: Company of the Year, for Achievement in Diversity Marketing, Community Service and Minority Supplier Programs; African-American Auto Executive of the Year; Minority-Owned Supplier of the Year and Vehicle of the Year.

Sponsors included General Motors, Ford Motor Company, Chrysler Corporation, Jaguar Cars, Mercedes Benz of North America, Michelin North America, Mitsubishi Motor Sales of America, Detroit Newspaper Agency, Comerica Incorporated, and Plante & Moran.



Karen Goodson

MINORITY SUPPLIER OF THE YEAR:
Anthony Snoddy,
president of Exemplar
Manufacturing.

GOLDEN QUILL AWARD—

Washington Automotive Press Association President, Les Jackson (left), presents AAOW Publisher Randi Payton with its 1996 Golden Quill Award for excellence in automotive journalism. The top place went to AAOW, while Janet Fix of *Detroit Free Press* won the 300-member organization's second place award.

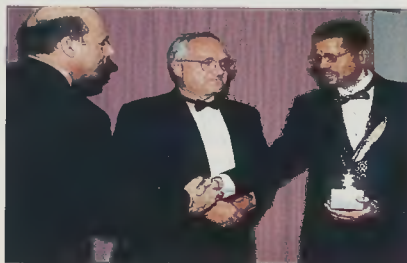


Photo by Joe Thomas