

A Passionate Business Communicator



BY CINDY ORLANDI

**LIN CUMMINS,
ARVINMERITOR'S SENIOR VP
FOR COMMUNICATIONS, IS
RECOGNIZED AS AN
INTERNATIONAL LEADER**

L

in Cummins is on a roll. The wheels are spinning faster than ever for this successful female executive. Cummins, who explains she is "passionate" about her work in the international automotive industry, is senior vice president for communications and officer for ArvinMeritor. Her corporate calendar recently included industry activities in Germany, England and the Netherlands. Meanwhile, her staff in Amsterdam and Troy, Mich., was busy planning and communicating about the company in events in Australia and Japan as well as in North and South America.

Cummins, who usually travels two weeks out of every month, returned from Europe in May in time to be the guest of Mrs. Joe Knollenburg at a Congressional Club Luncheon in Washington D.C., hosted by Mrs. George W. Bush and Mrs. Tony Blair.

Cummins recently was honored with Wayne State University's 21st Century Award and was a finalist for the International Association of Business Leaders'



Left to right: Laura Bush, Lin Cummins, Lynne Cheney, wife of Vice President Dick Cheney, and Cherie Blair, wife of British Prime Minister Tony Blair, at The Congressional Club's annual spring luncheon honoring the First Lady. The Congressional Club is a bipartisan group of Congressional spouses who host the luncheon to make a contribution to a charity given in the First Lady's name. Cummins was the guest of event chair Sandie Knollenberg, wife of Sen. Joe Knollenberg (R., Mich.) The event was held at the International Ballroom of the Washington (D.C.) Hilton Hotel on May 15, 2003.

annual "Best in the Business" award. So it shouldn't have come as a surprise for Cummins to learn that IABC/Detroit, one of the organization's largest chapters, also had chosen her as its "Communicator of the Year" for 2003.

The 2002 IABC/Detroit Communicator of the Year, John Bailey, was honored to present the award to Cummins at the organization's annual Renaissance Awards program in June. "Lin has faced and overcome extra challenges being a female in the automotive business and has made huge accomplishments," said Bailey, president of John Bailey & Associates. "She

has earned what every business communicator wants, the ear of the decision makers and a seat at the table."

Larry Yost, ArvinMeritor's Chairman and CEO, was among those who nominated Cummins for the award. Yost noted that Lin is well known in the automotive industry, understands the business and has helped to "map out" the vision and future of the \$7 billion company. The tier-one automotive supplier has 32,000 employees in 27 countries.

"Internally, I believe that the information we provide to our employees is the best. Nobody does it better," said Yost. "Externally, I

always receive compliments from others that want copies of our communications pieces to use them as a benchmark of a well-managed brand," he added. "That's the best compliment."

"Our overall objectives with our employee publications are to promote pride in ArvinMeritor; educate about our customers, products and geographic presence; share successes; and help all employees feel part of the ArvinMeritor family," explained Cummins. "A recent addition to each issue is a center spread dedicated to the countries where ArvinMeritor operates. We are highlighting the culture, lifestyle and

unique business opportunities of one of our 27 countries each quarter — using eye-catching images, headlines, and pull-quotes. In this way, we are shortening the distance between our employees living and working all over the world.”

Cummins, who recently aligned the company’s investor relations and corporate communications strategy, also received kudos from Beth Gurnack, vice president of Investor Relations for ArvinMeritor. “The result is a better message with a consistent flow,” explained Gurnack, who initially had reservations about the consolidation of investor relations under communications.

“Lin is a wonderful mentor and role model,” says Colleen Hanley, director of Corporate Communications for ArvinMeritor. “Maybe it’s because she started at a time in this industry when women had a difficult time moving ahead that she is so open to helping us ‘younger ones’ make the right moves and choices,” adds Hanley, who also is a past-president of IABC/Detroit and serves on the association’s Executive Board of Directors as IABC U.S. District 7 Director.

“It’s not how hard you work,” explains Cummins. “It’s what value you bring to the company.” That’s why she takes the time to visit four cities a month to meet with investors and analysts even though it means she has to pack light and juggle priorities. Cummins, who says she also takes pride in being both a mother and grandmother, believes it is important to communicate both the bad and the good news in a down economy.

“We meet with people so that they want to continue to buy and invest,” explains Cummins, who



Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm (second from left) and her husband Dan Mulhern join Lin Cummins at this year’s Crystal Rose Ball to benefit Hospice of Michigan. Cummins was recently appointed to the board of directors of Hospice. The annual fundraising event took place in April at Detroit’s new Ford Field.

has responsibility for communications with customers and investors as well as employees and the community.

Cummins adds that she strongly believes that it is vital to help employees understand business objectives and continue to grow the company brand so that ArvinMeritor doesn’t skip a beat when the economy recovers.

“People need to trust their lead-

ers,” stresses Cummins. “When things are tough, there is a lot of fear and so it is even more important to get leaders out to talk.” For example, ArvinMeritor leaders provide a Quarterly Report Card to employees; the next one is set for July from a plant where ArvinMeritor makes door systems in Liberec, in the Czech Republic, and will be video broadcast throughout the world. ■