

Well Done! AME Awards for Excellence and Service

Heartfelt congratulations and “thanks” may be easier to give than receive. Those recognized for their contributions and improvements are oftentimes modest about the impact they have made, perhaps yearning for even more service opportunities. Yet it is fitting to set aside time for recognizing leadership, excellence, and character as reflected in those around us. Congratulations to the organizations receiving AME’s first annual regional awards for excellence in operations, and our overall AME 2006 company award recipient for excellence in operations, Batesville Casket Company. We also offer appreciation to Ralph Todd, recipient of the 2006 Lifetime Achievement Award for AME members and to Fujio Cho, chairman of Toyota Motor Corporation, recipient of the AME 2006 individual award for excellence. These awards were presented or recognized during the AME annual conference held recently in Dallas, TX.

Batesville Casket Company Receives Overall Excellence Award

Batesville Casket Company’s Manchester, TN operations reflect implementation of the lean tools as expected in lean companies. Among their outstanding features, three are noted here. *First, creativity before capital* at Manchester can be seen in careful attention to simplifying processes without spending unnecessary capital. Manchester personnel use kaizen reviews of a process to simplify it, leading to both quality and uptime improve-

ments. Understanding that complex processes and equipment are harder to maintain and keep running, they eliminate opportunities for errors and delays.

Second, the Diamond Standard for quality is Manchester’s tough quality audit for function and appearance. Randomly selecting caskets at the end of the line, they look for and eliminate deviations from specifications and any flaw that might displease customers. Everyone at Batesville is constantly thinking, “What would a customer think?”

Third, people are the heart of continuous improvement. “One Team” is the mantra at Manchester. Through daily meetings and in many other ways, employees at this union plant are enlisted in making “tomorrow better than today.” In this way, their management team succeeds in encouraging everyone to pull in the same direction.

AME Regional Awards for Operational Excellence

In addition to Batesville Casket Company (*Southeastern Region award recipient*), the following organizations were recognized by AME for their excellence in operations:

- *Canada: Canadian Blue Bird Coach, Brantford, ON.* Associates at this facility manufacture Type A school busses.
- *Great Lakes Region: Myers Spring Company, Logansport, IN.* Employees at Logansport manufacture springs and wire forms.

- *Midwest Region: Flexible Steel Lacing Company, Downers Grove, IL.* Mechanical conveyor belt fasteners are produced at this facility.
- *North Central Region: Creative Memories, St. Cloud, MN.* Among their products are scrapbooks, photo albums, and photograph supplies.
- *Northeast Region: HP Americas' Software Manufacturing, Nashua, NH.* The operation is a sub-unit of Hewlett-Packard's Global Software Supply Chain (GSSC). Among their products and services are software kits, licenses, and components that make up the kits; they also offer services ranging from product introduction to material planning, order management, e-commerce, as well as print, media, and manufacturing/distribution services.
- *Southwest Region: M2 Global Technology, Ltd., San Antonio, TX.* The company is a premier worldwide supplier of microwave components and contract manufacturing services for the defense, telecommunications, and medical industries.
- *West Region: Ventana Medical Systems, Tucson, AZ.* The company is a leading developer and manufacturer of instrument-reagent systems used in automating the process of diagnostic testing of tissue samples on glass microscope slides.

Ralph Todd: 2006 Lifetime Achievement Award

Ralph Todd, recipient of the AME Lifetime Achievement Award for AME members, has served our organization in many capacities for more than 20 years. He retired from Tektronix some years ago. While there, he worked tirelessly for adoption of lean manufacturing and design for manufacturing.

Recalled R.W. "Doc" Hall, "I was once invited by Ralph to Tektronix to explain JIT to four or five people. Before leaving I phoned Ralph to double-check the number of people at the meeting — about 30. When Ralph picked me up at the airport, I checked again the number of people. About 500,

said Ralph, and the meeting was moved to a ballroom. That was typical of Ralph."

Ralph helped to launch the AME Western Region and was its president for several years, said Doc Hall, adding, "He was so successful developing programs that other regions began to ask him to help set up events. Soon he became AME's corporate event organizer. During the 1990s, if you went to an AME event, chances were good that Ralph helped organize it."

Although Ralph seldom chose to be the up-front performer, he made announcements and introductions, and then offered suggestions for follow-up events. For about 15 years, Doc noted, AME could not hold an annual conference without Ralph's active committee participation. He knew how to staff a conference and how to pick up the pieces when anything needed to be done.

Ralph also formed the Northwest High Performance Enterprise Consortium (HPEC). He was undeterred by at least two false starts for this lively group, now well on its way in serving Pacific Northwest organizations.

He also understood how to guide a disparate group of volunteers in one direction, enlisting others to pitch in and make a new idea work. For Ralph Todd's many years of service toward enterprise excellence, AME selected him as the recipient of the 2006 lifetime achievement award.

Fujio Cho: 2006 Award for Individual Excellence

AME presents its 2006 individual award for excellence to Fujio Cho, chairman of Toyota Motor Corporation. A 1960 graduate of Tokyo university in law, Cho-San immediately began working for Toyota in civil affairs (public relations in the United States). He later worked in a factory in Toyota City, where he drew the attention of Taiichi Ohno. He quickly developed into a TPS leader and in 1967 he was assigned to Production Control (running plants and coaching people on continuous improvement).

He became a manager in the Production Control Division in 1974. Cho-San led a two-year campaign in which all of

Toyota's suppliers adopted TPS (a desperately needed change during an oil crisis).

In 1978 Cho-San co-authored the first paper in English that attempted to explain TPS to the Western World. It was presented in 1980 at the Ford world headquarters auditorium to approximately 500 people, in a session co-sponsored by the predecessor organization to AME.

When he became a manager in the Logistics Division in 1984, Cho-San worked to improve the shipping quality for exported cars and parts. (He tracked a car from the line to the U.S. dealership.) Then in 1988 he came to the United States for the startup of Toyota's Georgetowne, KY plant, as president of Toyota North America. He was a keynote speaker for AME's 1994 annual conference, just after he returned to Japan. He became the public spokesperson for Toyota, becoming president in 1999.

Cho-San assisted in having the size of the company's board and pressed for the first non-Japanese board member. To develop non-Japanese managers and mentors and promote the Toyota Way, he founded the Toyota Institute, where he still lectures at times. He was elected chairman of Toyota Motor Company in 2006 and is president of the Japan Automobile Manufacturers Association. He is highly deserving of the AME 2006 Lifetime Achievement Award.

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Chairman Tony Laraia presents the AME Manufacturing Excellence Award to Batesville Gasket Company Manchester Operations. The award is accepted by Plant Manager Mary Jo Cartwright.



The AME 2006 individual award for excellence was given to Fujio Cho, chairman of Toyota Motor Corporation. Mike Daprile, Toyota vice president of manufacturing, accepted the award from Chairman Tony Laraia and Target Editor-in-Chief Robert W. "Doc" Hall.



Ralph Todd was the 2006 recipient of the Mac McCulloch Lifetime Achievement Award.