



# Global Perspectives

Connecting you to the industry's leading educational event. **September/October 2004**

*News From The Global Automotive Aftermarket Symposium*



*In celebration of the 10th anniversary of the Symposium, the theme for the 2005 event will take both a look back and a look forward.*

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## Renowned Economist Set to Present In 2005

One of the nation's leading economist will headline the 2005 Global Automotive Aftermarket Symposium (GAAS). Lester Thurow is a professor of economics and management at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and has been the Dean of the Sloan School of Business at MIT. He has three New York Times best selling books to his credit and consults widely around the globe.

Thurow will provide the keynote address during the opening session on Wednesday,

May 11. He believes that fortune favors the bold and will discuss how aftermarket executives can lead their organization by seizing risk in the global economy. "Now is the time to seize the moment and build economic systems that will minimize instability, allow second and third world countries to thrive, and promote and protect our own national well-being," says Thurow.

His latest book, published by HarperBusiness Books (Fall 2003), is entitled, "Fortune Favors the Bold: What We Must Do to Build a New and



*Economist Lester Thurow*

Lasting Global Prosperity."

For more information about Lester Thurow, visit: [www.lthurow.com](http://www.lthurow.com). ♦

## A Chat With GAAS Chairman Mort Schwartz

The Global Automotive Aftermarket Symposium will celebrate its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary during the 2005 event in Chicago. Mort Schwartz was one of the pioneers who helped start the Symposium. He continues to serve as Chairman for the 2005 Symposium.

The first Global Automotive Aftermarket Symposium was held on September 25-26, 1996 at the Hyatt Regency Deerfield Hotel in the suburban Chicago area. The Chicago area has hosted 8 of the first 10 Symposiums, with the other two held in Detroit.

We recently sat down to chat with Mort about the ori-

gins of the event and his recollections from the first Symposium.

**Q. What prompted you and others to put together the Global Automotive Aftermarket Symposium?**

A. Organizations like Frost and Sullivan and others were requesting people from the aftermarket to speak at their conferences. They were all for-profit enterprises without any evidence of putting anything back into the industry. As a result, I thought we should do our own conference where the proceeds from the event would be put back into the industry. When I shared my idea with Al Gaspar and Jack Creamer they

got behind it immediately. So the first conference was put together with APAA, AWDA, and MEMA. ASIA joined the event during the second year, and we have added all the major associations since.

As you know, we decided that the net proceeds of the Symposium would be used to fund industry scholarships. This is a practice that continues to this day.

**Q. What was the agenda like for the first event?**

A. We intentionally used the term "global" when we put together the name of the event. The trend toward globalization

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## 145 Students Receive GAAS Scholarships In 2004

The Global Automotive Aftermarket Symposium (GAAS) continues its work to ensure a strong future talent pool for automotive aftermarket companies and service outlets through its highly successful scholarship program. A total of 145 students will receive \$1,000 GAAS scholarships in 2004, with the majority of recipients entering automotive vocational-technical programs,



which will help address the critical shortage of automotive technicians.

In the eight years of the scholarship, 901 students have received aid totaling nearly \$920,000. Of the 145 scholarships given this year, 17 were awarded to Canadian students.

“The sheer number of scholarships the

program has awarded is impressive, but what is even more impressive is the fact that 75 percent of past recipients now have careers in the automotive aftermarket, said Peter Kornafel, chairman of the GAAS Scholarship Selection Committee. “These numbers demonstrate the importance of the program and are evidence why the industry is strongly encouraged to contribute even greater resources toward the program.” ♦

### Mort Schwartz Interview - *continued from p. 1*

was talked about back in 1996 but was not as hot a topic as it is today. So we feel like we were ahead of the curve. I think the concept of globalization evolved a lot faster than people visualized.



Schwartz

**Q. The first brochure described the Symposium as “an in-depth forecast through 2001.” Why did you focus so much on the future?**

A. We wanted attendees to walk away with information that would prepare them for the next five to 10 years. The idea was that attendees would have a working knowledge of the trends that would soon impact their business. We felt like we were trying to arm people with information they could incorporate into their own company’s business plan.

**Q. What were some of the predictions made at the first conference?**

A. Our keynote speaker was Dr. John Stoessinger of Trinity University who addressed the topic: “The United States and the Coming Struggle for Global Economic Dominance.” I vividly recall him talking about the trend of Islamic radicalism. Although that was not the major focus of his speech, he addressed that issue as one of the danger points of doing business globally. He also talked about the emerging of China and India in the world economy. So Stoessinger foresaw

back in 1996 that China was evolving as a potential major competitor in manufacturing.

Larry McCurdy (then of Echlin, Inc.) talked about becoming the low cost producer of parts and Dick Snell (then of Tenneco) presented his thoughts on global manufacturing. Snell foresaw the interaction of global manufacturers and the critical importance of being a global player and providing parts wherever cars are assembled.

We had an interesting presentation by David O’Reilly of O’Reilly Automotive and how his company was meeting the challenge of a dual market strategy of serving wholesale and retail customers. You have to say that O’Reilly as a company continues to get this right, as they find that delicate balance between the needs of the DIY and DIFM markets.

**Q. What other presentations do you recall?**

A. I remember Temple Sloan making a strong defense for three-step distribution. At that time a lot of people were predicting the demise of that distribution channel. He pointed out that the continued growth in the number of vehicle models and part numbers would give three-step distributors plenty of opportunity to grow. He saw the automotive aftermarket as a big industry with plenty of room for diverse ideas and approaches. Certainly you can see that he got it right: three-step distribution contin-

ues to thrive and there are niche players who have succeeded in our industry.

When you look back on the first 10 years of the Symposium you can really say: “some things change and some don’t.”

**Q. The Symposium’s 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary will be celebrated in 2005. What special things do you have planned?**

A. Our Symposium has always been about raising money to fund industry scholarships. In 2005 we will reach a significant milestone when we surpass \$1 million dollars in scholarship funds awarded. That represents over 1,000 students who will have been impacted by our scholarship program during this past decade. This is something that we are extremely proud of; we are the only group who provides this level of support.

The 2005 Symposium has taken on the theme “Lessons from the Past, Perspectives on the Future.” We will be bringing back some of the people who presented at the first Symposium and will take a look at what they said back in 1996. Like we have always done at past Symposiums, we will be looking ahead to the trends that will impact our industry in the next five to 10 years. The agenda we have already put together is going to be very strong and will appeal to a wide cross-section of our industry. We have some more surprises that we will announce as the event draws closer. ♦

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