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AUTO PLASTICS EXPERT, NORM KAKARALA NAMED 2014 SPE[®] AUTOMOTIVE DIV. LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD WINNER

TROY, (DETROIT) MICH. — Dr. Norm Kakarala, who has had a notable 46-year career in automotive plastics at companies like General Motors Corp., Delphi Corp., Inteva Products LLC, and Uniroyal Tire Co., has been named the 2014 *Lifetime Achievement Award* winner by the Automotive Division of the *Society of Plastics Engineers (SPE[®])*. He will be honored for his role leading automotive plastics and composites innovations at the 44th-annual *Automotive Innovation Awards Gala* on **November 12, 2014** at Burton Manor (www.burtonmanor.net) in Livonia, Mich. First given in the year 2000, the award recognizes the technical achievements of individuals whose work – in research, design, and/or engineering, etc. – has led to significant integration of polymeric materials on passenger vehicles. Past winners include:

- J.T. Battenberg III, former chairman and chief-executive officer of Delphi Corp.;
- Bernard Robertson, then executive vice-president of DaimlerChrysler;
- Robert Schaad, chairman of Husky Injection Molding Systems, Ltd.;
- Tom Moore, retired vice-president, Liberty and Technical Affairs at then DaimlerChrysler;
- Mr. Shigeki Suzuki, general manager - Materials Division, Toyota Motor Co.;
- Barbara Sanders, retired director-Advanced Development & Engineering Processes, Delphi Corp.;
- Josh Madden, retired executive at General Motors Corp. (GM) & Volkswagen of America;
- Frank Macher, former CEO of Collins & Aikman Corp., Federal Mogul Corp., and ITT Automotive;
- Irv Poston, retired head of the Plastics (Composites) Development-Technical Center, GM.;
- Allan Murray, Ph.D., retired technology director at Ford Motor Co.;
- David (Dave) B. Reed P.E., retired staff engineer, Product Engineering, GM;
- Gary Lownsdale, P.E., chief technology officer, Plasan Carbon Composites; and
- Roy Sjöberg, P.E., retired, General Motors Corp. & Chrysler Corp.

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Norm Kakarala Named 2014 SPE Auto Div. Lifetime Achievement Award Winner
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Dr. Norm Kakarala was selected as this year's Lifetime Achievement Award winner for his extensive work during a career spanning almost five decades as a technical specialist in the area of polymers, composites, and thermoplastic polyolefin (TPO) formulations, including adhesives, coatings, and rubber. He is well known for his work in understanding structure-property relations, and the influence of forming processes like injection molding, sheet extrusion, and thermoforming on materials. He has a strong background as a technical liaison between product development and production implementation of automotive plastics. He also has designed accelerated laboratory tests to predict product-service performance of automotive plastic components, many of which have subsequently been adopted as industry standards.

Kakarala retired last year as senior technical fellow at Inteva Products LLC (Troy, Mich.) where he received awards for TPO formulations for interior skin applications for new General Motors Co. programs, developed a soft, wrappable TPO skin/foam bilaminate for cut & sew interior-trim applications, and also validated clearcoat systems for extruded-to-color TPO sheet for thermoforming applications. Kakarala joined the company in 2008 when Delphi Automotive Systems (Troy, Mich.) spun off its interiors business as Inteva.

Before that, Kakarala was a senior technical fellow from 1996 to 2008 at Delphi where he validated closed-loop recycling systems for interior TPO skins using sheet extrusion and thermoforming, developed in-house TPO formulations for sheet extrusion and thermoforming, and managed the company's interior materials and parts testing laboratory for quality and durability evaluations.

From 1981 to 1996, Kakarala was a staff development engineer at General Motors Corp. (GM) at the company's technical center in Warren, Mich. While there, he worked with vehicle groups in the selection of materials for new programs on notable cars like the *Chevrolet Camaro*, and on plastic/composite-bodied vehicles like the *Chevrolet Corvette* and *Pontiac Fiero* sports cars, and the *Chevrolet Lumina*, *Oldsmobile Silhouette*, and *Pontiac Trans Sport* minivans. He also developed industry standards on adhesives and composites through his work as GM's representative on the Automotive Composites Consortium of the United States Council for Automotive Research LLC (USCAR), the precompetitive research consortium for General Motors, Ford Motor Co., and Chrysler Corp. (now Fiat Chrysler Automobiles). Kakarala also managed a materials development and testing group at GM to support both vehicle and component development teams. When GM spun off its part production operations as Delphi in 1996, Kakarala went with the business.

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Norm Kakarala Named 2014 SPE Auto Div. Lifetime Achievement Award Winner
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Before his work at GM, Kakarala was a staff research engineer at Uniroyal Tire Co. (Detroit, Mich.) from 1967-1981. During his years there, Kakarala formulated rubber compounds to meet exacting service requirements for steel-belted radial tires. He also was a project leader on the company's Canadian government contract for aircraft tires with all-synthetic materials. Kakarala also managed a materials testing laboratory at Uniroyal where he developed test procedures and standards for shear tear and fatigue properties of rubber-tire compounds.

Among Kakarala's significant career accomplishments, he received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the SPE Detroit Section (2011), he was inducted as a fellow in the Society of Plastics Engineers International (2004), he received SPE's Honored Service Member award (2003), he received the Engineering Society of Detroit's Gold Award for outstanding professional achievement (2002), and he received the 1999 Recycler of the Year award from the SPE Recycling Division (now SPE Environmental Division) for closed-loop recycling of TPO skins.

Additionally, Kakarala has organized numerous technical sessions and presented over 30 technical papers at conferences from SPE, the American Society for Testing & Materials (ASTM), and SAE International® (previously called Society of Automotive Engineers). He also helped found the SPE Automotive Engineered Polyolefins Conference and has served as the event's technical program chair or co-chair for its entire 16 years. Further, he has been a seminar leader for high-speed testing of plastics, and has published two lead chapters in the ASTM handbook on impact testing. He also holds eight U.S. patents for different TPO material formulations for vehicle interior skins and molded parts, and three TPO instrument-panel applications that he has worked on over the years have been winners in the Vehicle Interiors category of the SPE Automotive Innovation Awards Competition.

Kakarala served president of the SPE Detroit Section (1998-1999) and chair of the SPE Automotive Division (2004-2005), and he has developed ASTM and SAE standards for testing plastics and polymer composites during his years working for General Motors. Even in retirement, he continues to be active in organizing technical sessions for the SPE Automotive Engineering Plastics Conference (AutoEPCON), an event he founded, and the SPE Automotive Engineered Polyolefins Conference.

He holds a doctorate degree from University of Detroit, an M.S. degree from Wayne State University, and a B.S. degree from Andhra University — all in Chemical Engineering.

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On **November 12**, Kakarala will be honored for his significant contributions to automotive composites and plastics at this year's ***SPE Automotive Innovation Awards Gala*** starting with the VIP Cocktail Reception at 4:30 p.m that is sponsored by Celanese Corp. At 5:00 p.m. the main exhibit area will open for general admission and guests can review this year's ***Automotive Innovation Awards*** part nominations, as well as enjoy the specialty and antique vehicles that are always a highlight of the show. Dinner will begin at 6:30 p.m. and the awards program itself will last from 7:00-9:00 p.m. For those who wish to extend merrymaking and networking activities, the ever-popular *Afterglow* – also sponsored by Celanese – will run from 9:00-11:00 p.m.

SPE's Automotive Innovation Awards Program is the oldest and largest competition of its kind in the world. Dozens of teams made up of OEMs, tier suppliers, and polymer producers submit nominations describing their part, system, or complete vehicle and why it merits the claim as the *Year's Most Innovative Use of Plastics*. This annual event typically draws over 700 OEM engineers, automotive and plastics industry executives, and media. As is customary, funds raised from this event are used to support SPE educational efforts and technical seminars, which help educate and secure the role of plastics in the advancement of the automobile.

The mission of SPE is to promote scientific and engineering knowledge relating to plastics worldwide and to educate industry, academia, and the public about these advances. SPE's Automotive Division is active in educating, promoting, recognizing, and communicating technical accomplishments for all phases of plastics and plastic based-composite developments in the global transportation industry. Topic areas include applications, materials, processing, equipment, tooling, design, and development.

For more information about the ***SPE Automotive Innovation Awards Competition and Gala*** or to download nomination forms and rules for this year's competition, please see <http://speautomotive.com/inno> and <http://speautomotive.com/awa>, or call +1.248.244.8993 extension 4, or write SPE Automotive Division, 1800 Crooks Road, Suite A, Troy, MI 48084, USA.

For more information on the ***Society of Plastics Engineers*** or other society events, visit the ***SPE*** website at www.4spe.org, or call +1.203.775.0471.

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Attn. Editors: Medium-resolution photography of Dr. Kakarala is available upon request. For additional images, a large collection of SPE Automotive Division digital photography is available for download at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/speautomotive/collections>.