

Timmons' Remarks at the Women in Manufacturing STEP Awards Program (Washington, D.C.)

March 26, 2015

Thank you, Neddy [Perez], for that kind introduction and for assuming the important role of leading STEP. You are a rock star – there are few people as passionate as you on workforce issues.

It's a pleasure to welcome all of you to the Women in Manufacturing STEP Awards. And it's great to join you, once again, for this important celebration.

This award dinner is one of the highlights for me every year because of the positive energy, unbridled enthusiasm and good old-fashioned common sense that you bring with you. Don't you think Washington needs a little more of that?

Every March, as a country, we honor the extraordinary contributions and innumerable sacrifices that American women have made throughout our history – ...and that they continue to make today – to move our nation ever closer to perfecting those ideals that have made our nation great: free enterprise, competitiveness, individual liberty and equal opportunity.

Pioneering women here tonight, like my mother Mickie. She had to hide her pregnancy with me to keep her job. Yet eventually she rose through the ranks through the strength of her character, her determined spirit and the merit of her work to become the president and CEO, and publisher of the *Chillicothe* [Ohio] *Gazette*, my hometown newspaper.

Her story is like so many other trailblazers then and today. She didn't even know she was a role model in the eyes of young women starting their careers.

From the thousands of women who worked on assembly lines during World War II ...to the countless women of character and commitment who serve today on our shop floors, ...in research and development labs ...and in the C-suite ...to the 130 honorees and emerging leaders we recognize tonight – ...these remarkable individuals inspire us, every single day, to lead. And they challenge us to strive – always – to forge the better future that everyone in this country deserves.

And a vital part of that future – that will create opportunity and prosperity for all – is manufacturing. Because manufacturing keeps America exceptional and continue to change our lives for the better.

We are creating more jobs, making more products, and making them better than ever before. Every year, manufacturing contributes more than \$2 trillion to the American economy – one of every eight dollars in our economy.

And manufacturing has the biggest multiplier effect of any industry. Every manufacturing dollar in America adds one dollar and thirty-seven cents to the economy – nothing else comes close. And a single manufacturing job can lead to the creation of three to five more jobs in other industries.

Manufacturing improves people's lives not just through the products we make, but through the economy we strengthen. You simply can't have a strong service sector, financial sector or education system without thriving manufacturing.

And we can't have thriving manufacturing without the most capable, talented and inventive workforce in the world – a workforce that represents the full ingenuity and creativity of our people and our nation.

But, according to a recent report by Deloitte and our Manufacturing Institute, over the next decade, nearly 3.5 million manufacturing jobs will need to be filled. The skills gap is expected to result in 2 million unfilled positions. A major driver of that gap is the perception, particularly among our young

people and parents, that manufacturing's best days are behind it. People think of burned-out smokestacks and boarded-up factories. They think of the old ways of doing things.

I'll never forget speaking last year to a thousand students at the University of Kansas – and when I ask if they intended to pursue a career in manufacturing, not one student raised his or her hand.

We need to show what everyone in this room knows, that manufacturing is about incredible new technologies – 3-D printing, nanoscale chemistry, energy efficiency, satellite technology, medicines that are saving lives and changing the world. That manufacturing is as much about tomorrow as yesterday – with endless opportunities for everyone, including my two daughters C.J. and Ellie.

That's why we gather to lift up the examples of extraordinary women who represent the best of our industry and promise of its future. That's why the National Association of Manufacturers and the Manufacturing Institute are more closely aligned than ever and are strengthening our collaboration and partnership every day under the leadership of Jennifer McNealy and her incredibly talented staff, Institute Board of Trustee Chairman Blake Moret and Vice-Chair Kellie Johnson – to advance the truth about manufacturing, to engage and train the next generation workforce and to create excitement around the dreamers, makers and builders of America – around you.

At the NAM, we remain as committed today as ever before to carrying on the progress the honorees have achieved– recognizing that your work is our work. And it is far from over.

After all, to bring about the best environment for manufacturing in the United States, to realize our industry's potential, to secure American exceptionalism for generations to come requires our collective efforts and unwavering dedication to empowering America's women and girls not just to expand opportunities; not just to determine their own destinies; and not just to succeed – but to thrive. To lead. And to shape the brighter future in manufacturing and in the nation we seek – and, that together, we must build.

This is the challenge – and the opportunity – now before us. Thank you for embracing that cause and for your commitment to the future of manufacturing in the United States. I look forward to all that we must, and surely will, accomplish in the years to come.

Thank you – and congratulations again to tonight's honorees.