

## PRESS RELEASE

*For Immediate Release*

### STEP Ahead Awards Recognize Women for Excellence in Manufacturing

*The Manufacturing Institute Will Honor 130 Women with STEP Ahead Awards*

**WASHINGTON, April 21, 2016:** Today, The Manufacturing Institute will honor 130 women at the [Women in Manufacturing STEP Ahead Awards](#) at the Ronald Reagan Building in Washington, D.C.

The awards dinner gala will be keynoted by GoldieBlox Founder and CEO Debbie Sterling. Attendees will also hear inspiring stories from Sheila Tierney, vice president, Global Procurement, Ingersoll Rand, STEP chairwoman; Heidi Alderman, senior vice president, Petrochemicals, BASF Corporation, STEP vice chairwoman; Jennifer McNelly, executive director, The Manufacturing Institute; Jay Timmons, president and CEO, National Association of Manufacturers; Emerging Leader Nichole Williams, lean six sigma black belt, Cooper Tire & Rubber Company; and Honoree Valerie Young, vice president, International Supply Chain, 3M Company.

Before the awards, the honorees and emerging leaders visited Capitol Hill to meet with Congressman Tom Reed (R-NY), Congressman Tim Ryan (D-OH), Congresswoman Suzan DelBene (D-WA), Senator Ron Johnson (R-WI), Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA), and Congressman Tom Emmer (R-MN). The 130 women also participated in personal and leadership development sessions throughout the day and will continue through Friday, April 22.

The Women in Manufacturing STEP (Science, Technology, Engineering and Production) Ahead Awards honor women who have demonstrated excellence and leadership in their careers and represent all levels of the manufacturing industry, from the factory-floor to the C suite. The STEP Ahead Awards program will highlight each Honoree's story, including their leadership and accomplishments in manufacturing. The chosen women are asked to make a [pledge](#) to help advance women in manufacturing and promote the importance of a diverse workforce. Through this pledge, women commit to advocating for the manufacturing industry, mentoring young women, engaging employees resource groups to generate ideas and share best practices, promoting personal development, and leading as an ambassador for manufacturing education.

“We are trying to get to action with STEP Ahead. Every class of honorees and emerging leaders is building the army, an army that will promote diverse workforces and recruit the next generation of manufacturing leaders to secure the future of this industry. These women are the best of the best and exactly what America needs to make a difference in manufacturing,” said Jennifer McNelly, executive director, The Manufacturing Institute.

A recent survey from Deloitte and The Manufacturing Institute found that 84 percent of executives agree there is a talent shortage in U.S. manufacturing. Contributing to this gap is the underrepresentation of women in the industry. While women make up nearly half (47 percent) of the labor force, that number is only about over one-fourth (27 percent) in the manufacturing labor force. STEP Ahead works to close this gap through the attraction of women into the industry, as they are an untapped and vital resource.

A full list of Honorees and Emerging Leaders can be found here:

<http://www.themanufacturinginstitute.org/Initiatives/Women-in-Manufacturing/2016-Honorees/2016-Honorees.aspx>

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***About The Manufacturing Institute***

*The Manufacturing Institute (the Institute) is the 501(c)(3) affiliate of the National Association of Manufacturers. As a non-partisan organization, the Institute is committed to delivering leading-edge information and services to the nation's manufacturers. The Institute is the authority on the attraction, qualification and development of world-class manufacturing talent. For more information, please visit [www.themanufacturinginstitute.org](http://www.themanufacturinginstitute.org).*