

2021 Deming Cup for Operational Excellence



2021 DEMING CUP HONOREES



Mary Barra
Chair & CEO
General Motors

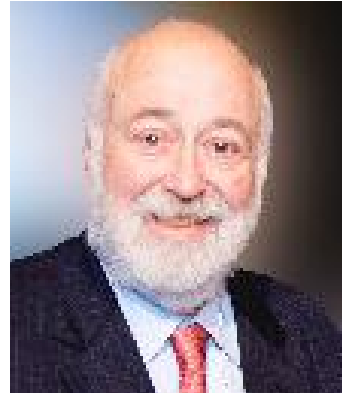


Ken Frazier
Executive Chairman
Merck

Dear Friends,

The W. Edwards Deming Center for Quality, Productivity, and Competitiveness at Columbia Business School presented the 2021 Deming Cup to Mary Barra, chair and CEO of General Motors and Ken Frazier, executive chairman of Merck. Both GM and Merck were recognized for their operational excellence.

Thanks are due to our Center's Advisory Board and Judging Committee for their counsel and involvement. We are grateful to our sponsors—Maurice Amado Foundation, Central National Gottesman, Ali Doğramaci, Courtney Dornell, G100 Companies, General Motors, IBM, Richard Jaffe, McKinsey & Company, Merck, Mondelez International, Northwell Health, Bennett Nussbaum, The Schurtz-Ford Foundation, Shop LC, Craig Thompson & Tullia Lindsten, TireHub, Valid, and Zoetis. Your enduring generosity and loyal friendship sustain our work.



Professor Nelson Fraiman '71

We owe special recognition to our speakers and presenters for sharing their perspectives and testimonials to make this year's virtual ceremony outstanding. And we would like to express our heartfelt thanks to previous Deming Cup winners who sent in their personal congratulations to our 2021 awardees.

By honoring exemplary leaders, Columbia Business School seeks to inspire alumni, faculty, staff, students, and practitioners to adopt the core guiding principles of continuous improvement and operational excellence.

Enjoy the highlights of the evening's virtual celebration!

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nelson Fraiman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nelson Fraiman '71
Faculty Director
The W. Edward Deming Center for
Quality, Productivity, and Competitiveness
Professor of Professional Practice
Columbia Business School

The 2021 Deming Cup Virtual Ceremony

began with a powerful Historical Retrospective of the Deming Cup. This moving tribute traced the chronological arc of the award through the perspective of each and every honoree over the years as they highlighted the core Deming Principles that inspired their leadership. This soaring summary distilled the essence of Deming's invaluable contribution to the practice of leadership and operational excellence in the voice of the Deming Cup winners as they had accepted the award in the year they won. The retrospective affirmed the relevance and robustness of Deming's teachings and welcomed the 2021 honorees into this prestigious group—The Class of Deming Cup Awardees, as it were.

David Niles '98, chair of the Deming Center Advisory Board and president of G100 Companies then welcomed the gathering and congratulated the 2021 awardees, Mary Barra of General Motors and Ken Frazier of Merck for not only successfully balancing the leadership of complex businesses, but also taking on longer-term challenges in the environment, public health, and social policy. He saluted them for playing a leading role over the past 18 months of the COVID crisis and social change at a time when the voices and actions of business leaders were more important than ever. "Navigating disruption, steering transformation, and holding on to a wholistic long-term vision for all their stakeholders and society...Mary and Ken's impact is far and wide. They are both true groundbreakers," he concluded.

Before moving on to the ceremony, Niles shared a cogent and eloquent overview of the mission and programs of the Deming Center—which, since its creation in 1993, has worked to bridge theory and practice in operations by supporting research, fostering innovation and best practice sharing among affiliate companies that are part of the center's network, and supporting students by teaching Deming principles to the MBA and EMBA community.



David Niles '98

Mary Barra Award Presentation

The ceremony progressed to the presentation of the 2021 Deming Cup to Mary Barra, chair and CEO of General Motors. She was introduced to the gathering by warm testimonials shared by members of the Deming Center family who praised her courageous, humanistic, and visionary leadership: Beth Ford '95, president & CEO of Land O'Lakes, Terry Lundgren, 2012 winner of the Deming Cup while he was chairman and CEO of Macy's, Inc., as well as co-chair of the Deming Cup judging committee, Kristin Peck '99, CEO of Zoetis, Quentin Roach, SVP, Global Supply Chain & chief procurement officer of Mondelez, and Pat Russo, lead director of the General Motors board. They commended her for being the only female CEO of a major American automotive company, keeping GM on track for a great future with her "relentless focus on innovation, technology, and talent," and for having the "persistence and resilience to drive the transformation required to achieve that vision." They recognized her for being a "wonderful and good human being" who did not flinch from making tough, "audacious" decisions aimed at securing a net zero carbon future for GM.

Barra graciously accepted the honor of the 2021 Deming Cup on behalf of the entire GM family, acknowledging how much the company has evolved over the years in its vehicles and culture. She highlighted the genesis of "ventilator speed," a new benchmark for excellence, agility, and excellence, that came to being when GM created 300,000 ventilators in a record 154 days during the COVID-19 pandemic. She noted how it "is now ingrained in our company and represents removing barriers in order to work efficiently and move quickly toward our goals," embodying the spirit of employee-empowerment and operational excellence as espoused by Deming.

Ken Frazier Award Presentation

In keeping with the collective welcome theme, Frazier's inspiring, people-centered, and social-justice oriented leadership was highlighted in the sincere introduction by his peers and well-wishers in the Deming Center family: David Abney, former chairman and CEO of UPS and winner of the 2019 Deming Cup, Ken Chenault, winner of the 2015 Deming Cup while he was chairman and CEO of American Express, Beth Ford '95, president & CEO of Land O'Lakes, Quentin Roach, SVP, Global Supply Chain & chief procurement officer of Mondelez, and Craig Thompson, president & CEO of Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center and winner of the 2020 Deming Cup.

They spoke about his "courageous and transformative" leadership, admirable "career and humanity," "principled leadership stressing ethics, excellence, and empowerment," all of which allowed him to motivate and inspire people to work with purpose and vision. Calling him probably the best example of a "good guy who can finish on top," embodying the "best of North Philly—grit, resilience, courage, and incredible will to win," they lauded him for his admirable career and humanity, making him a befitting recipient of the 2021 Deming Cup.

Frazier cordially embraced the honor of the award on behalf of the over 70,000 Merck employees, noting that it recognized their "collective effort...their dedication, innovation, and flexibility" that reaffirmed Merck's commitment to "scientific and operational excellence." He shared the vision of their founder, George W. Merck, who believed that "medicine is for the people, not the profits," noting how this mandate drove everyone at Merck to "balance competence and caring" to create the most impactful products that would save lives and make living better for millions of people.

Congratulations!

The ceremonial portion of the evening ended on a high note with heartfelt messages of congratulations and welcome showered on the awardees by previous Deming Cup winners and members of the Deming Center’s Advisory Board and Judging Committee. Their spirited embrace of Barra and Frazier as members of the “Deming Center and Columbia Business School family” left no doubt that they were, indeed, a part of the School’s community from hereon.

Winners Panel Discussion

Dean Costis Maglaras continued the evening’s proceedings upon the completion of the award ceremony. In his brief remarks, he warmly congratulated the awardees on behalf of the entire academic community of Columbia Business School, and then introduced Provost Mary Boyce, who would be moderating the Winners Panel Discussion with Barra and Frazier. Calling her an “incredible scientist” with a distinguished and long scholarly career in computer science, who joined Columbia University in 2013 as dean of the Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science, where her mandate of “engineering for humanity” transformed the culture and impact of the school. Elected to the post of provost in 2021, from a “dear friend and strategic partner,” Boyce also became “one of my two bosses,” concluded Maglaras, as he turned over the proceedings to her.



Dean Costis Maglaras



Provost Mary Boyce

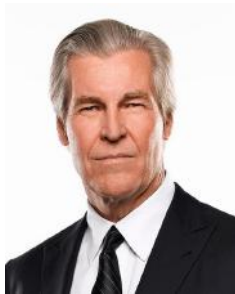
Provost Boyce helmed an insightful and candid Winners Panel Discussion that dug deep into the leadership journeys of both Barra and Frazier, flowing through complementary themes around personal purpose, organizational transformation, social justice, workforce development, and diversity, equity, and inclusion. Built on the personal perspective and leadership experiences of Barra and Frazier, the conversation was scaffolded by W. Edwards Deming’s Principles that provided a tangible and common framework connecting their leadership with the operational excellence for which they were being honored.

The discussion addressed their own experiences of “rising through the ranks” of their companies learning valuable lessons of leadership along the journey, tying it to their distinctive, humanistic, and inspiring leadership of today. Boyce expertly steered the discussion through the personal and the organizational, allowing both Barra and Frazier to share their thoughts on how companies can leverage operational excellence and process improvement tools to solve some of today’s most pressing challenges ranging from climate change to healthcare access and workforce development—while ensuring the sustained success and profitability of their companies.

The discussion then opened into a brief but highly interactive audience Q&A, allowing members of the gathering to connect with Barra and Frazier on questions that were important to them.

Closing

The evening was aptly, and warmly, brought to a close by Deming Cup judging committee co-chairs Terry Lundgren, chairman of TL Advisors and retired chairman and CEO of Macy’s, Inc. and Sam Palmisano, chairman of the Center for Global Enterprise and former chairman, president, and CEO of IBM. They both expressed their sincere appreciation to the awardees for their willingness to generously engage with the school’s community, and the Deming Center team for working tirelessly behind the scenes to make this evening a meaningful one for the entire gathering.



Terry Lundgren



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