



December 18,2012

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17 December 2012

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Mr. John C. Liu  
Office of the Comptroller  
City of New York  
One Centre Street  
New York, NY 10007  
212-669-3916

Subject: Common Decency: Accommodating the Handicapped/Disabled  
Reference: Press Release: Comptroller Rejects Contract That Violates Civil Rights

Dear Mr. Liu:

I was utterly flabbergasted to learn that the mayor of my hometown has overtly rejected the minimal courtesy of accommodating the unfortunate, the handicapped. Although the issue of the mayor being potentially guilty of a crime (violation of the federal Americans with Disabilities Act ), in my view, such is secondary. First and foremost, the mayor's contract edict is a safety issue, and therefore a liability issue.

#### Background

In 1991 my supervisor at Chrysler, Mr. Richard A. Winter, wrote the following words on my employee performance evaluation:

*“(Paul Sheridan is) Very good at monitoring safety and regulatory needs”*

In 1992 I was appointed, by staff to Mr. Lee Iacocca, to chair the Safety Leadership Team (SLT). After a two-year existence of the SLT, a lawyer in the Chrysler Regulatory Affairs Office, Mr. Ronald Zarowitz, wrote:

*“Paul Sheridan does a thorough, detailed, organized and tireless job. He became an active promoter of advancing safety in the minivan program, only slowing when the reality of the interest from management became apparent to him.”*

In 2005 I won the coveted Civil Justice Foundation (CJF) National Consumer Champion Award for my work in transportation safety. I am the only person in-history so honored for automotive safety. At the CJF award gala in Toronto, Canada (to an audience of 1200+ lawyers, judges, and media people) I stated:

*“Safety is not an engineering issue per se. Safety, first and foremost, is a management issue.”*

The City of New York organization chart indicates that you and the mayor are in management positions.

Chrysler Minivan Accommodation of the Handicapped: “The right thing to do”

During 1991 through 1994 I was a Product Planning Manager in the Chrysler Minivan Operations Group. During that time I called, attended, and documented several meetings with outside suppliers to educate our group with respect to the technical details that would accommodate the suppliers that offer aftermarket vehicle retrofit services/products which address the access and safety needs of the handicapped/disabled. I personally invited (i.e. prevailed upon) then-head of the Minivan Operations Group, a gentleman and friend named Mr. Thomas Gale, who attended my meetings.

Despite the fact that design revisions and incremental cost was involved in the retrofit accommodation, despite the fact that this incremental cost would potentially lower our price competitiveness, Mr. Gale decided, proverbially/representatively speaking, that such was “*the right thing to do.*” This retrofit accommodation was contained in the 1996 through 2000 NS-Body minivan, the 2001 through 2007 RS-Body minivan, and to the best of my knowledge the 2008 through current RT-Body Chrysler minivan vehicles. As you know, these vehicles are also sold very successfully overseas, including your home country of Taiwan.

The “Taxi of Tomorrow” is Retrograde

I am confident that if you confronted individual product managers at Nissan regarding the cost advantages of not accommodating handicapped/disabled access and/or outside supplier retrofit, many would openly admit to such (and would simultaneously ask for anonymity). I am also confident that if you posed the issue at the personal level, these same Nissan personnel would vie to overturn the mayor’s contract, at least to the extent that your recent rejection so specifies.

The notion of a taxi that not-so-tacitly accommodates a competitive bid cost, but fails to address the common decency that Mr. Gale and I initiated in 1991, is a notion steeped in the opposite of retrofit: Retrograde. The mayor is going backwards; any monies he believes he is saving the taxpayer will be forfeited in one jury verdict, presumably a jury that has at least one member that owns a vehicle that their tax dollars funded through the [Automotive Industry Financing Program](#) (AIFP) of 2009, et al.

Conclusion

You are correct in [your rejection](#) of the one-billion-dollar “Taxi of Tomorrow” contract. The most important rejection criteria should not be based on a misguided ruling of an appeals court judge. But one important “official” issue will be the effect my testimony will have on a New York jury after a disabled person is robbed or injured while waiting in an extended cue (on a New York City street) due to minimal/zero availability of accommodating transport, and the jury’s recognition that-that issue was essentially resolved in 1991.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at any time.

Respectfully

Paul V. Sheridan

Attachments

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\* By Email or USPS.

## Winners of 2005 Civil Justice Foundation National Champion Award



Paul Sheridan  
Former Chairman of the  
*DaimlerChrysler Safety  
Leadership Team*



*"Safety is a management issue ... not an engineering issue."*

Paul V. Sheridan

Civil Justice Foundation Breakfast - The Civil Justice Foundation awards modest grants to grassroots consumer advocacy groups. Since its inception in 1986, the Foundation has awarded over \$1 million to over 100 organizations. Father Thomas Patrick Doyle was honored with the Community Champion Award for his work as the premier advocate for those sexually abused by Catholic clergy. He thanked AAJ members for making "justice a reality" and offering victims *"credibility, solace, understanding, belief...[and] hope that justice is real; in fact, it's sacred."* Paul Sheridan, a former safety staffer turned whistleblower of Chrysler, was honored with the Consumer Advocate Champion Award. Paul's main message was that *"safety is a management issue...not an engineering issue."* Lastly, former Senator John Edwards received an award as a champion of civil justice, as a fighter on issues that make a difference to American families. Edwards said he was *"proud to be a trial lawyer"* because we all *"fight with strength and passion for what we believe in."* He called on AAJ members to continue the fight for the jury system and to be compassionate toward those who are struggling.



  
Sheraton Centre







# Times

A weekly newspaper for Chrysler employees and their families

Lutz named Chrysler Corporation President

## Chrysler reorganizes to promote teamwork

**C**hrysler made a series of organization changes Jan. 14, most of which are designed to strengthen the company's commitment to the platform team concept.

• Robert Lutz has been named President of Chrysler Corporation. His former title, President of Chrysler Motors, as well as the title of Chairman of Chrysler Motors, have been discontinued. Lutz is responsible for all North American automotive activities including sales, marketing, product development, procurement and supply, and manufacturing. He is also responsible for Acustar, Chrysler's parts subsidiary, and Chrysler operations in Mexico.

In addition, four general man-

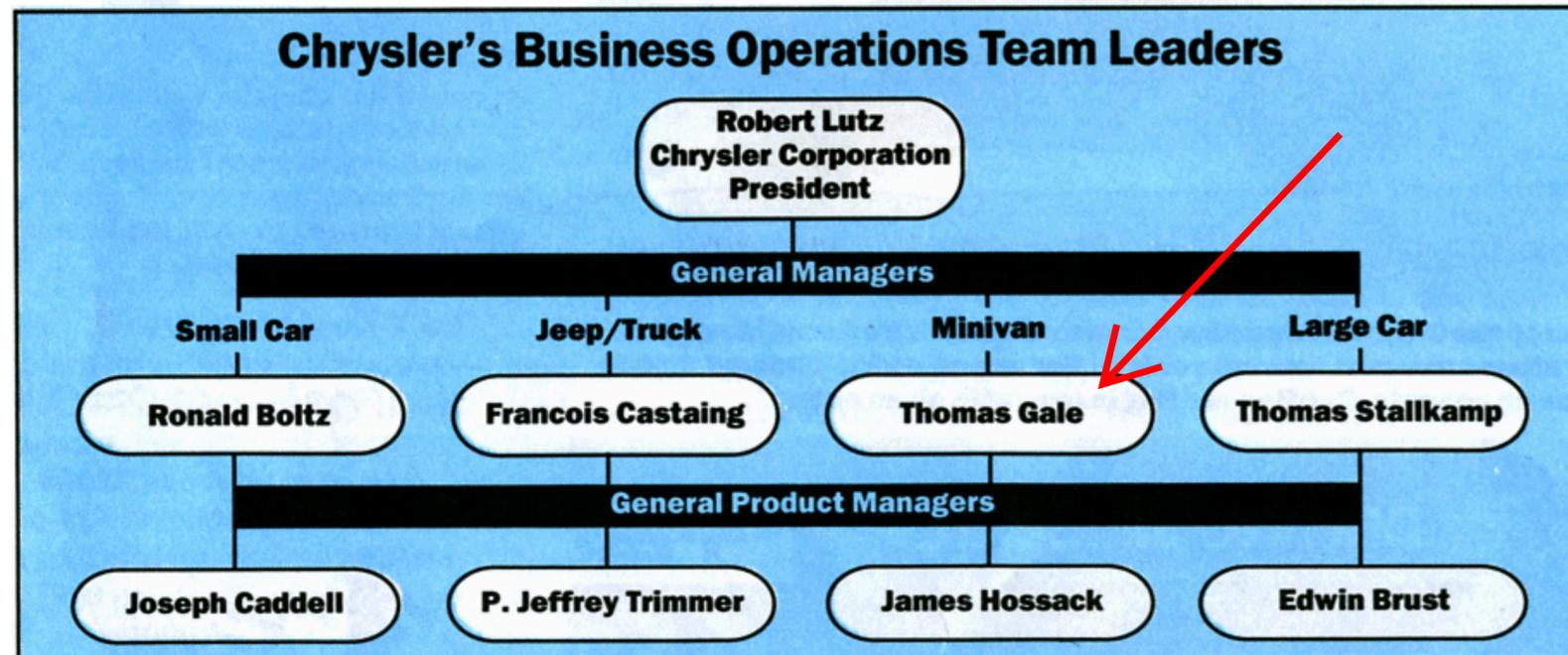
agers were appointed to coordinate all product development and market and consumer inputs for both current and future product lines. The four appoint-

ees are all currently company vice presidents and will retain their present areas of responsibilities in addition to their new general manager duties. All four

executives report to Lutz.

• Ronald Boltz has been appointed General Manager—Small Car Operations and con-

see Platform, page 4



## Briefs

### Gulf crisis prompts security measures

Chrysler Security and Fire Prevention departments have increased precautionary security measures at U.S. manufacturing plants and major office locations in response to the Persian Gulf situation and the possibility of terrorist attacks.

Many of the preparations may not be noticeable, but increased personal identification and vehicle checks at traffic gates may result in delays while entering or leaving Chrysler facilities.

The Security Office also asked that employees notify local security personnel if they hear or notice anything out of the ordinary—for example, a package in an unusual location or unknown people or vehicles loitering around plant entrances.

### International travel curtailed

Chrysler Special Security Operations issued a travel advisory suspending all international business travel with the exception of

brand-name drug whose patent has expired. A generic drug is sold under a common or "generic" name for that drug, not the brand name. Generics often become available for sale shortly after the patent on the brand-name product expires. And generic drugs usually cost less than brand-name drugs, yet work just as well.

There are more than 200 manufacturers of generic drugs in the United States. Some companies make only generic drugs while other companies make

generic drugs.

If you have a specific question about your prescription, ask your pharmacist. In about two out of three cases, when a generic drug is available, the pharmacist will dispense a generic drug rather than a brand-name drug. This is because generic drugs cost less and save patients money, and they usually achieve the same medical results.

If you're concerned about the safety of your generic product, ask your pharmacist. Pharmacists receive bulletins from the

Remember, if you have a prescription that you are supposed to take until it is gone, do not stop taking it unless you have checked with your physician or pharmacist.

If your doctor determines it is medically necessary for you to receive a brand-name drug, he or she will write "DAW" (dispense as written) on the prescription. If your doctor does not specify DAW, and you request the brand-name drug from the pharmacist, you will be responsible for the difference in cost.

## TRANSPLANT SURVIVAL RISING

*continued from page 1*

increase in Japanese U.S. transplant production in recent years," Iacocca said.

"With their U.S. transplant factories producing 1.5 million units annually and growing, and with Japan's market share in the United States at 30 percent and growing, now would be an appropriate time for Japan to agree to a total market share restraint that would include both transplant and imported units.

"This approach would allow

continued growth in U.S. transplant operations while Japan built-up imports, which contain no U.S. added value and support no U.S. manufacturing jobs would decline," Iacocca said.

Following Japan's announcement on import restraints, 19 members of Congress released a letter they sent to Japan's Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu expressing disappointment in Japan's response to the Gulf crisis and urging "meaningful" restraints on auto exports. Ford Chairman Harold Polling also called Japan to roll back its exports.

## Platform team concept expands; general managers named

*continued from page 1*

continues as Vice President—Product Strategy and Regulatory Affairs.

• Francois Castaing has been appointed General Manager—Jeep/Truck Operations and continues as Vice President—Vehicle Engineering.

• Thomas Gale has been appointed General Manager—Minivan Operations and continues as Vice President—Product Design.

• Thomas Stallkamp has been appointed General Manager—Large Car Operations and continues as Vice President—Procurement and Supply.

Chrysler Chairman Lee Iacocca said, "The platform team concept we launched for the development of the new LH pro-

gram is succeeding beyond our most optimistic expectations.

"The cross-functional teamwork idea is working so well that we decided to apply it to all of our product lines and broaden it to include not only the product development process, but also the important market and consumer inputs necessary to bring world-class vehicles to market.

"These new general managers," Iacocca added, "will be positioned to pull it all together because that's what it's going to take to compete in the '90s—great products totally in sync with our customers."

The new Business Operations activities will be organized on a cross-functional team basis and will incorporate Chrysler's ex-

isting platform team functions, expanded to include representatives from planning, sales, marketing, service and consumer activities.

Each of the team managers will have a general product manager:

• Edwin Brust has been appointed General Product Manager—Large Car.

• Joseph Caddell has been appointed General Product Manager—Small Car.

• James Hossack has been appointed General Product Manager—Minivan.

• P. Jeffrey Trimmer has been appointed General Product Manager—Jeep/Truck.

Chrysler also announced that Thomas Denomme has been named Executive Vice Presi-

dent—Corporate Staff Group. He had been Vice President—Corporate Planning and External Affairs.

Effective with this change, Anthony St. John, Vice President—Employee Relations, and Gino Giocondi, Vice President—Quality and Productivity, will now report to Denomme. They had reported to Lutz.

Denomme's responsibilities include Strategic Planning, Communications, Civic and Government Affairs, and Washington Affairs, in addition to Employee Relations and Quality and Productivity.

Concurrently, Corporate Economist Donald Hilty is reassigned from Denomme to Chrysler Corporation Vice Chairman R. Steve Miller Jr.

## Times

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