

GM Tech Center Engineer Co-Authors Book on Launching of General Motors

By Dave Felice
Special Writer

In the revised second edition of "David Buick's Marvelous Motor Car: The Men and the Automobile that Launched General Motors," co-author Larry Gustin features a new chapter on Chevrolet, as it observed its 100th anniversary.

Chevrolet, which once owned General Motors, was created by GM founder William C. "Billy" Durant with Buick people using Buick plants and workers, with production centered in Flint.

Ousted from GM by investment bankers, Durant formed Chevrolet and used the new company to regain control. According to Gustin, Durant wrote: "I should have a company of my own . . . no bankers."

Gustin, a former writer/editor for the *Flint Journal*, recalls the story that Durant even tried to buy Ford and later admitted he could not have been as successful as Henry Ford. Gustin says there is a notion that Ford and David Buick once worked together in the same brass foundry.

Written with Kevin Kirbitz, a GM engineer at the Warren Tech Center, "Marvelous Motor Car" provides the first-ever report on David Dunbar "Dave" Buick discussing design, manufacture, and marketing of internal combustion engines, and how Buick set the pattern for Chevrolet.

Meticulously researched and illustrated with rare material, Gustin and Kirbitz rely on primary sources and interviews with Durant's widow and Buick relatives. The book documents Buick's experience as a Scottish immigrant, his inventiveness in bonding porcelain to metal for plumbing fixtures, and his early forays into building engines with Walter Marr.

In this singular Buick biography, Gustin weaves technical details into an intriguing story and provides a valuable automotive history.

In the infancy of the auto in-

dustry, people handcrafted one engine and one car at a time. Gustin catalogs early efforts and how Buick engines pioneered the powerful "valve-in-head" technology, now known ubiquitously as "overhead valve" engines.

Dave Buick had difficulty with business details. He left automobiles and went on to a failed oil exploration venture in California. Gustin also tells of a later land development scheme in Florida, known as "Buick City," in the 1920s. Buick died at age 74 in 1929, as one newspaper reported, "leaving only his name on an automobile."

Notable pioneers, including Henry Ford, Walter Chrysler, Charles Nash, and Ransom Olds show up. But there are some less prominent members of the fledgling auto industry such as Charles Annesley.

Gustin calls Annesley "a missing link." Charles George Annesley is believed to have provided the first block for an engine developed by Marr before he joined Buick. Gustin reports Annesley's contributions were overlooked be-

cause Ford, in his first book, misspelled the name as "Ainsley."

In the introduction, auto marketing guru Bob Lutz pays tribute to history, saying "to be successful in the future, it's good to know where you have been."

The book also features a new interview with former GM President Fritz Henderson on why Buick survived GM's recent bankruptcy.

Gustin says he continues to find more information about David Buick, General Motors, and the development of the auto industry. Gustin still looks for a photograph of David Buick with a Buick automobile.

Gustin authored the award-winning biography, "Billy Durant: Creator of General Motors," revised for the GM centennial in 2008.

With Terry Dunham, Gustin has written six editions of "The Buick: A Complete History." He has a Distinguished Service Citation from the Automotive Hall of Fame and is honored in the Michigan State University State News Hall of Fame.



Pictured is the Buick and Sherwood plumbing fixtures company baseball team, with Dave Buick in suit jacket, back row center.



The "skeleton Buick" is the first car, 1903, with Walter Marr driving and David Buick's son, Tom, riding as passenger.

Navy's Barrett Becomes GM's Chief of New Diversity Office

DETROIT - General Motors last week announced that Capt. Kenneth J. Barrett, U.S. Navy (Ret.), will be the automaker's first Chief Diversity Officer.

"Diversity is and has been a key component of our success, including diversity of workforce and diversity of customer base - it can only make us a better company," said GM Chairman and CEO Dan Akerson.

"That's why we've created this new position and filled it with a proven leader like Ken. His strengths and track record in diversity will help us achieve the leadership position we're committed to reaching in this crucial area of the business."

Barrett has 14 years of executive experience.

Before joining GM, he served as the Under Secretary of Defense's acting director, Office of Diversity Management and Equal Opportunity, in Washington, D.C.

Prior to that, Barrett had five years of award-winning performance as the U.S. Navy's Diversity director, where he achieved historic levels of minority and female officer additions and transformational work-life balance initiatives.

In 1984, Barrett began his career with the U.S. Navy. After commissioning through the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps, he held positions in engineering and operations.

"Ken Barrett is a strong, yet humble leader who took the Navy from being a pack player to having the most effective diversity department in the entire federal government," said Luke Visconti, CEO of DiversityInc.

"His knowledge on diversity issues is second to none and his experience puts him in the top 1 percent of all senior diversity executives."

A Worcester, Mass. native, Barrett holds a bachelor's in political science from the College of the Holy Cross.

Fed Report Says Consumer Borrowing Is on Rise

By MARTIN CRUTSINGER
AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) - U.S. consumers swiped their credit cards more often in March and took out more loans to attend school, driving overall borrowing up by the most in more than a decade.

Total consumer borrowing rose \$21.4 billion in March, the Federal Reserve said last week. That's the seventh straight monthly increase and the largest since November 2001.

A measure of auto and student loans increased by \$16.2 billion. A separate gauge of mostly credit card debt rose \$5.2 billion after declining in January and February.

The increase pushed total borrowing up to a seasonally adjusted \$2.54 trillion. That's

slightly below the all-time high of \$2.58 trillion reached in July 2008, eight months after the Great Recession began.

After hitting that peak, consumers cut back on borrowing sharply for more than two straight years. They began taking on more debt again in the fall of 2010 and have stepped up borrowing in recent months.

The steady rise in borrowing is generally considered a good sign for the economy. It suggests consumers are more confident and comfortable taking on more debt.

Analysts said stronger hiring since last fall has encouraged more Americans to borrow more.

But another reason for the increase was a big surge in student loans. Paul Edelstein, director of financial economics at

IHS Global Insight, said that could reflect an effort to take out loans in advance of a scheduled jump in rates this July.

Cooper Howes, an economist at Barclays Capital, said he expects the trend in consumer borrowing to continue in coming months as the economy improves. Still, he said the increase in student loan debt could reflect some people are having trouble finding jobs and are opting to go back to school.

"We expect that student loan growth will continue to push the level of consumer credit higher and we look for (credit card debt) to expand as banks become more willing to lend," Howes said.

The overall economy grew at an annual rate of 2.2 percent in the January-March quarter,

helped by the strongest growth in consumer spending since late 2010. Consumer spending accounts for 70 percent of economic activity.

Still, job growth has slowed sharply in the past two months, while wages have lagged inflation. That has raised concerns that consumers might pull back on spending later this year.

Employers added just 115,000 jobs in April, the government said Friday. That followed the creation of 154,000 jobs in March. From December through February, the economy added an average of 252,000 jobs per month.

The employment report also noted that the average worker's hourly pay rose by just one penny in April. Over the past year, average hourly pay has ticked up 1.8 percent to \$23.28.

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