

# **VOLVO PENTA**

Volvo Penta of the Americas

## **Press Information**

### **The Manufacturing Institute to Honor Volvo Penta's Valerie Harriell with STEP Ahead Award on April 10**

#### ***Award Honors Top Women Leaders in the Manufacturing Industry***

(CHESAPEAKE, Va.) – March 7, 2018 – The Manufacturing Institute has announced that Valerie Harriell, vice president of human resources for [Volvo Penta of the Americas](#), has been named one of the top women in U.S. manufacturing for 2018.

Harriell and the other honorees will be recognized at the 6th Annual Women in Manufacturing STEP (Science, Technology, Engineering and Production) Ahead Award at a gala dinner April 10 in Washington, D.C. The STEP Ahead Awards celebrate those women who have demonstrated excellence and leadership in their careers in all levels of the manufacturing industry, from the factory floor to the C-suite.

“Companies across the U.S. agree there is a talent shortage in manufacturing. Through the STEP Ahead Awards, we hope to take another step toward closing the gap by highlighting the stories of successful women in manufacturing and giving them a platform to encourage other women to join the industry and be role models for the next generation,” said Carolyn Lee, executive director of The Manufacturing Institute. “The 130 women being honored demonstrate what modern manufacturing careers are all about: making an impact in their communities with meaningful careers that offer significant opportunities for growth.”

With primary responsibility for recruiting, retaining and supporting employees, Harriell, who has been with Volvo Penta 10 years, has been instrumental in branding Volvo Penta to attract top talent. She has recruited and retained more than 30 percent of the company's 250 employees in the U.S., and extended her outreach efforts to find highly skilled internal employees in Sweden and Brazil who were interested in working abroad. By doing so, she enhanced Volvo Penta's diversity footprint and brought talented workers to new environments.

“Valerie has a keen eye for attracting top talent. Once they are hired, she provides them with the support and continuing education skills they need to thrive and grow in their jobs,” said Ron Huibers, president of Volvo Penta of the Americas.

In addition to helping Volvo Penta build a strong and successful team, Harriell has championed diversity in the workforce. Over the years she initiated a Volvo Penta Professional Women's Network; organized the Diversity and Inclusion Leadership Training classes for management teams; expanded the company's summer internship program to include student mentoring and community outreach; and provided engagement training to company managers as a Volvo Group Attitude Survey (VGAS) Leader. Off the job, she has mentored high school-aged girls at risk through a local program, My Sister's Keeper.

“I'm humbled to be considered among such an elite group of women,” said Harriell. “I look forward to continuing to mentor women, both those in the industry today and those who will serve as the next-generation of leaders in manufacturing.”

The STEP Ahead Awards are part of the larger STEP Ahead initiative, launched to examine and promote the role of women in the manufacturing industry through recognition, research, and leadership for attracting, advancing, and retaining strong female talent. In five years, STEP Ahead Award winners have impacted more than 300,000 individuals — from peers in the industry to school-aged children. Women constitute one of manufacturing’s largest pools of untapped talent. Women totaled about 47 percent of the U.S. labor force in 2016, but only 29 percent of the manufacturing workforce.

Harriell is the second Volvo Penta recipient of the STEP Ahead Award in recent years. Marcia Kull, then vice president of marine sales for Volvo Penta, earned the designation in 2016.

For a high-resolution image, visit:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/nkaa9gw1zwqbjvd/AAA5v2gR44f0BRzfk5qjwjwRa?dl=0>.

### **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).

### **About Volvo Penta**

Volvo Penta, with approximately 3,500 dealers in over 130 countries, is a world-leading and global manufacturer of engines and complete power systems for boats, vessels and industrial applications. The engine program comprises diesel and gasoline engines with power outputs of between 10 and 1,000 hp. Volvo Penta is part of the Volvo Group, one of the world’s leading manufacturers of heavy trucks, buses and construction equipment.

Connect with Volvo Penta of the Americas on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) for the latest company news and insights.

*For further information, please contact:*

*Christine Carlson*

*Volvo Penta of the Americas*

*Phone: +1 (757) 382 4084*

*E-mail: [christine.carlson@volvo.com](mailto:christine.carlson@volvo.com)*

*Jim Rhodes*

*Rhodes Communications, Inc.*

*Phone: +1 (757) 451 0602*

*E-mail: [jrhodes@rhodescomm.com](mailto:jrhodes@rhodescomm.com)*