



Your Resource for GM Women in Automotive Retail

# WRN LINK

## SAVE THE DATE



WOMEN'S RETAIL NETWORK

# DRIVEN 2018

## Profitability. Growth. Retention.

### 2018 WRN Business Meeting • September 18-19 Detroit Marriott at the Renaissance Center

A BUSINESS MEETING FOR: WRN Dealers and Key Managers | GM Dealership Female Managers

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# New WDAC Member Brings Fresh Perspective to Role

Kristy Elliott

Sunshine Chevrolet  
"America's 1st GM Green Dealer"  
Arden, North Carolina



Diversity — in every regard — is helping improve the GM Women's Dealer Advisory Council. Not only does today's Council represent different regions and cultures, it is comprised of varying perspectives.

Kristy Elliott, who recently joined as a member representing the Southeast Region, brings a point of view from outside the automotive industry. Despite being the daughter of Don Elliott of the Don Elliott Auto Group, which was founded in 1978, she has spent many years working in health care and specifically marketing.

With this experience, Elliott says she has the clarity to see operations from a fresh perspective and support new ways of doing things.

Elliott joined Sunshine Chevrolet in Arden, North Carolina, more than four years ago and became the dealer in 2017, filling her father's shoes. He added Sunshine Chevrolet to his two dealerships in Texas in 2008, and it's been growing ever since. She says she finds some similarities between health care and

“  
My responsibility is to carry the message, be a role model for women, look for new ways to engage people in WRN and encourage dealer participation in our initiatives.  
”

automotive, especially in the areas of regulations and cost management.

"I brought a fresh set of eyes into the dealership when I arrived," says Elliott. "We no longer have a 'always done it that way' perspective. I'm constantly asking my managers, 'Why?' It may be annoying, but it eliminates waste and improves operations."

Elliott says she's honored to represent GM's female dealer body with company executives. She's also thankful to be learning so much from the more seasoned dealers on the

Council. An advocate for best practices and continuous improvement, Elliott is a NADA 20 Group member. In fact, her 20 Group constantly ranks among the top nationwide for profitability.

"As dealers, we have to get much smarter about running our businesses," she says. "Encourage people to depart from past practices, eliminate complacency and re-evaluate our decisions."

That's not just hyperbole for Elliott. By cutting all of the dealership's traditional advertising and moving exclusively to online advertising, Sunshine Chevrolet has cut net advertising expense while increasing sales. She's also established a compensation model for the sales department based on volume instead of gross.

A graduate of Baylor University and the NADA Academy, Elliott says she's optimistic about many things, including CEO Mary Barra's vision for the company and Chevrolet's current and future product line.

Working for Ralph Lauren might not be the career path you'd expect for a GM dealer, but it served Katie Bowman Coleman, of Bowman Chevrolet in Clarkston, Michigan, just fine. The newest member of the GM Women's Dealer Advisory Council (WDAC) Coleman had just one dream upon graduating college — join the world of clothing retail. But after years of exciting international work in the fashion business, Coleman missed her roots and returned to join her family's GM dealership, becoming dealer principal in 2011.

"I've been blessed to have two careers I genuinely love," says Coleman. "My parents supported me following my initial dream of fashion, and they later welcomed me into the family car business. I had no idea how much I'd enjoy automotive retail."

"GM has been very generous to me and I feel it's time for me to give back," she says. "I'm committed to helping shape the future for dealers, women and the car-buying public. How will dealers connect with customers? What might a 2030 showroom look like? These are very exciting questions!"

Representing the North Central Region, Coleman hopes to become a familiar face and valuable resource for dealers there. She's also focused on becoming an ambassador for women in retail automotive and increasing the number of females working in all dealership roles.

"Early on I realized there were many women at General Motors in leadership positions," she says. "I would take the opportunity whenever I went to industry events to seek out these women and ask them about their experiences, especially with work-life balance. I found women very forthcoming and willing to share tips that had worked for them. WRN has played an important role for me in learning how to be a better dealer."

## New WDAC Member Hopes to Become a Valuable Resource for Dealers

### Katie Bowman Coleman

Bowman Chevrolet  
"One Great experience"  
Clarkston, Michigan



“

We are immersed in community events through action, not just funding. We place the customers at the center of everything we do and are 100 percent dedicated to their care. And we treat employees as if the dealership is their home. That attitude transfers to the customer, and improves satisfaction all around.

”

Bowman Chevrolet is one of Michigan's fastest-growing dealerships, thanks to Coleman and her staff's hard work. She says success for dealers lies in their passion for three groups — their employees, their

customers and their communities. Coleman has a robust strategy for each to increase engagement, enthusiasm and support.



## 2018 Planning Calendar

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>WDAC</b>	1/17 	2/21 		4/17-4/18 F2F	5/15 	6/20 	7/24 	8/15 	9/17-21 F2F	10/17 	TBD F2F	TBD
<b>GMW1 GMW3</b>	1/21-23 Scottsdale, AZ				5/6-8 Dallas, TX				9/17-21 Detroit, MI			
<b>GMW2</b>	1/23-25 Scottsdale, AZ				5/8-10 Dallas, TX				9/17-21 Detroit, MI			
<b>WRN S&amp;P Skype</b>			3/14 Skype		5/16 Skype		7/25 Skype		9/17-21 F2F Detroit, MI		11/14 Skype	
<b>Drive to Succeed Scholarship</b>	1/1 Online Application Open			4/15 Online Application Close	Candidate Selection		6/1 Candidates Notified		9/19 Award Ceremony			
<b>Driven2018 Annual Business Meeting</b>									9/18-20 Detroit Marriott Renaissance Center			

## NICOLE MITCHELL Joins GM Dealer Development



I'm delighted to be a part of the GM Dealer Development team. I've successfully worked with dealers across the country to evaluate data and develop action plans for sales growth and increased profitability. I'm looking forward to working with the MDD and WRN dealers with the support of the region and field teams to make a positive impact.



**GENERAL MOTORS DEALER DEVELOPMENT** continues to improve the diversity and performance of the dealer network and tasks Nicole Mitchell, dealer performance manager, to lead initiatives for MDD and WRN dealers. "GM continues to make progress in increasing the number of women and minority owned dealerships in the GM dealer network," says Mark Rainey, director of GM Dealer Development. "In order to continue our diversity dealer growth, we must make sure existing MDD and WRN dealers have support to successfully operate in this competitive marketplace. Nicole will lead and facilitate the support efforts of the team to help ensure success for our dealers."

"My primary goal is to assist minority and women dealers in a collaborative approach to modify their processes to better promote increases in sales and profitability," says Mitchell. "I plan to accomplish this by taking an 'out of the box' approach regarding

marketing strategies, analyzing data and challenging dealers to try new and innovative ideas." Mitchell plans to work closely with the field and regional teams and direct available resources to interested and willing dealer participants.

Mitchell's primary focus will be coordinating all MDD and WRN 20 Groups. "GM has tremendous tools to help dealers achieve their goals. My role will be a chief facilitator to sort through all of the data and help dealers develop executable plans with the support of the region and field teams."

Mitchell is uniquely qualified to lead this challenge. She considers herself a "numbers person" and has been around the automotive industry from an early age. "I was born and raised in Saginaw, Michigan, and I fondly remember visiting Garber Buick with my grandfather for all of his vehicle purchases and service work," adds Mitchell. "Who would have thought this would lead to my first auto industry job?"

Mitchell started her automotive career working at Garber Buick in Saginaw while attending Northwood University, where she earned a degree in automotive marketing. At Garber Buick, she was a greeter, title clerk and office assistant responsible for supporting the finance manager with deal jackets. After graduation, Mitchell joined Reynolds & Reynolds as a variable operations trainer, helping dealers utilize the software and accounting tools. After nearly two years in this role, Mitchell followed her calling and joined GMAC as a retail buyer and commercial lending analyst where she gained valuable experience. Mitchell accepted an opportunity to join GM as a Chevrolet district sales manager in Cleveland, Ohio, then was promoted to the Baltimore, Maryland, market. Most recently she was field operations manager in the Northeast Region, Mitchell also continued her education and earned an MBA from Baker College.



The GM Women's Retail Network (WRN) is comprised of dealers, dealer management staff and stakeholders working together to improve dealer quality and profitability by leveraging the mutual support systems that benefit its members.

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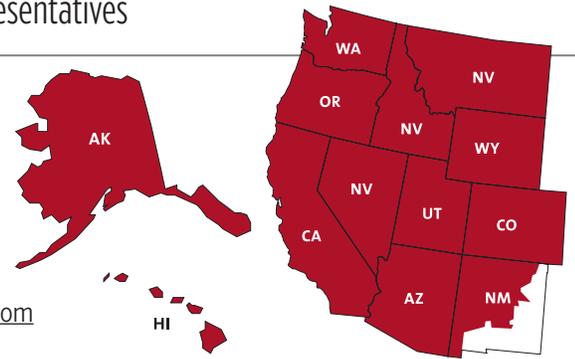
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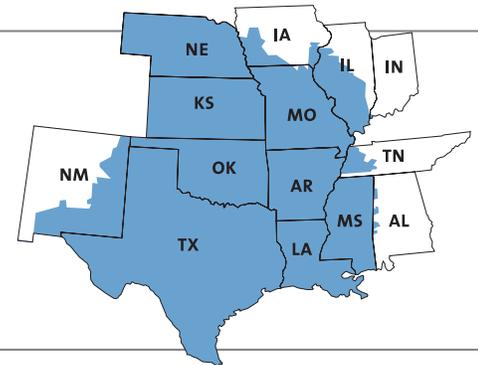
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