First off, congratulations on being selected as the first-ever female Steelmaker of the Year. How meaningful to you is this award and its historical significance?

I am humbled to be recognized given the outstanding recipients of this award through time, starting with John Correnti, who was the first recipient in 1998. Obviously, John Correnti is known for revolutionizing the industry. It is also special for CMC to be recognized a second time as Marvin Selig was awarded Steelmaker of the Year in 2001.

Tell me a bit about your background. How did you become involved in the metals industry?

My career spans 38 years in the metals and mining industry, first in the aluminum industry at Alcoa, where I spent 24 years, and the second half of my career in the steel industry. I have always been interested in manufacturing, particularly in ordinary products that are so essential to our daily lives. Here at CMC, we say we are building our country every day.
What stands out to you as your proudest career achievement?

I have had the wonderful opportunity to work for several fine companies across various sectors of the metals industry and it is hard to pinpoint any one achievement. I have worked for many great leaders who taught me so much and have faced many different challenges from turnaround to growth. Each opportunity has been challenging, exciting and intellectually invigorating.

Conversely, what has been your greatest challenge?

My greatest challenge has been work-life balance. Balancing two executive careers and raising children has been a great challenge but also incredibly rewarding.

Commercial Metals Company was the first facility to produce spooled rebar in the United States, and your new Durant, Okla., micro-mill is continuing that innovation. What’s next for the rebar market? Are there improvements to be made?

CMC has pioneered several new technologies such as the introduction of the first micro-mill in the world. We pride ourselves in being leaders in innovation and we are continually searching for new ways to solve customer problems, improve product quality and lower our cost of production. Technology is always

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evolving, so we shall see what the next development will be for all the products that we manufacture.

The acquisition of the Gerdau rebar mills and fabrication facilities has been transformative for CMC. As the work to integrate those facilities continues, what have you learned about change management?

Planning is key to any successful implementation of a major project. Integrating a large acquisition is very complex but the CMC team did an amazing amount of upfront planning for the integration and that work is paying off. Plans are progressing ahead of our expectations and so far there have been no major surprises.

You’ve testified multiple times before Congress about the impact of unfairly traded steel imports on your company and the continued need for tariffs. Now that the Section 232 tariffs have been in place for a year, how much certainty do you feel that they will remain in place? What would happen if those tariffs were suddenly lifted?

At CMC, we operate with the mindset that we must be competitive irrespective of trade relief. We are supportive of the current actions because today there is not a level playing field on a global basis. We know that we operate producing the highest-quality, lowest-cost product while servicing our customers in a differentiated way. I believe that our existing trade laws are ineffective in combating unfair trade and my recommendation is that we need a structural change to our existing regulations to create that level playing field once the 232 trade relief measures are lifted.

AISTech 2019 was a landmark year for recognizing exceptional women in the steel industry, with our second-ever female Howe Memorial Lecturer, first female AIST Distinguished Member and Fellow, and first female Steelmaker of the Year. However, the industry at large still has a long journey ahead to address gender inequality in the workplace. What steps must the steel industry take to achieve greater equity and encourage the next generation of female steelmakers?

In today’s world, women have a tremendous opportunity to excel and be successful in any sector of the economy. I hope to serve as a role model for others considering a career in this industry. We need to increase the pipeline of women and demonstrate to women that this is a great industry with just as much opportunity for growth and challenge as the alternatives that they might consider.