Legacies from Legends in Public Relations

Inspired by the 40th Anniversary of the Public Relations Student Society of America

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“I believe that sound public relations comprises policies and deeds as well as words; that it should deal in truth rather than deception; and that it should seek to clarify the issues of our times rather than to confuse them.”

J. Carroll Bateman, APR
“Creed For Public Relations”
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INTRODUCTION

This book celebrates the 40th Anniversary Year of the founding of the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) with personal messages for students that were written by 34 “living legends.” These women and men have been honored by their colleagues for leadership in the development of the public relations profession.

Their comments here capture observations from experience and useful directions for future practice. In sum, they become a unique legacy for students.

PRSSA: Beginnings and Growth

In November 1967, the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) responded to the hopes of eager students and relentless advocates by establishing PRSSA. The following year, PRSA chartered 14 colleges and universities as “alpha” PRSSA chapters.

Leading champions for the student organization were Jon Riffel, vice president of Southern Pacific Gas Company; Dr. F. H. “Chris” Teahan, PRSA vice president-Education; and J. Carroll Bateman, president of the Insurance Information Institute and 1967 PRSA president. Like most of their colleagues at the time, none of these “founding fathers” had formal study in public relations. However, they recognized that education is the sine qua non of a profession and an imperative for assuring progress and respect for a rapidly evolving field.

During the years that followed, PRSSA became a powerful incentive for academe to develop these studies. Schools wishing to be chartered for student chapters must now offer at least five courses in public relations. PRSSA supplements the academic experience through conferences, publications, a web site, opportunities for service and awards, global connections and--most important--strong support and counsel from dedicated advisors and other professionals, especially those who sponsor student internships.

Today, 284 schools have chapters with more than 9,000 student members. Many of the 81,000 PRSSA alumni now populate the practice and have become mentors and leaders in the profession.

Launching This Legacy

In June 2007, the Center began this work to recognize PRSSA’s milestone year of 2007-08. We asked legendary professional honorees to write brief personal messages of counsel, wisdom and experience for publication as a gift to students.

These honorees are professionals who have received one or more lifetime honors from three major public relations organizations: The Arthur W. Page Society’s Hall of Fame and Distinguished Service Awards; the Institute for Public Relations’ Alexander Hamilton Medal; and PRSA’s Gold Anvil Award and its Educators Academy Ferguson Award.

Thirty-four of those honorees agreed to become authors for this anthology—a remarkable response and reflection of caring for students. Those receiving the same honors in the future will be invited to write their messages for posting on the Center’s web site (www.plankcenter.ua.edu), thus ensuring a growing treasure of insights.

To enable the book to be an even more comprehensive resource for readers, the names of all recipients—both living and deceased—of those honors and other important awards presented through 2006 appear on pages 74-82. It’s a proud roster of respected leaders whose work has strengthened public relations practice and education.

In publishing these names and the messages from 34 living legends, we hope this book informs and inspires those who will shape the next generation of public relations. To present and future students of the profession, it comes with a fond and spirited “Godspeed!”

Betsy Plank, Chair
The Plank Center for Leadership in Public Relations
University of Alabama
September 2007
Barkelew's 35-year career includes C-suite experience in the public sector (LA County Office of Education), the private sector (Dayton Hudson Corp., nka Target Corp.) and an international agency (Fleishman-Hillard). Named PR Professional of the Year (1995) and one of the Most Influential Women in Business in Minnesota (1999). Past president, National School Public Relations Association. Received the Arthur W. Page Society's Distinguished Service Award (2003).

We are a society of wonderful followers who need cheerleaders, direction, inspiration, motivation, thoughtful callers of the question with an orientation to action...we need leaders. In 2002 and again in 2007, I asked a cross section of recognized leaders across the country their thoughts about the characteristics of excellent leaders, the key challenges leaders face today and why leadership is important. These CEOs, heads of non-profits, media chiefs and public relations leaders agreed that leadership then and now requires vision and goals, authenticity, ethics, curiosity, passion, a sense of humor, lots of positive energy and masterful people and communications skills.

All agreed that leadership is a responsibility, not power, prestige or a job title. It’s about WHO you have to be, not WHAT you have to do.

The new focus this year is “authenticity:” being real vs. always being right. You see the same desire for authenticity in the popularity of today’s reality shows. And now, being “real” has emerged as a top criterion for candidates for national office.

My surveyed leaders identified six areas of key challenges:

- Cutting through the static to get the message out, leaders need to be bold, fearless and clear in message.
- Managing the competing elements of ego vs. ethics in an often times unethical world means leaders must read the context in which they are asked to lead correctly, do their jobs ethically and accept the risk of losing their leadership roles if what they champion is unacceptable.
- Uniting a universe of followers behind a mission or set of goals means finding common ground in a society that is encouraged to divide.

- Recognizing the absence of national examples and a culture that glorifies financial success may dilute what leaders can do.
- Too much short term thinking in business makes it harder to keep business focused on the long haul.
- Stakeholders want values-driven behavior, credibility and sustainability in today’s leaders, not just superstars. People crave authentic leadership, defined vision, integrity, effectiveness, compassion and courage.

How important is leadership today?

Those I surveyed in 2007 said there is a growing hunger for leaders who can tip the scales in the right direction, creating accountability for behavior and results. They said people are “thirsty for positive direction, for someone to believe in.” Many used phrases like “nothing happens without leaders,” and “leaders help us find ways to seek a common good.”

A dynamic young CEO said, “Leaders are not born. They are the product of hard work and determination in pursuit of a dream or passion.”

How can you become a leader?

- Set goals, have a vision, know your values. Ask yourself three questions: Who am I as a person? What do I want to be? How do I get there and make sure I stay there? Write it down. Use it as your personal guideline.
- Don’t wait to be asked, speak up. Get involved in something and stretch your leadership wings.
- Look for opportunities to develop your people skills.
- Find some role models. Spend time around leaders you admire and learn from them.
- Be open to new thoughts, ideas, opportunities. Keep growing.

I believe the best leaders—the best professionals—work hard at what they do and never forget how to do. They are involved in their communities, adding balance to their lives and enhancing their knowledge about the places they live and work. When you are involved, you belong. Where you are involved, you grow.

Remember Linus’ advice to Lucy: “There’s no heavier burden than a great potential.”
Edward M. Block, Fellow PRSA
Senior Vice President, Public Relations (ret), AT&T

Led public relations, employee information and advertising programs at AT&T for 12 years. Established the AT&T charitable foundation. Helped develop the initiative that led AT&T to establish the MacNeil-Lehrer NewsHour on PBS. Recipient of the PRSA Gold Anvil Award (1997), the Arthur W. Page Hall of Fame Award (1993) and the Alexander Hamilton Medal of the Institute for Public Relations (2003).

There are two basic building blocks for a successful career in public relations. You don’t discover them in a classroom. You discover them through experience over time, hopefully with help from mentors or role models. That was my good fortune.

The two building blocks are brains and guts.

If this strikes you as too glib to be a useful nugget of knowledge, just think about it.

Brains are your software, the stuff you’ll need to intimately understand the business of your employer or client, the ability to think clearly, often under pressure, often without useful guidance from your boss and, most important from day one, your source of creativity and passion to demonstrate superb craftsmanship as a writer.

Guts are your hardware, a willingness to tactfully stick to your guns when you’ve thought through an issue or problem, understand what’s at stake and exhibit confidence that you know what needs to be done or said when others do not or won’t stick their necks out. You won’t prevail every time, but you’ll build a reputation for always being fully invested in your responsibilities.

Over a long career I’ve heard these simple rules expressed in different words by other successful executives:

- Bosses don’t want to know how smart you are, they want timely, responsive solutions to the issues they confront.
- Bosses want solutions, not problems. They’ve got enough of the latter.
- Timid sycophants are useless.
- If you screw up, be the first one to tell the boss what happened and what you intend to do about it.

What this advice adds up to is that leadership and success begin with brains and guts. These characteristics and how to employ them emerge over time as opportunities come your way to demonstrate them. Not likely on your first day on a new job, but certainly beginning, at least in small ways, with your first job.

A wise friend once told me that the very best business schools cannot teach a CEO how to be an effective CEO. They must learn on the job. The same holds true for men and women who pursue careers in public relations. A good school can help you master the tools and techniques of effective public relations, but it’s on the job that you master the art of public relations management.

So, be patient, seek out and pay attention to role models, learn the business of your business and, as your career advances, learn how to become the “go to” person when business problems threaten management goals. In the business world, communications is overhead. Problem solving is value added. PR possesses unique assets to help management recognize, understand and solve problems.

Ed Block
Throughout my career I’ve felt the most fun and fulfilling part of being a public relations practitioner is acting as the link between a problem and a solution. Because we are in the unique and advantageous position of being in communication with all departments and aspects of an organization, we know when a problem occurs--and where to find the solution. Not only does that help the organization, it proves the value of public relations.

Whether we’re the in-house counsel or an outside consultant, to do a good job in public relations, we must understand not only WHAT the organization is all about, but WHO does what, WHEN it gets done, WHERE it is done and WHY. (Sound familiar?) We need to be among the most knowledgeable employees in the organization--and it pays.

I remember my first weeks on a new job in a hospital--my first experience in healthcare. I made appointments to meet with and interview every department head. It took a long time, but I needed to know how things worked, how people worked together and who did what. It paid off almost immediately.

As I was interviewing one manager, he kept telling me his frustration at not being able to achieve his goals and what was holding him back. I paged through my notes, sure I had heard something that would help. Within a few minutes, I was able to share with him some relevant information I had gleaned in another department a few days earlier. He and the other department head met shortly thereafter and worked out a solution that was advantageous to everyone. Word spread quickly that the source of their solution was in the public relations department!

With the nature of personal communication changing daily and mass communication taking on a new meaning with every new invention, some people are wringing their hands and bemoaning the fact that public relations is so different now. Perhaps the way in which we communicate electronically is changing, but human contact is still a basic need. People still make up their minds about how they’ll vote, what they’ll buy and where they’ll spend their free time by talking to other people. We can help provide those linkages.

The same kind of linking can go a long way when we get involved in volunteer activities or represent our organizations in the community. The more we know, the more we can help solve problems and link resources to each other. In addition to making us feel good, it’s a wonderful way to get to know interesting people, to widen our networks and to demonstrate that public relations is a lot more than publicity!

Judith S. Bogart, APR, Fellow PRSA
Public Relations Consultant
Today, counsels CEOs and directors as an equal. Fifty nine years ago, was an anonymous staff publicist known largely to his parents. Writes books (10), position papers, white papers on management machinations, a bi-monthly policy implications newsletter and dusts off 16 professional awards (8 Silver Anvils, 1 Gold, one for public service) on the mantle. Has served on 23 non-profit boards and is considered a management thought leader by his new peers.

Do you want a job or a career in public relations? Easy question? But they are not equivalents. The symptoms may seem the same, but the roots differ significantly. Both require diligence, patience, writing skills, media relationships and, simply, hard work.

The dictionary defines a “job” as part of the routine of one’s occupation. A “career” is intellectual action. If that’s too esoteric let me simply say that building a career hinges on curiosity…one word, WHY. Why am I doing this…now…can’t it be done better, faster?

• A JOB makes it hard to get up in the morning and takes a while to get started.
• A CAREER propels you out of the bed and into high gear.
• A JOB is defined by hours, days, weeks.
• A CAREER is seamless…you often don’t know what time it is…sometimes even forget the day of the week.
• In a JOB you look forward to holidays, weekends.
• In a CAREER these are interruptions.
• In a JOB you often watch things happen.
• In a CAREER you make things happen.

I’m sure you get it.

So, now, clutching your parchment validation as a certified public relations practitioner, you can’t wait to get into strategic planning, mission statements applying the principles of behavior modifications, sorting out cognitive dissonance, etc. Your academic credentials are excellent, and you are snapped up by a PR agency (I’ll get into the corporate milieu later). You might even get an honorific title: “associate assistant account executive.” Assignment: promote Absolute vodka, or a new line of candles, a skin care treatment, a new line of laundromats, a fancy hot dog—or you may be shifted over to be a blogging feeder.

What’s this nonsense? Four years of study to be a publicist? Ye’ Gods! Well, friends, that is how it begins. I, the youngest—and cheapest—staffer to join the prestigious Carl Byoir & Associates, tackled in my first 4-5 years thermostats, door locks, a new bible, rivets, greeting cards and electronic watches. Know what? I enjoyed it. (I should mention that in those days we were full time on an account, so there was an awful lot of open time to fill usefully.)

I learned to write fast, to know to whom I was writing, to do research, to get to know reporters in person, to build relationships. A humble beginning! Yes. I never took anything for granted; conventional wisdom was an anathema to me. You’ll hear your colleagues pontificate wildly. Listen, but don’t absorb. You are, titles et al. notwithstanding, a probationer…a novitiate. Have patience…as you get increasingly difficult assignments—and you do more than is expected—the real principles of public relations embedded in your DNA emerge.

Should you choose the corporate route, you’ll be low on the communications food chain…probably assigned to employee relations and all the mystic wonders of e-mails, iPods, blackberries and web castings. Promotions come about as fast as a melting glacier. Turfs are clearly defined and impenetrable. Your boss is probably responsible for the market share of his product line. He wants free publicity, period! Don’t try to tell him/her all you know.

Do more than asked for…more than expected. It will ultimately be recognized, and you will move slightly upwards. But, you will learn the business, the traditions, the culture and the idiosyncrasies of the players. This is a pervasive weakness of agency life; there’s never enough time—or legitimate charging hours—to gain these invaluable insights.

John F. Budd, Jr., APR, Fellow PRSA
Chairman and CEO, The Omega Group

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Arthur W. Page, while serving AT&T as its first vice president for public relations, said: “A company’s reputation is chiefly dependent on what it does, and in a lesser degree on what it says, and the lesser degree becomes very small indeed if what it says and what it does do not jibe.”

Yes, communications is essential. But communications constitutes the last part of professional public relations, not the first. Hard reality will always overcome communications programs, good publicity or even skillful propaganda.

Reality should be the rock on which any public relations campaign stands. Customers know. The word gets around when products don’t deliver promised results. Employees know when they are treated unfairly. Voters know when the candidates misrepresent, exaggerate or lie to them. Citizens recognize when public officials serve selfish, partisan interests instead of the general public.

But it isn’t as simple as that. Folks don’t discover things right away. Sometimes, they’ll endure two or three bad experiences in a restaurant before they decide not to return. Or they’ll endure years of abuse from a boss before they decide their company just isn’t a good place to work. Sometimes voters enthuse over a politician’s rhetoric for years before they recognize she or he is a fraud.

It’s part of the human experience that people (just like you and me) don’t like to admit they’ve been wrong, or they’ve made a mistake or misjudged a product, a public figure or a policy. So they see (usually unconsciously) some excuse to rationalize their error and to change their judgment. That’s why public opinion changes slowly. That’s why even the most effective public relations campaigns show results very slowly. We communicate almost instantaneously these days, but public opinion changes very slowly.

The skilled professional tries to discover reality before worrying about what to communicate. She/he wants to know objectively what actions deserve public approval and which do not. And then she/he tries to persuade management to change and correct those policies that may irritate the public, the customers and the community. Only when the policy serves the public interest can good communications make a difference.

Experience has taught me that the most difficult problem in life (and not limited to professional public relations) is “telling truth to power.” It is not easy to tell the boss he or she is wrong. Integrity requires it. But how to tell the truth to power is an art not quickly learned. No one, and especially not clients and executives, like to be told they have erred. How to tell truth to power requires sensitivity, tact and perhaps humility, too. But learning how will provide the difference between success or failure in your career.

Those are among the most important lessons life has taught me.
Described by PRWeek as the “architect of the largest public relations agency in the world” and “the century’s most influential PR figure.” Counselor and confidante to corporate and government leaders for more than 50 years. Recipient of numerous honors and awards, including the PRSA’s Gold Anvil (1980), the Arthur W. Page Society’s Hall of Fame (1991) and the Alexander Hamilton Medal from the Institute for Public Relations (1999). Named PR Professional of the year by Public Relations News (1977 and 1989).

The question most often asked me by students and recent graduates is along the lines of, “Mr. Burson, what is your best advice for us as we start our careers in public relations? What are the three or four things you think will count most as we pursue a career in public relations?” This is what I tell them:

Networking is the most important activity you can undertake, starting now. Approach it in terms of building a support infrastructure you can tap into as your career and your life go forward. But never think that networking is simply a matter of knowing people. To be effective, it takes an underlying relationship—shared experiences—and you’ve got to work at it. Just one example of the payoff: when I ask newly recruited employees how they happened to come on to Burson-Marsteller, no less than half say, “I knew someone who knew someone.” You get the point!

Working as a member of an organization—a team—is an essential in most careers, especially business. My successor as B-M CEO, Jim Dowling, put it this way: “We prize the individual; we celebrate the team.” It is essential that you earn the trust of those around you: not only your boss, but also your peers and, equally important, the people who work for you. My late partner, Bill Marsteller, maintained that, “Your direct reports are the ones who really ‘nominate’ you for promotion to higher responsibility.” At Burson-Marsteller, more than half of all involuntary separations of professional employees are due to an employee’s inability to work with his/her teammates—to “fit in” as a member of the organization.

Never cease working to become a better writer and a more effective speaker. One of the scarcest commodities in public relations today is competent writers. My observation is that the newly-hired staffer who demonstrates a strong writing ability soon becomes one of the office’s most billable employees. There is always a need for good writing, and word spreads fast.

Develop as broad a knowledge base as possible. In public relations, all kinds of problems arise. And as consultants, they do so in all aspects of social, political and economic endeavor. Strive never to be caught tongue-tied because of a total lack of knowledge even on a subject remote to your daily existence. The old fashioned way of doing this has been by reading—traditionally, newspapers, magazines, books and, of course, television and radio. The new way is the Internet, about which most of you are far more au courant than I. The best advice my father ever gave me was, “Try always to be in the know.”

I offer good wishes to all recent graduates seeking careers in public relations. Even after so many years, I well remember my early years and the numerous individuals who contributed to whatever success has been heaped upon me. I could never have done it alone—and I believe, many years from now, you will feel as I do.
E. Ronald Culp
Senior Vice President and Managing Director
Ketchum Midwest

Responsible for Ketchum’s operations in Chicago and Pittsburgh; serves as a global corporate strategist. A 30-year professional career spans a broad range of communications activities and programs in government and the business-to-business, consumer products, pharmaceutical and retailing industries. Recipient of the Arthur W. Page Society’s Distinguished Service Award (2006).

Over the past 35 years, I have determined that the best public relations efforts are those that blend both common sense and experience in observing how people receive and react to new information. There is no precise road map to success, but I hope the following points will be helpful as you make your own journey within this challenging and exciting profession.

10 tips I wish someone had told me earlier in my career:

• Learn all the tasks in public relations, not just the “glamour” jobs. A broad background in the basics of the profession will allow you to find the areas you love, yet will make you a more valuable employee and colleague. From this broad base, you can focus on a specialty. As your career progresses, master a second area and maybe a third, which offers a fallback. In time you will have the breadth to tackle an upper-level generalist/leadership role.

• Good writing and editing are PR’s essential tools. Both require disciplined thought, rigorous attention to rule and detail and, of course, creativity. In the perpetual argument of speed versus accuracy, the latter wins hands down. Who wants to be first—but wrong?

• Listen before you act. Action without thorough understanding is a “speed vs. accuracy” trap that can get you in trouble. Take the time to listen and process.

• Get connected/stay connected. Networking is a career-long necessity and pleasure that can start right now. Contacts I made in the 1970s are friends, colleagues and clients today. You simply cannot know too many people.

• Be interested and interesting. You can develop the personality skills needed to be a great networker by showing active interest in others, and by stretching to broaden who you are. A tremendously rewarding way to increase engagement is giving back through non-profit opportunities in the community.

• You’re always in the middle—so get comfortable. We’re the peanut butter in every sandwich, whether it’s between the client and the media, your client contact and her boss or even between the client and our own business department. Don’t fulminate...facilitate.

• Collaboration wins... Gone are the days of the individual with all the answers. Client needs today are simply too varied, complex and urgent to rely on one view of the right solution... But trust your gut. Don’t hesitate to offer the outside view if the direction of the collaboration seems wrong.

• Be flexible... We are living in a global economy that is increasingly interconnected and mutually dependent. Working with others requires flexibility unprecedented in any time... But hold to your values. The business community doesn’t function properly without honesty and integrity at the core.

• Learn how to “tell truth to power.” One of the most important and most difficult jobs we face is delivering information to clients or bosses or colleagues who don’t necessarily want to hear what we have to say. The art is presenting in a way that doesn’t necessarily provoke but gets the message across. It’s a life skill, too–practice with a significant other or close friends.

• Champion diversity. Nearly 40 percent of those living in the United States are minorities. Because our job is to communicate effectively with broad and inclusive audiences, we need diversity at the table. It’s right, and it’s smart.

Observe others, work hard and be patient. The rewards can be significant!
OFIELD DUKES, APR, FELLOW PRSA
President, Ofield Dukes & Associates

Named recipient of the 2001 PRSA Gold Anvil Award following careers as journalist, public relations executive and public relations educator. Inducted into the PRSA College of Fellows (2001) and the Public Relations Halls of Fame in Washington, DC and the Commonwealth of Virginia. In 2005, PRWeek named Dukes one of the five most effective communicators of the year. Served as an adjunct professor at Howard University and The American University.

P resident John Fitzgerald Kennedy said, “The new frontier of which I speak is not a set of promises—it is a set of challenges.” The English historian Arnold J. Toynbee traced the development of ancient civilization to his theory of challenge-and-response, which demonstrated how men generally made a more positive response to adversity than to “easy” conditions.

Challenges have proven to be steps on my ladder of success. The circumstances of my parents being sharecroppers on a farm in rural Alabama where I was born became an early challenge of walking miles to a one-room schoolhouse with bare educational resources. Then there was the challenge of moving to Detroit at the age of nine and living in a rigidly segregated city.

In high school, there was the haunting challenge of not having a vision beyond the long, dark shadows of Detroit’s ghetto. Upon graduation, with a very “soft” high school education, I took the entrance exam to attend Wayne State University, flunking it not only once, but twice.

While attending Wayne State at night as a non-matriculated student, I qualified for a job at Sears, Roebuck & Company. That job was in the maintenance department, as a porter, because Sears, like other retail stores then, had a “social policy” of only hiring people of color for maintenance jobs. Negroes were not hired as stock boys, elevator operators or even to change tires at the service station. So, this was a challenge about one’s self-worth at a time when Negroes were treated as second-class citizens.

The Korean conflict and its mandatory military draft rescued me from Sears, and I found myself in the front lines of a war. In Korea I became introspective about my direction in life, and I developed a vision to return to America to become a journalist.

After discharge from the Army, I returned to Detroit and entered Wayne State University as a journalism major. For four years, I accepted the challenge of working hard in preparation for a career to be a journalist. Just before graduation, my advisor called me into his office and said, “Ofield, I have found jobs for your six classmates at the Detroit Times, News and Free Press.” Then he paused and said, “But I don’t have any contacts at Jet or Ebony Magazine.” Again, I faced the challenge of the times—daily newspapers in Detroit didn’t hire people of color, not even as copy boys or delivery truck drivers.

An essay by Ralph Waldo Emerson on self-reliance provided a psychological buffer for me. Emerson wrote that the genius of Beethoven, Mozart and Plato was that unfaltering faith in their ability to deal with adverse challenges and then move on to excel. This essay highlights a challenge we all face: faith in our ability to meet and deal with adversities in life and not break stride to achieve our goals.

When I opened my firm in Washington, D.C., I got up every morning with a passion to be excellent, a determination to preserve my sense of integrity, a commitment to practice the Golden Rule of treating others with dignity and kindness and not allowing anything to disrupt my inner peace.

And these are the challenges common to us all: Seeking to be excellent, maintaining our integrity because your reputation is like a whistle and its echo, practicing positive interpersonal relations in a highly multicultural America and following the sage advice of the late Dr. Richard Carlson in his book, “Don’t Sweat the Small Stuff.”

There were many other challenges in operating my own public relations firm in the communications capital of the world. One hot July day I received a surprising call informing me that I had been named the winner of the 2001 Public Relations Society of America’s coveted Gold Anvil Award! I said a prayer of thanksgiving, took a deep breath and said to myself, “The challenges, as tough as they have been, have brought me to this mountaintop experience in public relations.”
Graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Columbia College; M.S. in journalism, Columbia University. Worked as a newspaper reporter, radio news writer for CBS Television and public relations director for the Toni division of Gillette. Started his firm in Chicago in 1952. Edelman is today the largest privately held, independent firm with 48 worldwide offices. Recipient of the PRSA Gold Anvil (1999) and Inside PR's Lifetime Achievement Award (1998). Named to the Arthur W. Page Society’s Hall of Fame (1997) and received the first ever Outstanding Achievement Award from the China International PR Association.

The celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) comes at a most appropriate time in our world.

There is underway currently the greatest expansion of the public relations field than has ever occurred previously. It is rare if a company does not have a public relations department and director. There are more public relations firms in the U.S. than at any other time in history.

There's also an expansion into markets throughout this country and worldwide to meet the needs of mid-sized companies, which may or may not have a public relations director and/or department.

Larger public relations firms are representing clients in the U.S. and Europe, Asia and other regions of the world, providing traditional public relations services as well as diversifying into such related fields as medical, consumer, financial, government relations and corporate reputation. The expansion of public relations keeps pace with the dynamic economic growth in the U.S. and globally.

Pursuing further growth of their business, many public relations firms build additional assignments from ongoing clients. This makes good sense because they work from a base of good service, which provides a strong opportunity to move into global markets and/or to add programs in practice areas not presently covered by the ongoing program.

For public relations firms of all sizes, it's essential to maintain a continuing new business effort. As I advise our own people, we have to be aggressive in seeking further growth of assignments. No matter how strong a contribution we're making in a current program, it's up to us to capitalize on this good work by providing additional services to existing clients.

Opportunities for PRSSA alumni are greater than ever and will enable them to make significant service contributions while earning solid financial returns.

I salute you and look forward to your future accomplishments.

Daniel J. Edelman, APR, Fellow PRSA
Founder and Chairman, Daniel J. Edelman, Inc.

For public relations firms of all sizes, it’s essential to maintain a continuing new business effort. As I advise our own people, we have to be aggressive in seeking further growth of assignments. No matter how strong a contribution we’re making in a current program, it’s up to us to capitalize on this good work by providing additional services to existing clients.

Opportunities for PRSSA alumni are greater than ever and will enable them to make significant service contributions while earning solid financial returns.

I salute you and look forward to your future accomplishments.
JOHN W. (JACK) FELTON, APR, FELLOW PRSA
President and CEO Emeritus, Institute for Public Relations

With bachelor’s and master’s degrees from the University of Michigan, Felton has held leadership roles at three Fortune 500 companies. Subsequently, he became Distinguished Visiting Professor at the University of Florida and president and CEO of the Institute for Public Relations. Served as national president of PRSA—twice. Authored two books, eight published plays and is currently writing a musical for his grandchildren called, “Why Daniel Wouldn’t Join the Lions’ Club.”

A reporter asked my boss Harry Wells: “As a mechanical engineer, how did you get to be the President and then Chairman of the Board of a big Fortune 500 company like McCormick Spice?”

Harry smiled, shrugged his shoulders and said: “I simply tried to do every job they gave me, better than anyone had ever done it before, and one day they asked me to be President.”

That “be the best” attitude is a formula for success in public relations or any career. Learning how to ask the right questions also is critical for success in public relations. I don’t mean just asking the typical journalism questions of Who? What? How? When? Where? Why? I mean other questions specific for public relations, such as:

• How might we do…whatever we need to do?
• What do we need to know?
• What if…something goes wrong?
• Is it the right thing to do?
• Will what we do make a difference?
• And always the final question: Did I do my best?

The “how might we?” question brings more creativity and imagination than asking “what can we do?” According to psychologists, the word “can” limits discussion while “might” opens limitless possibilities.

“Might” led us to ask if we could make the annual report for McCormick Spice Company smell like a spice. It took us three years to find a way, but when we did we had the first annual report that really smelled! The wide publicity we received helped the investment community understand which of several companies named McCormick we were. Some 30 years later, investment firms and reporters still have contests trying to guess which spice the report will smell like each year.

“What do we need to know?” is a basic research question. What data on this subject is already available, and what new research do we need before we attempt this project?

Asking “what if” prompts consideration of what do we do if it rains out an outdoor event? What if the honored speaker or guest doesn’t arrive or get there on time? “What if” is one of the backup questions smart planners always ask.

“Is what we are doing the right thing to do?” is a question about ethics. It involves not doing bad things for good reasons, or doing good things for bad reasons. It asks if what you plan to do is appropriate, fair, legal and uses good moral judgment.

The “make a difference” question tests if a project or event will serve a useful purpose, fill a special need or benefit the buyer or the community.

The last question, “Did I/we do our best?” asks how our performance measured up against our stated objectives and professional standards.

Using these basic questions can help ensure success in public relations.

What will the future be? No one knows. However, we do know it will be filled with many unexpected changes. What won’t change in public relations? These values:

• The value of telling the truth. Truth is always wise and in style.
• The need for creativity and imagination; both are always in demand.
• Persistence--keep on trying new things.
• Ethics--it builds trust and keeps good reputations.
• Stewardship--maintaining good relationships is critical.
• A keen sense of humor because from my experience in the business of public relations, you never know what’s gonna happen next!
Learn to write with clarity and persuasion, and get to know the business you are serving, the problems and the opportunities. Spend time developing your "good judgment;" it might be your shining quality.

Don’t be reluctant to become the “loyal opposition” and take an opposite stand if you feel it serves the public interest. Good judgment will tell you when the time is right to do this.

Your goal should be to raise the level of public communications by making truth, integrity and responsibility the standards that may not be compromised.

As communicators you are cast in the role of protecting and enhancing your company’s reputation. More than anyone else in the company, this is your responsibility.

Tell the truth. Never lie to the press. But remember, you are not obligated to tell everything you know about a given situation.

Some say ethics cannot be taught. But certainly your ethical conduct can be honed as you become involved in complex situations. Don’t compromise your ethics. It is who you are.

Every failure to communicate effectively and ethically carries with it a lesson that we must learn and apply, especially in the business world, and especially in today’s contentious business climate.

Lawrence G. Foster, APR, Fellow PRSA
Corporate Vice President, Public Relations (ret)
Johnson & Johnson


Public relations is a fascinating business with a unique personality. It is rarely dull. Don’t be dull.

If you are fortunate enough to work for a CEO, offer him or her friendship and understanding along with your best skills. It is lonely at the top.

Formal learning does not end with the college degree. Experience is the great teacher for the long term.

When you are sitting around the board room table with colleagues from other disciplines, remember that your input will likely be different, as it should be, based on your training and your experience. Express yourself thoughtfully. Strive to be a problem solver.

Enjoy your work. It will reflect in your attitude and your performance.
I began my business life almost 50 years ago when I joined a small public relations firm in Chicago, coming from my first job in the promotion department of MGM Pictures. About a year later, I made a phone call that proved to be a turning point in my life.

In 1957, I made a cold call to a man named Ray Kroc, who had a handful of the old red and white McDonald's around the Chicago area. None of us ever dreamed they would grow to over 30,000 restaurants in over 100 countries around the world. Earlier this year they celebrated their 50th anniversary with much fanfare.

Their community involvement was part of their culture from the very beginning—and still is today, even with their huge advertising budget. I coined the term “Trust Bank” for all the community involvement—which helped them build “deposits” of goodwill in case they might need it for a “withdrawal”—when a crisis or sensitive issue arose.

Back then, there were no color TVs, no mobile telephones, no fax and, of course, no e-mail—let alone blogs. The quartz watch I’m wearing has more computing power than existed in the entire world.

There is a problem, however, with a high-tech, low-touch culture. Too many of us are becoming increasingly reliant on impersonal communication. People are much more willing to use email than to set up face-to-face meetings or even talk on the phone.

We live in a “transparent” society now. Anyone with an Internet connection and an opinion can influence perceptions. Also, people and companies can’t “get away” with unethical or questionable actions—with the watchdogs in government, media and consumer groups that are active today.

Whenever I have the chance, I reiterate my own twist on the old adage: “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.” Actually, it’s my most unfavorable saying. I’ve always said, “Fix it before it breaks.”

We should all have the courage to change things before we have to. Sometimes familiarity can breed contempt. I think JFK (Kennedy, that is, not Kerry) said it: “The time to fix a roof is when the sun is shining.” Nothing could be truer.

Whenever I meet with young people in our office, they usually ask a couple of questions that help me evaluate what I’ve done over the years. There are two questions they always ask: “What have you done that you’re most proud of?” And, “What do you regret not doing?” I like the last question because it’s something I can still do something about and perhaps help them. So we come back to my tried and true tag line: “Fix it before it breaks.” It really boils down to “going with your gut feeling.” The same thing can happen when I’ve been talked out of a good idea when I know it makes sense. We’ve had some of our greater successes when we “stuck to our guns” when the nay-sayers tried to play it safe.

In any business or in life, you must take risks...learn to love it. If you play “not to lose” rather than “to win,” you’ll never be a success.

Albert Einstein once said: “Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new.”
Guided Fleishman-Hillard’s ascent from a regional public relations agency into a leading international communications powerhouse. Recognition for his leadership includes: PRSA’s Gold Anvil Award (2003), PRWeek’s PR Professional of the Year Award, election to the Arthur W. Page Society Hall of Fame (2000), the Missouri Honor Medal for Distinguished Service in Journalism and election to the International Communications Consultancy Organization Hall of Fame.

I have been in the business of public relations for more than 40 years, and I still learn something new every day. That is one of the things I love about our profession. But along the way, I learned some particularly important lessons that have shaped my philosophy of leadership. One of the most valuable of those lessons is the importance of having a vision, and then backing it up with a deep personal commitment—and great people.

After becoming CEO of Fleishman-Hillard in 1974, I began to develop my dreams and aspirations into a vision for our agency. That vision had its basis in a strong, personal commitment to build our company into a firm with the best people, the best reputation, the best clients and one that offered the best communications service on a worldwide basis. That has been our vision for more than 30 years, and it remains our vision today. But, of course, having that vision and making it reality were two very different things.

At the time, Fleishman-Hillard had a single office, so growing a worldwide business was a pretty daunting task. But we planned it carefully; we were guided by our vision, and we worked on it one step at a time...hiring one key person...gaining one additional client...and opening one office at a time: Kansas City in 1977, New York in 1980, Los Angeles in 1982, Washington, D.C. in 1985. Then, two years later, we opened London and Paris offices, beginning our expansion into the international arena.

Those were exciting times. But they were risky times, as well. I was traveling 250,000 miles a year while personally handling our three largest clients. At the same time, we were explaining to our bankers (who absolutely had no idea what we did for a living) why we should open new offices when some of our existing offices had yet to turn a profit. It was tough. My CFO and I personally mortgaged our homes and everything else we owned in order to meet our twice-a-month payroll.

It was a high-risk strategy, but it worked. Our new offices gradually developed a solid client base and began to contribute to our overall operations. Today, of course, we are a world leader. But it was that vision of what we felt Fleishman-Hillard could become that sustained us through that period.

You notice I say “we” and “us” as I discuss our firm’s struggles and our success. The real key to that success, then and now, was that we had the good fortune to find and bring on board truly outstanding people.

That is something I remind myself of every day: You can have all the vision and commitment in the world, but you will not get far without good people. Choose your team carefully. Share your vision with them. Work with them, develop them and they will bring your vision to life.

JOHN D. GRAHAM, APR, FELLOW PRSA
Chairman, Fleishman-Hillard International Communications
I believe that education in public relations and mastery of the ever-enlarging body of research-based knowledge in our discipline are the most important characteristics of today’s best public relations professionals. Public relations began as a trade in which anyone could claim expertise. The result was an undefined and misunderstood practice in which few practitioners took either ethics or the effectiveness of what they did seriously. Leaders such as Edward Bernays, Arthur Page, Earl Newsom, Scott Cutlip, Betsy Plank and Patrick Jackson changed public relations practice to base it on social scientific theories as well as knowledge from the humanities. Academic scholars in public relations now have conducted enough high-quality research to make it both a respected profession as well as a respected academic discipline.

Based on this research, I have come to understand public relations as a strategic management function that uses communication to cultivate relationships with publics that have a stake in the behavior of the organization—either because they benefit from or are harmed by the consequences of that behavior. Public relations has value to an organization because it provides publics with whom it develops relationships a voice in management decisions that affect them. If public relations provides publics a voice in strategic decision-making, management is more likely to make socially responsible decisions. Responsible organizational behaviors, in a reciprocal manner, improve the quality of relationships with publics.

Quality relationships have both financial and nonfinancial value because they reduce the costs of regulation, legislation and litigation; reduce the risk of implementing decisions; and sometimes increase revenue. They also have the secondary effects of improving the reputation of an organization (what members of the public think about it) and reducing negative publicity because there are fewer bad behaviors for journalists to write about. The only way to “manage a reputation” is through managing the organizational behaviors that are reflected in that reputation.

If public relations is a process of cultivating relationships with publics, then the values of the profession should reflect a worldview that is likely to produce good relationships. I believe that the primary value of public relations is a simple one—a value I learned in the rural Midwest—that is embraced by most religions of the world, and whose absence has produced wars and civil unrest throughout human history. That value is concern for others as well as ourselves. It is reflected in what I have called the symmetrical model of public relations, which suggests that public relations should strive to balance the interests of publics with the interests of the organization.

Research also shows that organizations that interact with their publics responsibly are also the most successful. In addition, symmetrical public relations helps society at large by improving parts of the web of relationships that makes up society. The symmetrical value of concern for others as well as ourselves also makes public relations a profession. A profession, by definition, is concerned with the greater good as much or more than self-interest.

The challenge for the next generation of public relations professionals—those of you who now are members of PRSSA—is to practice public relations in this responsible way, explain its values to organizations and people in general and, as a result, gain respect for this most important profession throughout the world.
It's almost impossible for me to realize that I have been privileged to practice public relations for nearly a half century. Working in the profession has always been a joy. I have seen public relations evolve to become an integral part of every business and organization.

In college I knew a lot about the history of Western art, and I could analyze the structure of a well-made play and discuss the philosophy of socialism, communism and democracy. But I didn't have the slightest idea of what public relations was. Only after I was drafted into the Army and assigned to the Army Information School did I learn that this thing we called public information in the military was called public relations in civilian life.

I'd like to share some little wisdoms that I have picked up along the way that may be helpful to you.

• Don't be greedy. Don't accept the job that pays the most. Choose the one that will offer you the best opportunity to learn, stretch and grow. Good things come to those who wait.
• Always rely on straight talk. Be obsessively clear and concise. Waste the jargon and the bull.
• Go the extra mile. Quality service is at a premium today in all business. Especially yours.
• Don't have public relations tunnel vision. Your client will rely on you if he thinks of you as a business advisor and not a vendor. Strive to become an advice giver, not an order taker.
• Be a great team player. Teamwork works. The joy of the business is working with many talented people and being a member of a winning team.
• Remember the nice touches. Money talks and perks work—but little things still mean a lot to the people who are most important to you. I still keep some handwritten notes that I received from my first boss 40 years ago. E-mail is convenient, but a personal note, a book or a lunch with the boss are forever.
• Keep up or drop out. The practice changes faster than the speed of light. Change is the law of life, and the Internet has changed the ball game forever.
• Take the business seriously. But don't take yourself too seriously. Nobody likes a know-it-all. Public relations isn't brain surgery or rocket science. Don't be too disappointed if your pronouncements are neither little noted, nor long remembered.
• Give credit where credit is due. Somebody else may have a better idea. That somebody may be the somebody you work for, or who works for you.
• Keep your sense of humor and have some fun. In the business and in life. Take time to go to a ball game. Visit a museum. Attend a concert. Take in a play. You and your work will be the better for it.

When I concluded 14 years of teaching grad students at Northwestern University, here is what I told my last class: “Truth is what we are all about. Not hype. Not spin. But truth. If public relations is to retain its position as the credible source, we must not blur the line between information and propaganda, between advocacy and salesmanship. The old description of public relations as “the conscience of the corporation” is more relevant than ever in today's complex society. The highest calling of PR is to keep our organization on straight paths, to counsel the powers-that-be not just to say the right thing but to do the right thing. In the future, our job will be even more vital. We will be often called upon to assume the role of gatekeeper that has traditionally been played by the media. Our greatest value to our organizations, the media and our stakeholders must always be to separate information from misinformation and disinformation, and tell it like it is.”
ThOMAS W. HOOG, FELLOw PRSA
Public Speaker and College Lecturer

Former president and CEO of Hill and Knowlton/USA (1996-2001); founder of Hoog & Associates, a governmental affairs firm. Served five years as chief of staff for U.S. Senator Gary Hart. Member of the Advisory Boards of the Smithsonian Institution's Air and Space Museum and the Vietnam War Memorial. Received PRSA’s Gold Anvil Award (2004); named by PR Week as one of the 100 Most Influential Public Relations People of the 20th Century.

The leaders of tomorrow’s communications profession will have to help their clients and colleagues deal with tougher and tougher problems: ethical, legal, financial and social issues that go to the heart of corporate behavior and civic reputation. To earn trust, public relations executives must live up to the highest ideals of integrity and the most rigorous standard of truth-telling, living up to values epitomized by our profession’s pioneers—people like John Hill and Harold Burson.

Whether they work in agencies or “in-house” in corporate communications roles, practitioners should focus on providing strategic counsel based on solid research, a thorough understanding of corporate operations and public-spirited strategies. Offering candid counsel based on what really counts—a nuanced understanding of what the marketplace wants and substantive knowledge of what our society needs—is the surest way to win, and retain, public confidence.

Most important, the leaders of our profession must shun the dangerous “spin cycle” that has corrupted civic dialogue. “Spin” debases the entire process of communications as it seeks to divert public attention from fundamental challenges by resorting to quick-fix, skim-the-surface tactics that are intended to confuse people rather than clarify issues.

As long as public debate remains trapped in a shallow culture of spin, our profession will fail to gain the respect it deserves. Worse, the reliance on spin will feed the public’s cynicism, leading people to distrust everything they hear, as they recoil from messages which they recognize are crafted to delude them.

The culture of spin is destructive to our clients, the organizations we serve and our profession. A debased dialogue is not good for corporate credibility, and it undermines clients’ abilities to achieve their goals. It’s not good for consumers, who can’t tell where reliable information stops and spin begins. And it’s not good for our own long-term interests, because allowing public distrust to fester diminishes our credibility.

Tomorrow’s leaders, recognizing that the spin cycle is broken, should insist that the entire culture of spin be discarded.

Fending off substantive challenges to serious corporate concerns will always require candid communications that reflect a transparent and civic-minded corporate culture. Organizations win and retain public trust when they are values-driven organizations, with a humane corporate culture that is profit-oriented yet people-focused. We should remind our clients that the bedrock of corporate behavior should be the highest ethical values—a sense of high standards about how companies should treat their customers, shareholders and employees.

Communicators have an important role to play in meeting this challenge. They, perhaps more than anyone else in the corporate structure, should expunge the term “spin” from their lexicon. They should ensure that the highest value of all—allegiance to the truth—remains the central factor in corporate behavior.

Communicators are in a position to counsel CEOs and executives to elevate their vision. We can help them strengthen their corporate reputations—as well as do some good for society—by encouraging them to match their words with their deeds. We can exhort them, in the words of one great corporate leader, Michael Capellas, to “Do the right thing, because it’s the right thing to do.” And in helping clients recognize that they must fulfill broad-minded civic responsibilities, we can live up to our own ambition to elevate public trust in our profession.

The future leaders of our profession must reaffirm our role as counselors of corporate behavior, keepers of corporate reputation and guardians of corporate integrity. It’s a tall order, and it requires the highest professional standards. But I feel confident that our next generation of leaders will be up to the task.
When I look back on my 50-year career in public relations, starting when we still used carbon paper, mimeo machines and the U.S. mail, I am particularly gratified to note the progress made by women in the field. I well remember my first luncheon as a member of PRSA’s New York Chapter attended by about 200 people—only 10 of whom were women. What a different picture we see today.

In the late sixties, when my sister and I decided to make an offer for the firm Dudley-Anderson-Yutzy, at the time numbering about 100 on staff, we invited several men from the firm to join us. All but two turned us down, inferring they didn’t wish to work for women, and took off with their clients. We took the risk anyway and went ahead, consolidated our resources, introduced salary parity for men and women and focused our business on consumer products, especially food and beverages.

In those days, we were frequently invited to make presentations to various prospective corporate clients as the token agency headed by women. We always responded, although suspecting we didn’t have a prayer of being elected. As we broadened our scope of operations, a breakthrough finally came when we won the business of a sizable Midwestern city. During our orientation visit, a member of the Chamber of Commerce told us, “We never thought we’d hire an agency headed by women….But we’re glad we did.”

Several years later, after quadrupling the business, we sold the firm to a top advertising agency, with the promise we would continue to run the business. Lesson learned: after a few years, the situation changes completely. I departed, then entering the most satisfying phase of my public relations experience. With two partners I started a new firm, which has evolved into a highly successful independent company. We hired and trained young practitioners, some of whom now own the firm. Among the points emphasized: do your homework, keep your eye on the target, never stop learning, be straightforward, don’t over promise and follow through. As a result, the business has grown in the very best way possible—through referrals.

In the early days, many in our field looked down on efforts to promote products as simply “publicity,” not worthy of the term public relations. As marketers discovered what a difference a well-conceived campaign could make, more of their dollars were committed to PR. Also, as the voice of the consumer became stronger and communications infinitely more diverse and direct, detailed information and explanations are demanded and expected. Now management cannot afford to overlook the public relations function.

My own public relations training came on the job at a time when there were few resources other than willing mentors to guide a young person. Basically, what I learned is that common sense, good judgment, curiosity, integrity and follow-through, plus mastery of basic skills, will take one a long way. Of these, I would single out integrity as being a key factor, especially today when there is such lack of trust in government, business, the media and institutions once thought to be infallible. Students today are fortunate to have experienced professors and a range of courses and resources to guide them in this field.

What makes public relations a worthy profession? I found it to be always challenging, never dull and often fun. It’s solving problems, negotiating sensitive situations, fostering understanding and nurturing trust. It’s a continuing opportunity to learn something new, broaden one’s perspective and be a catalyst for change. The field has gained a great deal of respect, a respect that can only be maintained by strict adherence to excellent and ethical performance.
So you want to make a difference! There's no reason why you can't. The opportunities are enormous—and increasing daily. They range from helping community groups to influencing behavior worldwide. The greatest opportunities are for those who seek a mission, not a job. They will have a career that is always challenging, never dull and constantly changing—a recipe for an exciting and rewarding life. Are you ready for such a challenge? Do you have a passion to succeed?

A good place to start is mastering the many communication tools available today—both written and verbal. As media proliferate, the demand for original thinking and material grows in quantity and value. Knowing a subject and having something creative to say is essential. (Many can describe problems; few can offer realistic solutions.) Seeing something from a different perspective and providing a fresh viewpoint that others understand distinguishes a person as exceptional. It's not necessary to be a genius—just enthusiastic.

There are many good role models.

Modern persuasive communications can be traced to the 1760s when Sam Adams and a small group of inflamed revolutionaries initiated a wave of public discontent that ultimately led to the American colonies independence. They were aided by the writings in 1776 of Thomas Paine in his persuasive Common Sense, which further incited a dissatisfied public to revolt against the establishment. In the inspiring Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson eloquently set forth the precepts of individual freedom and democracy. The Federalist papers authors—James Madison, Alexander Hamilton and John Jay—laid the groundwork for the adoption of the U.S. Constitution in 1789. Never underestimate the power of an aroused minority.

Opinion forming communication continues to play an important role in shaping the course of history. There are:

- more communication tools than ever (thanks to the ubiquitous Internet);
- more people seeking knowledge (informed and uninformed);
- more leaders (of all kinds) who understand the capabilities and value of persuasive communications.

But as Arthur Page, founder of corporate public relations, declared, “Prove it with action.” Public perceptions are determined 90 percent by what is done, 10 percent by what is said. Individual success depends first and foremost on developing a reputation for being truthful, accurate and dependable. The CEO of one of America's largest technology companies told me the best advice he ever received came from an uncle who advised, “Never lie. You’re not smart enough. Liars never overcome their negative reputation.” Follow your moral compass. Do the right thing. Always.

The CEO of a global company for whom people clamor to work recommended, “Treat others with respect. Don’t check your personal values at the door.” For those interested in long-term success, the golden rule never fails.

Success also depends on looking at the perimeter 360 degrees around you (or the organization). As Scottish poet Robert Burns implored, “O wad some Power the giftie gie us to see ursels as ither see us!” Know what your boss’s boss (at any level) thinks. Good research eliminates surprises. Advertising guru David Ogilvy explained, “Too often research is used like a drunkard uses a lamppost: for support, not illumination.” Learn from failures (unavoidable unless you never try something new).

Those who are articulate and persuasive can make a difference—and have a rewarding life in the process. But in the end nothing will change if you don’t have energy, passion and enjoy making things happen.
Previously, EVP of brand strategy and advertising at AT&T and a member of the company’s Management Executive Committee; SVP of public relations and chairman of the AT&T Foundation. Co-founder of Earth Day; trustee of Columbia University, the New York City Ballet and the New York Presbyterian Hospital. Elected to the Arthur W. Page Society Hall of Fame in 2002 and served as chair of the society. Named one of the 100 Most Influential Columbia Alumni of all time.

The most polished skills, strategies and tactics are not enough to carry you from the role of practitioner to that of a trusted counselor. A solid knowledge of your corporation’s—or your client’s—business, good judgment born of experience and a broad understanding of public opinion and trends will bring authority to your advice. But you’ll never know how central integrity is until you’ve been through a few crises. And that may be too late. (Virtually all reputation crises end up being tests of character and integrity.)

Our business is crammed with pressures to subtly shade the truth—whether to tell powerful executives what they want to hear—or to deny that we live in a transparent society and agree that potentially damaging facts can remain hidden—or to hype a brand until the marketing bears little resemblance to its real capabilities. Avoiding the details of complicated financial transactions…managing phony grassroots support groups…starting rumors on web sites…paid word of mouth…it’s easy to just “go along.” Then, when big trouble hits (sooner or later it always does) and it’s time to tell the truth, tell it fast and take accountability for what went wrong. There’s no time to build credibility and trust with customers, the media—or your client.

Whoever you are counseling, when things get tough it will become critical that you have a history of consistently telling him or her the truth. What does it take to build that kind of close, trusting relationship?

• Learn the client’s business. Really. What’s the actual source of its success? What is the essence of the brand? What are the unspoken rules that drive the culture? Who are your allies on the business team? How relevant is your input?

• Listen deeply to all kinds of audiences—through all kinds of media—so you bring a convincing, uniquely “outside” perspective to the table. Then add big-picture analysis that helps put business decisions into a sound context.

• Leave your personal agenda, fancy models and formula solutions at home. Bring options that can lead to better and workable solutions for the challenge at hand.

• Don’t be intimidated. Always remember our job is to help the client do the right thing, not just communicate what he’s doing. And that takes guts, especially early in the game. You may be the only one in the room who isn’t ready to go with the flow. But don’t our jobs train us to question facile or backward-looking assumptions…to bring to the table voices that reflect the world the way it is, not the way we wish it were? Aren’t our skills all about engaging productively with people who don’t agree with us? Aren’t we all about establishing credibility through dialogue and engagement? When it comes to issues of reputation, you may not be expected to be tough at the time…but you’re always expected to have been tough in hindsight!

• Finally, invest emotionally. It’s a lot easier to be heard when people feel you care whether they win or lose.

In short, the path to becoming a respected counselor is to be competent, be open to new ideas, be honest and, above all, be true to yourself.

MARILYN LAURIE
President, Laurie Consulting
Career included 42 years in public relations, advertising and marketing with Rockwell, The Raytheon Company and Sperry Rand Corporation. Chaired the PR Seminar and Global Public Relations Council, and served on boards of the Arthur W. Page Society and the Advertising Council. Taught public relations at San Diego State University; served as advisor to the Dean of the Graduate School of Business, William and Mary College. Recipient of the Arthur W. Page Society’s Hall of Fame Award (1999).

My perspectives of the field of public relations are rooted primarily in service to public corporations. Fundamental to success in serving the public interests of any organization is a dedication to understanding and applying the fundamental skills of communication as though the very existence of your organization depended upon it. Sounds so obvious that it is hardly worth saying, doesn’t it?

Before I go further, I ask you to consider this sage advice from Arthur W. Page, a great pioneer in public relations. He said, “All business in a democratic society begins with public permission and exists by public approval.” I recommend applying this fact in respect to the importance of communications in every facet of an organization. Think also of the implications to constituencies of organizations (e.g., employees, customers, shareowners and suppliers) whose management has the accountability for building and maintaining public trust. At the core of earning public trust is strong, insistent and consistent communications management from within. Those of us in this field must be prepared to supply the vision, leadership and professional ingredients to meet this challenge.

Today, implications of the term “public corporation” are more demanding than ever. Virtually every issue confronting corporate management is laced with public relations considerations. Responses to these issues, in most cases, involve global publics and, as a result, varied social, economic and cultural interpretations of your message. The complexities of ensuring that your public intentions are favorably received have grown exponentially as have the methods and speed of disseminating information. From my view, the skills of communication haven’t changed much over time. However, competing in the global marketplace poses challenges that were incomprehensible only a few years ago.

The world in which we trade and communicate has undergone immense change, but there remains a somewhat naïve attitude among management leaders about the significance of professional communications in the management structure. Are we publicity agents…reputation gurus…advertising specialists…crisis responders…or does our appropriate accountability span all of these as the organization’s senior public policy official? Along with other senior members of the executive group, we must earn the position as solid, sensible, knowledgeable executives who participate fully at the inner circle of management. Since my retirement 10 years ago, I have witnessed numerous examples of public, private, government and non-profit organization catastrophes where assignment of public accountabilities was sadly lacking and, quite possibly, primarily responsible for those failures.

Of course, those with ambitions to practice public communications at the highest levels must prepare themselves. The fundamentals are critical to success in any field. Clear, concise and credible communications skills are essential personal attributes for leadership in public relations.

Understanding business principles is basic to participating in the organization’s management process. Seeking and listening to mentors on any subject that’s conceivably helpful in building steps to a successful career path is a sign of good judgment. Common sense and hard work are useful frostings on the cake.

The future will undoubtedly provide unimaginable challenges and opportunities for public relations executives. The speed with which information moves is a double-edged sword. It will be your measure of success to accurately interpret the needs, timing and content for communications to the marketplace. Arthur W. Page’s admonition to “manage for tomorrow” has never been more relevant.
Responsible for public relations programs and strategies for Scripps two cable channels, DIY Network and Fine Living TV Network. Joined Scripps Howard after 17 years of public relations and public affairs support to a variety of federal government clients. President of the PRSA Foundation and a former member of the PRSA board of directors. Co-chair of the Champions for PRSSA. Recipient of PRSA’s Ferguson Award (2006).

One of the first things I ask every student who tells me they want to go into public relations is, “Do you have the personality for PR?” In this light, what does it take to be successful at public relations? Here’s my top 10 characteristics for success:

- **Be Creative.** In a competitive media marketplace, tried and true is the right way to go for crisis communication and investor relations. The practitioner who can see new opportunities and approaches will be the leader instead of the follower.

- **Be Curious.** Questioning how things work and why they’re done that way will serve you well. It helps to understand the inner workings to determine how to do it better, or how to deliver a stronger message that resonates with your objective.

- **Be Competitive.** Shy and retiring won’t get you into the best position to promote your client and brand. In business, there are limited opportunities to position yourself within the marketplace, and, unless you understand and are willing to compete, you’re missing out. If you aren’t providing the opportunities, marketing is more than happy to step up and deliver the message.

- **Be a Storyteller.** People remember the facts better and react more favorably to a story than to lists. The human element of any issue also is more compelling than the financial. Focus your public relations on the story, and, more often than not, you’ll find success.

- **Build a Network.** A public relations professional is only as good as his/her contacts—media, vendors and peers. Sitting in an office won’t get you where you need to be if you want to impact your business. Reach out, find a mentor and become a part of the community, the industry and the profession. Every person you meet provides unique experiences and additional expertise. Remember, too, that giving brings greater returns, so you should always be looking to help others before you can expect them to help you.

- **Be a Complete Communicator.** While it’s widely accepted that writing is an essential skill, don’t underestimate the value of being a good speaker and using visuals/pictures to convey your message. Use every tool in your toolkit to communicate.

- **Put Ethics First.** Protect your reputation, which is the biggest asset any professional has. Adhering to the highest ethical standards will have better returns on your career than any educational degree or client campaign. Without it, you may no longer be in business.

- **Look/Listen/Learn.** Much of what makes a successful practitioner is the ability to evaluate interactions and relationships to identify what’s not being said. Many times it’s who is not talking and why, or who is not interacting with whom and why, that makes the difference. To manage relationships and affect change, the biggest job is sometimes the research and back ground to explain how and why a problem has arisen. Otherwise, you run the risk of “misdiagnosing” the problem.

- **Avoid Ethnocentricity.** Viewing other cultures or interactions from the perspective of your own heritage limits the diversity of ideas and opinions that elevate our ability to better communicate and enhance change. Diversity is not about representation, but more about understanding how each of us filters and interprets based upon our own experiences and values. By attempting to limit judgment and allow for understanding alternative perceptions and preferences, a practitioner can better serve a company or client and communicate more effectively.

- **Embrace Change.** Become a change agent, supporting and understanding the challenges of change within an organization. Most people are uncomfortable with change, but our profession is based on helping people change actions, attitudes, opinions or beliefs. In this rapidly changing marketplace, the one leading the change will be the true public relations professional.
Two thousand six was a very good year. Becoming the first woman of color to win the coveted Gold Anvil Award was a defining moment for me personally and professionally. I have been fortunate to practice this craft for almost 30 years in a variety of organizations. I have educated and mentored practitioners, contributed to the body of knowledge and created a new discipline that helped practitioners become proficient in communicating with multicultural audiences.

What I’ve learned over the years is that this profession challenges each of us to be prepared to chance the unconventional; to be as comfortable with uncertainty as we are with change; to master the art of good storytelling; and to be trustworthy, passionate, forward-thinking visionaries.

I’ve also learned that success comes from knowing the answer to the question, “What is your deepest fear?” Author Marianne Williamson’s eloquent words serve as a mantra for all of us high-achievers who view the word “no” as an incentive to be more creative:

“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.”

I offer these words of wisdom to educate, energize and empower the next generation of public relations practitioners to be fearless. Those of us who have come before you have had to push open doors and envelopes, challenge the status quo, take calculated risks and continue to be outspoken advocates for this profession. We have savored the accolades, borne the criticism and given our time and talent to help create a profession that values itself and those who practice it ethically. The following recommendations have inspired me and continue to keep me energized.

Perhaps they’ll work for you as well.

• Every problem can be solved with effective public relations.
• Learn how money is made and spent in the world.
• Lead by example. You either stand for something or you’ll fall for anything.
• Learn how to separate being liked from being respected.
• Develop your own vision statement, develop a plan and work that plan.
• Become your own brand and let it guide you to personal success.
• Find your passion in this profession and then do what you enjoy throughout your career.
• Learn how to communicate directly and professionally.
• Stay abreast of the new technology.
• Become proficient at writing for non-captive audiences.
• Read, read and read some more. A well-read person is a great conversationalist.
• Make a commitment to lifelong learning today: you can’t change behavior if you don’t understand it.
• Not measuring is not an option. Numbers are our friends.
• Mentors are a necessity throughout one’s career. Develop relationships with colleagues at various stages in their careers. You’ll be surprised what you can learn from their mistakes and successes.
• Approach diversity as an opportunity, not a problem.
• Keep your own counsel, but never be afraid or ashamed to ask for help.
• Always give back to the profession by using your talent and experience to help others.
• Join a professional association such as PRSA and become involved.
• Don’t take yourself seriously—take your work seriously.
• If you have a sense of humor, great. If you don’t, find one quickly. You’ll need it if you want to survive in this profession.

Your career journey in public relations will be full of surprises. There will be great successes and perhaps a few failures. No matter what lies ahead, stand tall, hold your head up and don’t be afraid!
When I graduated from college, I was ready to tackle the world but with no clear idea of what was in store for me. It was probably just as well since it turned out to be quite a ride. During my career in public relations, I have worked for four global companies, 13 CEO’s and a major agency, plus my own family agency. I have traveled to most of the major countries in the world and worked on just about every kind of business situation you can imagine.

My advice for anyone contemplating a public relations career is to approach it with eyes and mind wide open, be accepting of change, never fear challenges and, along the way, try to enjoy every minute of what can be a highly satisfying career choice.

To achieve success in this highly competitive field--and in the world of corporate communications that means gaining a seat at the policy-making table of senior management--you have to develop skills that go well beyond the basic public relations capabilities that you will use as you climb the management ladder.

Your focus has to be on the business you are serving. That requires a deep understanding of the company, its cultures and its values. You also need to know the dynamics of the business, its strategies and goals and, above all, the expectation of the company’s leadership.

In addition, you have to be an ambassador to the larger world. Perhaps more than any other executive besides the CEO, the chief public relations officer must know what is going on inside and outside the organization and how the company’s plans and actions relate to its various publics. That is an increasingly tough job because in the 24/7 news world we live in today, and the multiple information sources that are available to everyone, there are no secrets and no way to avoid public criticism if your actions don’t meet with public approval.

It is the chief public relations officer’s job to see that the perspective he or she has developed about the business and its publics is heard, understood and heeded by management. In other words, bring awareness and objectivity about what is happening in the world-at-large to the table and in doing so inject credible, usable information into the decision-making process. As you might expect, it’s not always a comfortable role to play. But if you have earned the respect of your peers and developed credibility in everything you do, you will more often than not be listened to.

One of the most challenging aspects of today’s public relations job has been the development of the global marketplace. It has changed both the way that corporations do business and the way we must practice public relations. We now must interact with globally connected media and with different cultures that view the world from different perspectives. More than ever before, corporate PR professionals must be good social scientists as well as good social counselors. It’s a challenge we should all welcome. It’s what makes us better public relations professionals.
In the 40 years since establishment of the PRSSA, the practice of public relations has certainly come of age, especially in terms of the acceptance of this critical skill set by well-managed companies and institutions. This is good news for anyone considering this challenging and rewarding career field.

Our profession has developed to the point where another significant advance should be considered through the identification and articulation of a set of shared values and responsibilities—a universal statement of beliefs (beyond a code of ethics)—that would help to define the true character of public relations for both those who seek our services, and for those who choose this professional career path.

What might be some shared values and responsibilities that our profession should own?

The first should probably be about the “publics” or audiences—both internal and external—with whom we communicate, and the importance we place on telling the truth. We need to say that we value audiences that are well informed about our organizations or clients, and not just partly informed. Transparency would be a good value to own.

A second core value would be about how we see our responsibilities to clients. We’re accused of using “spin,” of always putting our clients first and the best face on events. In reality, what we strive to be are honest advocates for the positions taken by our companies or clients and the objectives they seek to pursue. “Honest advocacy,” I believe, requires that we maintain the highest personal integrity and a position of independence and objectivity within our own organizations—the level of independence that allows us to counsel freely on the formation of organizational policy and then insist on organizational behavior that is consistent with the public positions we have taken. It’s time to say this is what we value, and that we’re taking on this responsibility.

A third value would be among freedom of expression and the news media—traditional media and new media. After all, in the classic definition of public relations, we regard the media as gatekeepers—the third party—through which we seek to achieve credibility for the messages we direct at our audiences. Certainly we value and respect high journalistic standards such as fairness and balance. We should say so. But maybe we also need to say that we believe in freedom of expression and especially freedom of the press as the foundation of society.

A fourth core value relates to our own profession. We have a responsibility to advance understanding of the legitimacy of our function, what we value, the principles that guide our practice and the ethical standards we embrace. As well, we need to exhibit a personal commitment to the highest standards of individual character and integrity—standards that we expect from each other and anyone who seeks to take up this practice.

I believe the public relations profession has reached the stage in its development where it has the opportunity to set itself apart, to clarify its values, roles and responsibilities and to achieve a singular character that is both palatable and enduring.
JOHN PALSZEK, APR, FELLOW PRSA
Senior Counsel, Ketchum


A profession must have a basic, defining social purpose. Medicine has health. Law has order. And public relations has harmony. I heard that statement at a Public Relations Society of America conference many years ago, and it’s been at the root of many of my professional experiences since then—some of which I’ve participated in, others I’ve observed with great interest.

Now, some will say that harmony is a naïve or arrogant goal for our profession. To them, I say think again. Harmony, after all, comes in many sizes. In today’s vernacular it’s “scalable” (but in reverse). And it comes in many forms—joining marketer to customer, shareholder to company directors, management to employees, corporation to society and, yes, a nation to the global community.

If harmony, or something very much like it—mutual understanding, common interest, cooperation or a transaction—is our ultimate calling, we’re in an enviable position to help our organizations achieve it. Because effective public relations operates at the interface of the organization and society. That means gathering and interpreting ever-changing public expectations and demands, influencing policy and performance and articulating the organization’s decisions and offerings.

That may sound grandiose at the entry-level when you’re writing a new product release or staffing a special event. It’s not. Because even at that level and in those assignments, the task is to explore and develop common interests.

Furthermore, in public relations we have a powerful weapon in this task: language. Think about playwright Tom Stoppard’s profound observation about the potential impact of words: “Words are sacred. They deserve respect. If you get the right ones in the right order, you can nudge the world a little…”

Nudge the world a little. How’s that for a life’s work? Nudge it toward what? Obviously, toward harmony that contributes to an improved quality of life and a higher standard of living. And make no mistake, every little “nudge” in that direction—a new product or service, public policy in the common interest or simply empathetic dialogue—can make an incremental contribution.

You will, of course, encounter cynics. Some will say that “The world is going to hell in a hand basket.” The temptation is to despair; terrorism, regional wars, economic inequality, disease and the threat of ecological disaster all point in that direction.

But the counter-argument is powerful. Author Robert Wright has given us perhaps the most thoughtful analysis of the long upward arrow of human history. He tells us that despite many setbacks, “It is hard, after pondering the full sweep of history, to resist the conclusion that—in some important ways, at least—the world now stands at its moral zenith to date.”

And Wright poses this seminal question: “Given the centrality of information technology…is it possible that we are passing through a true threshold, a change as basic as the transition from hunter-gatherer village to chiefdom, from chiefdom to ancient state?”

This may well be the world that my generation is leaving for you, public relations students. Clearly, today’s members of PRSSA will be practicing public relations in a very changed world in the decades ahead. If you’re to be successful in that ever-changing world, you must not shrink from such “big think” questions.

With such exciting prospects for our profession, I can’t help but I wish I were starting all over again in public relations.
YOU, MY FELLOW PROFESSIONALS, YOU ARE STARTING YOUR CAREER WITH A SOUND KNOWLEDGE BASE AND POSSESS TECHNICAL COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS FAR SURPASSING MINE.

These are my thoughts for your consideration and, in some cases, action:

Hold to the belief that public relations is an honorable profession essential to the democratic process. Ground yourself in the Code of Ethics, develop counseling skills and keep in touch with your professors about behavioral research you can use.

Public relations is a behavioral science; success is measured on how well our strategy achieves its goals: to change, to maintain, to stop or to prevent certain actions.

Our core mission is to build mutually satisfying relationships that create a bank of trust in both good and bad times. Know the paradigm for measuring trust.

Public relations is both an expanding universe and a hybrid discipline. Thinking about an M.A. in Communications or Business? Consider a minor in organizational development, social psychology or modern anthropology.

You are expert in using the current technical communication tools. But iPod phones are just tools; they will change. The heart of the profession is embedding your action plan in sound communications theory.

The key to the leadership group is your ability to demonstrate a problem-solving approach helpful to managers in legal, financial, personnel, planning or production. But first listen to learn how they see their problems.

Think carefully about the torrent of social media: does it build personal relationships that equal the power of getting to know an individual over a cup of coffee? Maybe you can triple task, but solving problems strategically requires focused thought. My subconscious works well overnight when the chatter has subsided.

The symbols of cultural history and the cadences of poetry are the keys to touching the human heart. These are the emotional triggers that influence the decisions we make.

Know what’s going on in our global village. Read The Wall Street Journal, or The Economist or listen to NPR. No issue is an island: solving it requires putting it in a larger environment of past, present and future.

Find a way to talk quietly to those holding different views within or without your organization. When they know you understand their values, you may be surprised to find some common ground.

It is commonplace to attribute institutional woes to “lack of communication.” Stakeholders may retort, “Your actions speak so loudly we cannot hear a word you’re saying.”

I asked Senator George Mitchell—one of my heroes—how he managed to help the Sinn Fein and the Northern Irish leaders find common ground for peace-making after centuries of bitter, bloody hostility. He said, “I did a lot of listening.” We know a great deal about getting out our message. How much do we understand about the art and the power of listening?

Join PRSA; it’s a ready-made network. With your first paycheck start giving back by sending $25 to the PRSSA scholarship fund, c/o of the PRSA Foundation.

ISOBEL PARKE, APR, FELLOW PRSA
Senior Counsel, Jackson Jackson & Wagner

Today’s aspiring public relations students and young professionals have a running start on their careers: formal study in the discipline and early commitment to the profession. Most have also had internships, mentoring by educators and practitioners, leadership experience and connections through PRSSA and multi-cultural and global perspectives.

Those opportunities weren’t there for most of my generation. We arrived from other studies, other occupations—primarily journalism. (This history/political science major had never heard of public relations!) The customary qualification: writing. The rest we learned by the seat of our pants or skirts—growing with the field as it evolved from one-way communication, publicity and event production to a management function charged with building reputation and relationships, dedicated to truth and listening; enlightened by research; disciplined by corporate objectives; increasingly challenged by societal issues.

So what lessons learned would have currency if I were starting all over again today? Among the many I remember and value:

- **Ethics and Integrity.** They are not simply a professional “code” to begin observing on the job. They are one’s here-and-now character and compass—in today’s classrooms, in daily relationships and behavior throughout a lifetime.
- **Mentoring.** In every corner of career and life, you’ll nurture and benefit from mentors. But also—begin now to become a mentor—upperclassmen to younger students, new alumni to classrooms and interns. From wherever you stand today, reach out a caring, responsible hand.
- **Knowing the Business—of clients/employers, for-profit and not-for-profit.** How it works; its products or services; its objectives; its financials; its constituencies, competition and corporate culture.
- **Computer Miracles.** Their wonders and resources are tools for a professional’s command, not captivity. They never replace face-to-face encounters fundamental to public relations practice. At least not so long as volatile, stubborn and complex human beings are around!
- **Community Service.** Beyond the daily desk, volunteering hones leadership skills, develops new contacts and insights, helps solve community problems. It’s also good for the soul.
- **Passion for Reading—newspapers and periodicals, of course.** But also research, history, contemporary and classical literature. (And keep re-reading the essays of Emerson and E.B. White, Betsy!)
- **Professional Organizations.** They provide unique opportunities to continue learning, develop leadership skills, forge collegial connections and make significant contributions to the profession’s progress and promise.
- **Public Relations.** Practiced at its best, it is a proud, powerful and responsible profession, essential to a democratic society in which people make daily decisions in the workplace, the marketplace, the community and the voting booth. Besides, it’s populated by many of the brightest, most creative, caring “can-do” men and women of honor, heart and humor—curiously addicted to the rigors of problem solving. Traveling in that spirited company is a great adventure!

Amen, my young colleagues. Welcome aboard the journey!
JOHN M. REED, APR, FELLOW PRSA
Chairman, Consultants in Public Relations


A good definition of public relations is “organized, ethical persuasion.” International public relations simply means you “do it someplace else.” By “someplace else,” I mean places where the audience or public is different from the persuader, where geographic, linguistic, historical, religious and other boundaries are crossed. In particular terms it means working in other societies, countries, ethnic pockets. International PR requires the persuader or PR person to have an extra skill set that includes linguistic ability, a knack for and desire to engage in cross-cultural persuasion.

In my own case, a deep interest in other people and cultures came in the form of a post card from my father, Charles Leo Reed. The dog-eared post card arrived at my boarding school in Leonardstown, Maryland from Lima, Peru, when I was in the sixth grade. Wow! That stamp was strange, the picture of the Andes exciting, and the fact that my father was there was amazing to this ten-year-old boy. My curiosity was stimulated, a feeling that exists to this day. I delved into geography and history and languages, determined to travel the world. Later I gained the opportunity to do so in the U.S. Army, and in my PR career. I early decided to concentrate on international PR. What fun!

Working abroad means finding those avenues, media and programs that will be effective in persuading, for example, local employees to work hard and remain loyal; produce legislation and regulatory systems that are fair and compatible with good practice; potential tourists to visit particular places; and so on. The important concept to be learned is that peoples differ markedly from place to place in terms of their histories, religions, interests, values and so forth, and that to persuade such audiences one needs to have local help, a person of the local ethos.

The old slogan that the world is getting smaller no longer applies. It was spoken of the modern transportation making it possible for people to travel easily over long distances to visit formerly remote destinations. Today the world is getting bigger as greater numbers of discreet linguistic, ethnic and political groups establish separate, sometimes independent nations or entities. The membership in the United Nations, originally a few dozen nations, now has over 200 members. Persuading people in Tahiti is quite different from persuading Cape Verdians.

For future practitioners of the noble art of ethical persuasion there is a growing need and opportunity for young, well-educated, energetic university graduates with a solid foundation in liberal arts, languages, history, writing, media and, most importantly, with genuine interest in “other” people and what makes them tick. Come on in, the water’s fine, especially in Tahiti and Cape Verde!
I’ve always thought that the highest praise a person can be given is to be known by his peers as a “pro”—as someone who knows what to do, knows how to do it with exquisite skill and gets it done cleanly, under pressure and when it counts, without a lot of fanfare or arm waving. That’s what you in PRSSA, I hope, are on your way to becoming professionals.

Don’t be put off by the game imagery. In a very real sense this is a game—one of the most difficult and demanding games imaginable. Its goal is to affect human behavior. It focuses on the most unpredictable and unmanageable off all subjects—the human mind and emotions. It relies for success on the most difficult of human activities—communications. It is a hard game. The stakes are high. There are winners and losers. It is exciting, challenging, demanding and, for people with the talent and drive to play it well, the best game in town.

If you’re reading this, I assume you’re one of them. If so, there are lessons from the recent past I hope you’ll keep in mind as you go about the play of the game.

Among the major lessons is that our responsibilities are broader than we once thought they were.

We’ve learned, I believe, that our organizations have a positive duty to inform. All those who are touched by our actions have a right to know what we’re doing and how it affects them. Our institutions and businesses have a responsibility to provide not just the disclosures required by law, but the clear and complete information people need to allow them to make informed decisions, in their own self interest, about our performance and our actions. Nothing less is acceptable in the world we operate in now.

But perhaps most importantly, we learned that Arthur Page was right. Page, an early AT&T executive who was a pioneer in our field, contended that, “All business in a democratic society begins with public permission and exists by public approval.” The successful corporation, he believed, had to operate in the public interest, manage for the long run and make customer satisfaction its primary goal. “The successful business must,” he said, “conduct itself in such a way that the public will give it sufficient freedom to serve effectively.”

All organizations exist and prosper only at the pleasure of the publics they serve. They earn the public’s support only by operating responsibly and acting fairly. Managements that are out raping and pillaging the countryside are going to be crucified, and should be.

The way to avoid such a fate is to do the right thing...as the public defines the right thing. There is nothing really difficult involved: provide quality products and services, sell them at fair prices, pay your people a reasonable wage and treat them with respect, don’t endanger human life or disregard the environment, pay your taxes, be honest, operate ethically. The only real impediments to such conduct are greed and arrogance. Don’t get trapped by them.

And do keep in mind one fundamentally important fact: yours, as a public relations professional, is a singular responsibility.

What you do, when you do it right, makes a real difference. It makes a difference in what people know, think and feel. And consequently it makes a difference in how they act—on matters that affect not only the normal flow of daily life, but the quality of life in our society itself. This responsibility is not to be taken lightly, nor are your skills to be hired out in the service of interests at odds with the public weal.

Good luck.
One of the great things about public relations is that you are working at the interface…with everyone and everything that can substantially impact the outcome of an organization. Sometimes we are a contributor, and sometimes we are the director of the outcome…it’s where we work and what we do. The Chicago Police have a slogan on their shoulder patches: “We serve and protect.” Well, ours should say, “We protect and produce.” In public relations it is all about the success of the enterprise, the ability of the organization to meet its goals, accomplish its plans and meet the measurements consistent with its mission.

It is vital you know how your organization works…to understand the financials…understand what determines success and where you can produce or protect. We are responsible, first, for our reputation, for the trust all the stakeholders put in our organization. Reputation is the ante; without watching over it, your ability to do more is in jeopardy. It has everything to do with how you see your job, your responsibility, your space and your ability to deliver on an ambitious view of your profession.

One of the major differences between the top people in public relations and those who feel they don’t get enough respect is personal and professional self-confidence. This is the “essence” of who we are, and we have to stake claim to our impact on the success of the enterprise. Standing at the interface is not without risk.

Not everyone is suited to be in public relations. Public relations has historically been taught beside journalism, as a communication development and dissemination job, one that explained, positioned, convinced or frankly covered up an organization’s actions, good or bad. That was never the perfect model. The outcomes, the trust, even the successes are driven by behavior…more about how the organization is behaving than what it is saying.

Public relations is a very visible and sometimes controversial position. It is our job to “tell truth to power,” which is not always desired or accepted. But it is what we do…especially in this increasingly transparent world… and sometimes it requires you to put your job on the line. I can remember being asked by a CEO to communicate to customers and employees why we were arbitrarily shutting down some offices and not others. My answer was that “I was not good enough; the facts did not support the action.” The result was a more rational approach to office shutdowns. The idea is to focus on outcomes, not merely outputs: we need to keep our eye on the business side of the business.

While the profession is getting tougher, it can also be a lot more rewarding. There are no more secrets; the media is no longer the best path to acceptance; the shareholder is becoming more empowered, aggressive and intrusive; and brands are losing their power. Bottom line, whether we are working at the center of the storm, or on the fringes, we must have management’s confidence that not only do we understand the issues, but that we can be effective in influencing the ultimate outcome. Good business judgment, no matter how you acquire it, is fundamental to success in public relations.
In the immediate post World War II years, as the young acting secretary of the provisional committee of the embryonic International Public Relations Association, I was privileged to learn directly from this comparatively small band, drawn from a number of different countries and cultures, what they believed were the social and moral values underpinning the work of the public relations specialist.

They were exercised as to the beneficial contribution which we could make to the Brave New World we all earnestly envisaged would emerge. To these modernist pioneers, public relations was not advertising, not press agentry, not publicity or propaganda and not promotion. Rather, it was a philosophy—an attitude of mind based upon the tenet that what people truly thought really mattered and should dictate the course of events.

To them—and indeed to me—to be accurately described as public relations, an activity has to contain three elements in almost equal quantities: truth, concern for the public or general interest and dialogue. And, whereas truth and concern for the public interest were variables determined by individual or corporate conscience, dialogue was not. It was either taking place, or it was not, and in any event was measurable.

In the opinion of this group, contact was essential to dialogue; information was the currency of contact; and controversy the price that had to be paid for the gain of trust and tolerance. They believed that true dialogue, coupled with effective communication, would help eliminate or alienate conflict between groups.

To them, the assertion that we were like lawyers, acting as either prosecutors or defenders depending on who commissioned our services first, was an untenable argument. What mattered when offering our services were the merits of the specific case, the worthiness of the cause, the record of the concern.

These were men who had experienced personally the horrors and miseries of war and witnessed the evils of unscrupulous propaganda. They recognized the manipulative methods of the spin-doctors well before the title was invented. They outlawed them and their practices, believing that we should dedicate our efforts to the presentation of a balanced picture of the institutions and organizations we represented as executives or counselors.

They did not envisage that the term, title and territory of professional public relations would be invaded and inhabited by marketers, publicists, propagandists and promoters.

By today’s standards, perhaps idealist? Yes. But, will history say they were wrong?
JOSEPH A. Vecchione, APR, Fellow PRSA
Vice President of Public Relations (ret)
Prudential Insurance Company


As you prepare for a career in public relations you undoubtedly have a lot of questions. Will I find a job? Can I succeed? What kind of competition will I be facing? Is public relations really for me? The truth is, there are so many variables involved nobody can answer these questions with real clarity. Most of the answers are very specific to you.

Are you a joiner? Do you like working pro bono for community and charitable organizations? Do you have that vital something called drive? I can’t define drive for you. For me, it is never giving up. It wants to solve problems other people have only given lip service to. And most important of all, I believe drive is the will, ambition and desire to succeed.

You know, of course, you are contemplating a people career. Love and try to understand people with all their faults. Resist feeling you are in competition with the media on the other side of the communications business. Use technology, don’t let it use you. There’s nothing better than working on a person-to-person basis whenever possible.

Maybe it will be helpful if I told you about my career path. I wanted to be an electrical engineer, but that went down the drain when it was discovered I had no talent whatsoever for mechanical drawing, a prime requisite.

I did, however, feel comfortable writing, so I looked for a career in that direction. I did a lot of things many of you probably did or are doing in school. Worked on the high school and college newspapers. Worked part time as a sports columnist for a local weekly.

After graduation, I got a starting job on the local daily newspaper. What I learned about tight writing, organization, collecting accurate facts and, most of all people, proved invaluable. I recommend newspaper training if you can get it.

After four years with the daily, I went on to editing a house publication for a national brewery. Then fate stepped in and provided entrée to my 30-year Prudential career. On the very day I was ready to accept an offer with an electronics company, a PR job at Prudential opened up.

Was it all wine and roses? Hardly. It took years before earning a PR manager position and years more before reaching vice presidential rank. Along the way there were many obstacles, and you will face many obstacles, too. It will take a lot of personal courage to overcome them.

Not all will agree with me, but I firmly believe you must be prepared to risk your job in pursuit of doing it right. It is easy to give in to the opinions of others, and many times difficult to fight for what you believe in. The best supervisors will be those who respect you for defending your positions.

If you are as fortunate as I, you will have discovered public relations has it all. It’s exciting, challenging and satisfying.

I wish all of you tremendous success.

Joseph A. Vecchione
What are the prerequisites for a successful career in public relations? Based on my decades of experience in the field, here is my list of five essentials.

**Curiosity.** As with journalists, you should be interested in the world in which we live. More than interested--fascinated. If you are narrow in your interests, your ability to communicate will be hindered. Wondering can be wonderful.

**Enthusiasm.** If you are dull and lackluster, you will not be able to communicate effectively with your employers, clients, the media or anyone else. Passion can be healthy and it enhances creativity.

**Integrity.** Our work involves advocacy and compromise. But honesty still is paramount.

**Writing skills.** It’s regrettable that some college graduates are semiliterate. Grammar and spelling errors abound. Alliteration, similes, metaphors and figures of speech can add sparkle to a news release, speech and other writing.

**Education.** The art of persuasion is developed from psychology, anthropology, sociology and other social sciences. These subjects are as important as journalism and mass communication in your education.

I believe that my success has been achieved with a good dose of these qualities. I also have been helped by many people. Bill Ruder was my mentor when I worked at the Ruder Finn public relations firm. I am privileged to have a wife who has been my biggest booster and most insightful critic. I am thankful to many others, of course.

I also am fortunate to be in good health. This year, I’ve been tied to my computer in the research and writing of my 24th book. The 10-hour workdays have been exhilarating rather than exhausting. So, I give thanks to my parents for my genetic endowment. I also thank Google, Wikipedia, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal and other daily companions.

Incidentally, I have had many failures. The cliché is that one learns from failures. It’s true. And yes, I have had a few successes. My public relations firm, Richard Weiner, Inc., launched Cabbage Patch Kids, a campaign that has been praised in public relations and marketing textbooks. The strategy of parental responsibility in the “adoption” of the Kids was based on the counsel of psychologists whom we retained.

Another client was Clairol. When I first started working for this company, our goal was to make hair coloring (it once was called hair dye) a commonly accepted cosmetic. We were successful. One of our notable campaigns was the promotion of hairdressers as artists.

During the last few years, a new medium has evolved into the most significant development in communications since the 15th century invention of movable type to print books. The new medium is the blog. More than 70 million blogs now exist. Some are personal diaries, but others are news and gossip sites that are instantly transmitted to many millions of people around the world. Blogs are the epitome of free speech and democracy.

The New York Time Magazine recently called me “the media maven.” The new media are one of the reasons that I am enthusiastic about the public relations field.
The magic of public relations rests on the critical nature of the calling, the excitement of doing thorough and creative research on the probable and the possible and the excitement of planning and executing programs that demonstrate leadership and caring.

How does one accomplish all that? Without intellectual curiosity it would be impossible. Without delighting in the analysis of all the variables and subjects of “what if,” the real excitement would not invite the person to enjoy the ultimate challenges and the excitement of executing plans that impart success.

In public relations, the media are often the better teachers for they tell different stories every day, highlight the challenges which others face and the “what if” challenges public relations leaders must meet. Consider the daily “what if’s,” imagine how each of us would address a similar or more complicated problem or opportunity and then excitedly, creatively, considerately and effectively plan for success.

Public relations involves other fascinating challenges. Media relations are vital, and they’re measured not in whom you know, but who knows and trusts you. It requires the ability to win the trust of many people, in all echelons of responsibility and interest, not just the immediate boss or primary client. A broad spectrum of public trust is essential, and it must be won by constant integrity, demonstrated concern for others and superior communications skills.

A true practitioner must be a thoughtful futurist who recognizes, studies and enjoys the challenges of change. It is the future that matters. The past has come and gone, its errors and successes relegated to history.

While the past may impart a chronology of historic successes, they are now part of the past and substantially irrelevant to the challenges of today or tomorrow.

What was once a somewhat local practice now involves knowledge and thoughtful understanding of international interests, concerns and methodologies. The understanding of foreign history, customs and language are essentials. We who have been a rather separatist society, basking in our economic leadership, now must accept the reality that our lease as the ultimate superpower is about to expire. International politics now challenge our local concerns for priority of interest. We must become far more alert to, and understanding and appreciative of the mores of other civilizations: those which exist both at home and abroad.

Yes, you must write and communicate well. That is a given. The excellence of your skills is what will be appreciated. You should love to read, and delight in writing and speaking, and must realize your role as the interpreter of fact and definer and clarifier of complexity. She/he who explains best is the most likely to convince. Remember, your PR job is learning, planning, executing a thoughtfully planned program and explaining in an easily understood manner. Never forget, you are in the convincing business. Also, never forget that integrity is the first order of your day.

Planning includes dedication to the known, or immediate, and the potential of any opportunity or adversity. Having created the plan, a PR person must then sell the concept and win the support of others in management, as well as the client, media and public.

Public relations is certainly among the very most fascinating of jobs. Your job is to anticipate the future and educate your bosses and clients on the dangers and opportunities of present and future. If you delight in thinking, considering, planning, convincing, executing and explaining, then you will enjoy public relations. It can be the greatest opportunity and most exciting job on earth.

Go for it!

Frank Wylie, APR, Fellow PRSA
Professor Emeritus, California State University, Long Beach
INDIVIDUAL AWARDS IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

Named on these pages are professionals—both practitioners and educators—who have received major honors over the years from the Arthur W. Page Society, the Institute for Public Relations and the Public Relations Society of America. While some are now deceased, all are architects of contemporary public relations, and their names deserve to be recognized and respected by the profession and its students. The work and contributions of these honorees continue to inform and to inspire.

The Arthur W. Page Society

Founded in 1983, the Arthur W. Page Society is a professional association composed primarily of the chief communications officers of corporations with at least $2 billion in annual revenues and the CEOs of the world’s largest public relations agencies. The organization’s members also include academics from the nation’s leading business and communications schools. The Page Society is dedicated to strengthening the management policy role of chief public relations officers. The Page Society is upheld by management concepts, known as the Page Principles, which have been tested for more than half a century and have earned the support and respect of chief executive officers throughout the country.

Hall of Fame Award

The Hall of Fame Award is the Arthur W. Page Society’s highest recognition, honoring men and women whose esteemed careers have taken them to the summit of the public relations field. Created in 1984, the annual award honors a leading senior level practitioner for career achievement and outstanding contributions to the profession. Inductees into the Hall of Fame have demonstrated a strong commitment to the Page Principles throughout their careers, thereby contributing to the important advancement of the role of the Chief Public Relations Officer.

1985 John H. Page
1986 Allen H. Center
1987 Scott M. Culp
1988 Hale Nelson
1989 W. Howard Chase
1990 Professor Tim Traverse-Healy, O.B.E.
1991 Harold Burson
1992 Chester Burger
1993 Edward M. Block
1994 Lawrence G. Foster
1995 John A. Koten
1996 Ronald E. Rhody
1997 Daniel J. Edelman
1998 Grant N. Horne
1999 Richard R. Mau
2000 John D. Graham
2001 Kurt P. Stocker
2002 Marilyn Laurie
2003 W. D. (Bill) Nielsen
2004 Alvin Golin
2005 James E. Murphy
2006 Charlotte Otto

Distinguished Service Award

The Distinguished Service Award was created by the Arthur W. Page Society to honor an individual whose contributions over the years have strengthened the role of public relations in our society. Successful candidates have served the profession by improving its overall value and effectiveness. The recipients of this award helped strengthen the role of public relations in our society by devoting themselves to services that help build and nurture the profession. Winners may have championed the merits of public relations; written articles and/or books; conducted opinion research; developed educational programs; and worked with students, professional groups and community groups.

2000 Betsy Plank
2001 Patrick J. Jackson
2002 John W. Felton
2003 Ann H. Barkelew
2004 John M. Reed
2005 No Award
2006 E. Ronald Culp
Alexander Hamilton Medal

Each year the Institute for Public Relations presents its highest award to someone who has made major contributions to the practice of public relations. The Alexander Hamilton Medal is given in recognition of the carefully planned strategies Hamilton used to gain the acceptance and adoption of the U.S. Constitution. Many early leaders, including Thomas Jefferson, opposed a strong central government. Hamilton believed without centralized control the United States would never be united or become a great nation. Noted scholars have called Hamilton’s techniques of persuasion, his authorship of most of the 85 Federalist Papers and their carefully timed release, plus his compelling debates, “the finest use of public relations in history.” In that same spirit, the Alexander Hamilton medal honors the person whose exemplary efforts demonstrate the power of the effective use of public relations.

1998 Chester Burger
1999 Harold Burson
2000 Betsy Plank
2001 Patrick J. Jackson
2002 Daniel J. Edelman
2003 Edward M. Block
2004 John W. Felton
2005 James E. Grunig, Ph.D.
2006 Marilyn Laurie

Pathfinder Award

This award is given in recognition of an original program of scholarly research that has made a significant contribution to the body of knowledge and practice of public relations. Special consideration will be given to an applicant’s lifetime research achievements. The selection committee is particularly interested in scholarly contributions resulting in the publication of major articles, chapters and/or books that integrates this program of research or articulates its importance to public relations research and practice.

1984 Dr. James E. Grunig
1985 Dr. Hugh M. Culbertson
1986 Dr. Glen M. Broom
1987 Dr. Norman Nager
1988 Dr. Marilyn Kern-Foxworth
1989 Dr. Larissa A. Grunig
1990 Dr. David M. Dozier
1991 Dr. Donald K. Wright
1992 Dr. Robert Heath
1993 Dr. J. David Pincus
1994 Dr. Charles Salmon
1995 Dr. Kathleen S. Kelly
1996 Dr. Glen T. Cameron
1997 Dr. Dean Kruckeberg
1998 Dr. Elizabeth L. Toth
1999 Dr. Don W. Stacks
2000 Dr. Linda Childers Hon
2001 Dr. Karen S. Miller
2002 Dr. Derina Holtzhausen
2003 Dr. Brad L. Rawlins
2004 Dr. Krishnamurthy Sriramesh
2005 Dr. Douglas Ann Newsom
2006 Dr. Judy VanSlyke Turk
2006 Professor Paul Argenti
Public Relations Society of America

Chartered in 1947, the Public Relations Society of America is the world’s largest organization for public relations professionals with nearly 32,000 professional and student members. PRSA is organized into 109 Chapters nationwide and 20 Professional Interest Sections and Affinity Groups, which represent business and industry, counseling firms, independent practitioners, military, government, associations, hospitals, schools, professional services firms and nonprofit organizations. The Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) has 284 Chapters at colleges and universities throughout the United States.

Gold Anvil Award

The Gold Anvil is the Society’s highest individual award. It is considered to be PRSA’s lifetime achievement award and is presented to a public relations practitioner and PRSA member whose accomplishments have made a major contribution to the profession.

1948 W. Howard Chase, APR, Fellow PRSA
1955 Pendleton Dudley
1956 No Award
1957 Richard S. Falk
  John W. Hill
  Ed Lipscomb, APR, Fellow PRSA
1958 Thomas J. Ross
1959 Hale Nelson, APR, Fellow PRSA
  Conger Reynolds
1960 George M. Crowson
  Carroll R. West
1961 No Award
1962 Earl Newsom
1963 Harold Brayman
  G. Edward Pendray
1964 Kenneth Youel, APR, Fellow PRSA
1965 Lee K. Jaffe, APR, Fellow PRSA
  Robert E. Kingsley
1966 Kalman B. Druck, APR, Fellow PRSA
1967 Yves Jasmin
1968 Ward B. Stevenson, APR
1969 Rex F. Harlow, Ph.D., APR

1970 Bert C. Gross
1971 No Award
1972 Ralph E. Frede, APR, Fellow PRSA
1973 George Hammond, APR, Fellow PRSA
1974 Dan J. Forrestal, APR, Fellow PRSA
  Denny S. Griswold, APR, Fellow PRSA
1975 J. Carroll Bateman, APR
1976 Edward L. Bernays, APR, Fellow PRSA
1977 Betsy Plank, APR, Fellow PRSA
1978 James F. Fox, APR, Fellow PRSA
1979 Philip Lesly, APR, Fellow PRSA,
  J. Handly Wright, APR, Fellow PRSA
1980 Harold Burson, APR, Fellow PRSA
1981 Allen H. Center, APR, Fellow PRSA
1982 Frank W. Wylie, APR, Fellow PRSA
1983 Donald B. McCammond, APR, Fellow PRSA
1984 Carl F. Hawver, Ph.D., APR, Fellow PRSA
1985 Leone Baxter, APR, Fellow PRSA
1986 Patrick Jackson, APR, Fellow PRSA
1987 Chester Burger, APR, Fellow PRSA
1988 John F. Budd, Jr., APR, Fellow PRSA
1989 Lawrence G. Foster, APR, Fellow PRSA
1990 David Ferguson, APR, Fellow PRSA,
  Richard Weiner, APR, Fellow PRSA
1991 John E. Sattler, APR
1992 John W. Felton, APR, Fellow PRSA
1993 Barbara Hunter, APR, Fellow PRSA
1994 John L. Paluszek, APR, Fellow PRSA
1995 Scott M. Cutlip, APR, Fellow PRSA
1997 Edward Block, Fellow PRSA
1998 John M. Reed, APR, Fellow PRSA
1999 Daniel J. Edelman, APR, Fellow PRSA
2000 Thomas L. Harris, APR, Fellow PRSA
2001 Ofeld Dukes, APR, Fellow PRSA
2002 Joseph A. Vecchione, APR, Fellow PRSA
2003 John D. Graham, APR, Fellow PRSA
2004 Thomas W. Hoog, Fellow PRSA
2005 Alvin Golin, Fellow PRSA
2006 Debra A. Miller, Ed.D., APR, Fellow PRSA
Outstanding Educator Award

The Outstanding Educator Award recognizes a PRSA member who has made a significant contribution to the advancement of public relations education through college or university teaching.

1970 Scott M. Cutlip, APR, Fellow PRSA
1971 Walter W. Seifert, APR
1972 Alan Scott, Ed.D., APR, Fellow PRSA
1973 John E. Marston, APR
1974 Otto Lerbing, Ph.D., APR, Fellow PRSA
1975 Raymond Simon, APR
1976 Albert Walker, Ph.D., APR
1977 Walter E. Griscti, APR
1978 Ray E. Hiebert, Ph.D., APR
1979 Kenneth Owler Smith, Ed.D., APR
1980 H. Frazier Moore, Ph.D.
1981 Frank E. Walsh, APR
1982 Douglas Ann Newsom, Ph.D., APR, Fellow PRSA
1983 Paul E. Dannelley, APR
1984 Dennis L. Wilcox, Ph.D., APR, Fellow PRSA
1985 Norman R. Nager, Ph.D., APR, Fellow PRSA
1986 Parry D. Sorensen, APR
1987 Anthony J. Fulginiti, APR, Fellow PRSA
1988 William F. Ehling, Ph.D.
1989 James E. Grunig, Ph.D.
1990 Hugh M. Culbertson, Ph.D.
1991 Glen M. Broom, Ph.D.
1992 Judy VanSlyke Turk, Ph.D., APR, Fellow PRSA
1993 Donald K. Wright, Ph.D., APR, Fellow PRSA
1994 Elizabeth L. Toth, Ph.D., APR
1995 Dean A. Kruckeberg, Ph.D., APR, Fellow PRSA
1996 Larissa A. Grunig, Ph.D.
1997 Maria Russell, APR, Fellow PRSA
1998 Melvin L. Sharpe, Ph.D., APR, Fellow PRSA
1999 Carol Gorney, APR, Fellow PRSA
2000 William C. Adams, APR, Fellow PRSA
2001 Laurie Wilson, Ph.D., APR, Fellow PRSA
2002 Clarke L. Caywood, Ph.D.
2003 Don Winslow Stacks, Ph.D.
2004 Kathleen S. Kelly, Ph.D., APR, Fellow PRSA
2005 Rick Fischer, Ph.D., APR, Fellow PRSA
2006 Bruce K. Berger, Ph.D.

Patrick Jackson Award for Distinguished Service to PRSA

This award is named in honor of the late Patrick Jackson, APR, Fellow PRSA, one of the most widely known and respected practitioners in the profession. His vision and many contributions to the growth of PRSA are legendary. The award is intended to recognize a member who has significantly contributed to advancing PRSA from the Chapter to national levels as well as furthered the Society by inspiring fellow practitioners professionally and personally.

2001 Betsy Plank, APR, Fellow PRSA
2002 John L. Paluszek, APR, Fellow PRSA
2003 Deanna K.W. Pelfrey, APR, Fellow PRSA
2004 James E. Lukaszewski, ABC, APR, Fellow PRSA
2005 Dwayne Summar, APR, Fellow PRSA
2006 Melvin L. Sharpe, Ph.D., APR, Fellow PRSA

Paul M. Lund Public Service Award

Named in honor of the late Paul M. Lund, vice president of public relations and employee communications at AT&T in the early 1970s, Lund was not only an accomplished leader in public relations, but was also a leader in every community of which he was a part. His extraordinary contributions to public service throughout his professional lifetime remain a legacy. The Paul M. Lund Public Service Award is given to a PRSA member whose participation as a volunteer in important public activities has increased the common good and reflected credit on the profession.

1976 Warren A. Logelin, APR
1977 William J. Gaskill, APR
1978 Benjamin Barkin, APR
1979 Richard E. Hodges Jr., APR, Fellow PRSA
1980 Loyd L. Turner
1981 Joseph Roos, APR, Fellow PRSA
1982 William E. Ramsey, APR
1982 William W. Marsh, APR
1984 No Award
1985 Robert L. Edwards, APR
1986 Donald G. Padilla
1987 Herbert B. Bain, APR, Fellow PRSA
1988 Hank Moore, APR, Fellow PRSA
1989 Betsy Plank, APR, Fellow PRSA
1990 Morris V. Rosenblum, APR
1991 Jerry L. Bryan, ABC, CBC, APR, Fellow PRSA
1992 E. Roxie Howlett, APR, Fellow PRSA
The Plank Center for Leadership in Public Relations was established by the University of Alabama Board of Trustees in 2005. It is named in honor of Betsy Plank, a 1944 graduate of UA, who is a distinguished leader in public relations and advocate for its education and students.

The Center's mission is to help develop leadership values and skills in public relations education and practice. Led by a national advisory board of leading educators and practitioners, the Center seeks to achieve its mission by:

1. Advancing knowledge of leadership values and skills in the profession.
2. Supporting research, teaching, service and professional educational efforts that help develop responsible and trustworthy leaders.
3. Bridging the interests and vision of the practice and education.
4. Collaborating with other groups and associations to nurture the ethical and effective practice of public relations.

Programs and Initiatives

The Center will use a variety of approaches and activities to support its mission. To date these initiatives have included:

- A grant program to support scholarly research into leadership in the field. Six grants totaling nearly $40,000 were provided to researchers at eight universities in 2006-2007.
- Sponsorship of an annual research award for the top graduate student paper in the Public Relations Division of the International Communication Association.
- Video interviews with 10 distinguished public relations practitioners and academics to capture their perceptions about leadership. The 20-minute interviews are available at the Center's web site: www.plankcenter.ua.edu
- Creation of Platform, the first online magazine targeted to public relations students, educators and practitioners across the country. Students at UA carried out this innovative project. Platform is at: www.platformmagazine.com
- Sponsorship of the annual PRSSA Ethics Advocacy Awards program.
- Endowment of the Jack Koten Distinguished Public Relations Lectureship and the Jack Felton Public Relations Scholarships at UA.

The PRSA Educators Academy presents the annual Ferguson Award to a practitioner who has given outstanding support to public relations education. The honor is named for a legendary champion of education and its students, the late David Ferguson, APR, Fellow PRSA, PRSA Past President.

1997  Betsy Plank, APR, Fellow PRSA
1998  Patrick Jackson, APR, Fellow PRSA
1999  John W. Felton, APR, Fellow PRSA
2000  John L. Paluszek, APR, Fellow PRSA
2001  Jon Riffel, APR
2002  Isobel Parke, APR, Fellow PRSA
2003  Judith S. Bogart, APR, Fellow PRSA
2004  Lawrence G. Foster, APR, Fellow PRSA
2005  Daniel J. Edelman, APR, Fellow PRSA
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ABOUT THE PLANK CENTER

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- Sponsorship of the annual PRSSA Ethics Advocacy Awards program.
- Endowment of the Jack Koten Distinguished Public Relations Lectureship and the Jack Felton Public Relations Scholarships at UA.
• Publication of “Legacies from Legends in Public Relations,” a book of messages to students from 34 honored leaders in the profession. The book was presented to PRSSA members and advisors on the 40th Anniversary of the student organization.
• Support for the pilot Learning to Teach Seminar, the Inez Kaiser Graduate Student Award, the Women in Public Relations Hall of Fame, the 2007 International Interdisciplinary Research Conference (Institute for Public Relations) and the PRSA Foundation’s Endowment for PRSSA Scholarships.

Board of Advisors
The Board of Advisors of the Plank Center consists of leading academics and practitioners who provide counsel and direction to the Center regarding plans and programs to support its leadership mission. Current members of the Board include:

Dr. Bruce Berger, director, the Plank Center; professor and chair of the Advertising & Public Relations Department at the University of Alabama (UA); former VP of public affairs at Whirlpool Corporation.

Keith Burton, president, Insidedge—GolinHarris; former general manager of GolinHarris’ headquarters office in Chicago.

Dr. Culpepper Clark, dean of The Grady College of Journalism & Mass Communication, University of Georgia, and former dean of the College of Communication & Information Sciences, UA.

E. Ronald Culp, senior VP and managing director, Ketchum Midwest; former senior VP of public relations and government affairs, Sears, Roebuck & Co.

Ex Officio: Current president of the Public Relations Student Society of America. Incumbent: Melissa Csuhran, public relations major at Ohio Northern University.

John W. (Jack) Felton, APR, Fellow PRSA; VP of public relations (ret), McCormick Spice Company; president and CEO Emeritus, Institute for Public Relations.

William Heyman, president and CEO, Heyman Associates, and trustee of the Institute for Public Relations.

Dr. Linda Hon, professor and senior associate dean of The College of Journalism & Communications, University of Florida, and former editor, Journal of Public Relations Research.

John A. (Jack) Koten, senior VP of corporate communications (ret), Ameritech; board member, Arthur W. Page Center; co-founder and past president of the Arthur W. Page Society.

Richard (Rick) Looser, Jr., chief operating officer, The Cirlot Agency in Jackson, Miss; Outstanding Alumnus in Public Relations, UA.

Gary McCormick, APR, Fellow PRSA; director of public relations, Scripps Emerging Networks; president of the PRSA Foundation.

Betsy Plank, APR, Fellow PRSA; chair, the Plank Center; former corporate and public relations agency executive and past president of PRSA.

Maria Russell, APR, Fellow PRSA, and professor of public relations and director, New Initiatives in Public Relations Education, Syracuse University.

Dr. Loy Singleton, dean of the College of Communication & Information Sciences, UA.

Andre Taylor, VP of communications (ret), Alabama Gas Corporation; past president, UA National Alumni Association.
Fourteen people comprise the PRSSA National Committee, which is responsible for managing the organization's business affairs. It is composed of eight student officers elected at the preceding PRSSA Assembly, the Immediate Past President and the FORUM Editor-in-Chief, an appointed position. They are counseled by a Professional Advisor, a Faculty Advisor, a PRSA Board Liaison and the PRSA Director of Education. One of the primary responsibilities of Committee members is to serve as a resource to individual chapters and members for special projects and/or problems.

**National President**  
Melissa M. Csuhran  
Ohio Northern University

**Immediate Past President**  
Kevin Saghy  
Ketchum Chicago

**VP of Chapter Development**  
Ryan Matejka  
Rowan University

**VP of Member Services**  
Allison Tomei  
Kent State University

**VP of Professional Development**  
Dwayne W. Waite, Jr.  
Elon University

**VP of Public Relations**  
Brenda Schulze  
Columbia College Chicago

**VP of Internships/Job Services**  
Denise Kreft  
Fashion Institute of Technology

**VP of Regional Activities**  
Rebekah (Kelly) McFall  
University of Memphis

**VP of Advocacy**  
Brandi Boatner  
Hawaii Pacific University

**FORUM Editor-in-Chief**  
Ryan Casey McShane  
Arkansas Tech University

**PRSA Director of Education**  
Jeneen Garcia

**National Faculty Advisor**  
Stephen D. Iseman, Ph.D.  
Professor, Ohio Northern University

**National Professional Advisor**  
Travis Parman, APR  
Manager of Product Communications, Chevrolet  
PRSSA Past President

**PRSA Board Liaison**  
John J. Deveney, ABC, APR  
President, Deveney Communication