

March
2004

A report from the Montgomery Chapter of the Public Relations Council of Alabama

A lifetime of Achievement



Grover C. Smith

(December 24, 1922 - January 7, 2004)

by Doug Freeland, President

PRCA says good-bye to a local legend, Col. Grover Cleveland Smith – writer, editor and public relations practitioner whose career spanned nearly 50 years. Smith died on Jan. 7, 2004. All of us in PRCA who had the opportunity to know Grover will miss him dearly.

A charter PRCA member, Smith was recognized at the 2003 PRCA state conference as the first recipient of the Grover Smith Lifetime Achievement Award, named in his honor. His work in newspaper, public relations, military and political arenas more than qualified him for the distinction.

Smith was born in Louisville, Ky., on Dec. 24, 1922, and raised in Birmingham, Ala. He graduated from Woodlawn High School in 1942 and the University of Alabama in 1950. He was the editor of the *Crimson White* and the *Rammer Jammer*. Upon graduation, he worked at the *Tuscaloosa News*, where he received The Associated Press Newswriting Award in 1954.

In 1955, he moved to the Washington, D.C., area. He worked for Sen. John Sparkman, D-Ala., as his press secretary, until his retirement in 1978. While in D.C., he was a founding member and first president of the Senate Press Secretary's Association.

In addition to his PRCA membership, he was an honorary lifetime member of the Alabama Broadcaster's Association; member of the Alabama Press Association; member of Sigma Delta Chi Journalism Fraternity; past president and member of the Federal Editor's Association; and past president and member of the U.S. Senate Staff Club.

A favorite of President John F. Kennedy, Grover was active in national and Alabama politics, and was the Alabama publicity director for the Kennedy-Johnson campaign in 1960. He was also instrumental in acquiring federal funding for the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway System during President Johnson's administration, and co-authored the book, *Rivers of Alabama*, focusing on the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway. After his retirement, he moved to Panama City, Fl., where he did freelance public relations until 1998.

continue on page 2

2004

Grover Smith

Lifetime Achievement Award

The Public Relations Council of Alabama Grover Smith Lifetime Achievement Award is the organization's highest honor. It was established to recognize a dedicated practitioner whose lifetime has been one of distinguished service to the public relations profession and to the Public Relations Council of Alabama. Recipients must have demonstrated the highest and most meritorious contributions to the improvement, promotion, development, and progress of public relations throughout their careers.

This award is made at the discretion of the PRCA State Board of Directors and does not have to be awarded annually. A panel of three accredited public relations professionals in good standing with PRCA will review the nominations. The PRCA State Board of Directors will appoint the panel that will recommend to the board whether a nominee should be honored with the award.

For more information regarding application deadlines, eligibility, etc. please contact [Peter Pepinsky, PRCA - East Alabama Chapter pepin-pr@mail.auburn.edu](mailto:Peter.Pepinsky@prca-eastalabama.org). We plan to add more information about this and other awards on www.prcamontgomery.org.



Where Ya Goin'?

Birmingham Chapter to
Host 2004 Conference

Years ago in the South, when passenger trains transported most travelers, folks in Alabama would take a trip simply to enjoy the pleasures of life in the big city. That city was Birmingham. At railway platforms all across the state you could hear one friend calling to another, "Hey, neighbor, where ya goin'?" And the reply would come: "Going to sweet Birmingham." What joyful anticipation of a trip that promised wonder and adventure. And still does.

On September 23, 2004, PRCA-Birmingham will welcome PR practitioners, students and associate members to the Magic City for the organization's statewide conference. The program, registration and awards competition information will be posted on this Web site soon. In the meantime, please visit the Birmingham Convention and Visitors Bureau Web site for a preview of what awaits in sweet Birmingham.

The theme for this year's conference is "Where Ya Goin'?" a play on the Greater Birmingham Convention and Visitors Bureau's "Sweet Birmingham" campaign. The conference agenda, which will be announced later this year, will feature leading experts in crisis communications, media relations, internal communications and special events management. For up-to-date information regarding this event, visit www.prcaonline.com.



A Lifetime of Achievement: Grover E. Smith

continued from page 1

He joined the U.S. Army Air Corps in 1942 and served in the active and reserves until 1982. He was an instructor at The Command and General Staff College of the U.S. Army at Fort Myers, Va. He served in World War II and the Korean War, and received numerous awards and medals, including the Meritorious Service Award.

An avid writer all his life, Grover's stories have been published in numerous newspapers, weeklies, and anthologies, logging more than one million in circulation.

He is survived by his wife of 54 years, Sara Ruth Hoge Smith; son, Mitchell Smith of Houston, TX; daughters, Mia Etchberger and Marqueta Seeuws of Panama City, FL; five grandchildren, Marleeta and Marlaina Smith, Jessica and Henry Etchberger, and Ford Seeuws; two brothers, Kyle and Byron Lavelle; and a sister, Sybil of Birmingham, AL.

In lieu of flowers, he requested that donations be made to The Pregnancy Center, 745 Grace Ave., Panama City, FL 32401

CHAPTER MEETING

MARCH 8, 2004

CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW?

Guest Speaker:
Senator J. T. "Jabo" Waggoner

RSA Plaza Terrace | 11:45 a.m.
Members \$12

Non-members \$25*

RSVP: pcollins@tourism.state.al.us

RSVP Deadline: Noon

Thursday, March 4, 2004

**Non-members will receive the \$12 rate
for their first two visits.*

About the Program: With so many voices crying out with concerns about state government, it is sometimes difficult to know if anyone is listening. As we all know, Alabama faces one of the most difficult financial crises in her history. Legislators are back in session, working diligently to find a way to fund programs and services with minimal suffering. As PR professionals, it is our obligation to stay abreast of events in our state and country. Legislation is passed every year that affects each of us--as employers, as employees and as citizens of Alabama. Senator J. T. "Jabo" Waggoner will help us understand the best way to stay informed on legislative issues that may affect you personally and as a PR professional. He will also discuss the most effective way to have your voice heard at the State House. Make it a PRiority to join us for lunch and a lesson on "being heard."

MEMBERSHIP UPDATES

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS: Accessing a Regional Network of PR Professionals

by Stacy Benefield, VP of Membership

You now know that when you join PRCA-Montgomery, you're really joining three different organizations: this local chapter of PRCA, the state organization of PRCA and the Southern Public Relations Federation (SPRF). One of the greatest benefits of belonging to these three organizations is the access to more than 900 PR professionals in Alabama, as well as in Louisiana, Mississippi and northwest Florida.

PRCA's Web site (www.prcaonline.com) includes a membership database with contact information for PR professionals statewide. You should have received an individual username and password to access the database. If you don't know yours, e-mail membership@prcaonline.com to request that information. When browsing the database, check that your personal information is correct. If it's not, you can correct most things yourself right on the site. If not, e-mail sbenefield@alaha.org to find out how you can make the changes.

SPRF also has an on-line membership database. The database requires a general username and password. If you would like to have that information, please e-mail sbenefield@alaha.org.

Look for more on PRCA membership benefits in future editions of this newsletter. Next: *Getting the recognition you deserve.*

About our Speaker, Senator J. T. "Jabo" Waggoner:



Senator Waggoner is a true leader in state government, as he is serving his fourth term in the Senate after serving from 1966-1983 in the House of Representatives. In addition to representing the 16th District (Jefferson and Shelby Counties) in the Senate, Senator

Waggoner is the President of Birmingham

Business Consultants, LLC, and a consultant for HealthSouth, the nation's largest healthcare services provider. Senator Waggoner has a heart for the people of Alabama that is evident in his presentation.

On-line Membership Profiles

With the completion of the 2003-2004 membership renewal process, the Montgomery-PRCA database has been updated to reflect the current membership (those not renewing have been deleted). In addition, the state PRCA on-line database is in the process of being updated as final renewals are received.

Any corrections indicated on your renewal invoice have been made to the Montgomery database. However, the local chapter is unable to make these corrections to the statewide on-line database. You must log in to the members only section of www.prcaonline.com and make the corrections to your personal information yourself. In addition, you may continue to update your information on-line throughout the year.

Members may edit most of their contact information in the on-line database; however, some information, including employer, accreditation status, chapter and the year he/she joined PRCA, must be edited by the state membership vice president to retain integrity and control of the state database. To request a change to any "locked" information, members should submit an "Update/Transfer Form" to the local vice president of membership, Stacy Benefield, who will then forward the information to the state. The form is available on-line at www.prcamontgomery.org.

Accessing the database does require a username and password, which all members should have received. If you have misplaced this information, please e-mail membership@prcaonline.com.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Stacy Benefield, vice president of membership, at 272-8781 or sbenefield@alaha.org.

Welcome New Members!

PRCA-Montgomery would like to welcome the following new members.

- **Gerrianna Miller**, public information officer, Alabama Development Office
- **Takenya Stokes**, public information specialist, Alabama Department of Public Health

Note: If you change jobs in the year, don't forget to let us know about it. Simply download the Membership Update Form from www.prcamontgomery.org and send the completed form to Stacy Benefield via fax, 270-9527, or postal service, AlaHA, 500 North East Blvd., Montgomery, AL 36117. Also, be sure to let us know about promotions, awards and special projects in which you're involved so we can share it with the membership — email susan@squareroot-inc.com.



MARDI GRAS, PR STYLE

by Jennifer L. Johnson
Vice President of Projects
AUM PRCA

This year's AUM Mardi Gras was a spectacular event and huge success for both the campus and the

AUM PRCA. Thanks to the generous donation given by the Montgomery PRCA, not only did we get to participate in this year's parade, but we also received the award for "Best Student Organization" float, marking a first for our chapter.

On Feb. 12 and 13, members of the AUM PRCA spent many hours designing what would be a pirate ghost ship, coordinating with this year's pirate theme. Stacey Little, president of the chapter, designed the ship while the rest of the members learned a thing or two in paper mache. The ship was surrounded by large clouds complete with sails and of course a pirate flag. Fog surrounded the atmosphere of our float to attract the ghost ship look, thanks to Little's fog machine.

Our glorious ride began at the AUM library onto the Taylor Road entrance, and our award hung proudly at the front of the ship while music from the Soundtrack "Pirates of the Caribbean" played on.

This was my first ever Mardi Gras parade, so of course the excitement was inevitable. As we steered through the crowd, representing the Montgomery Community, we threw everything



Aye Captain! AUM PRCA designed a pirate ship for their 2004 Mardi Gras float.

from traditional Mardi Gras beads and moon pies to various colored miniature Frisbees. Everywhere you turned someone was screaming, "Give me some beads!" It was truly a night to remember, and it would not have been a complete success without the Montgomery PRCA's help.

The AUM PRCA has participated in several worthwhile projects, making a difference on our campus and in our community. I am extremely proud to be part of such a wonderful organization. We have truly grown as an organization, and our members have given 100 percent to every project with such energy and enthusiasm.

Again, on behalf of the entire AUM PRCA organization, I would like to extend a heartfelt thanks to all of the Montgomery PRCA members for your donation. Your support has truly made a difference in each and every one of us-thanks!

Left: Students proudly pose in front of their "award-winning" Mardi Gras float. They were honored with the "Best Student Organization" float award for 2004;



Right: Students take a moment to smile for the camera as they prepare for the parade

