

# PRCA MONTGOMERY

September 2008

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

## Who Would Play You in a Movie?

Years ago, back when I worked my first internship at a weekly paper in Prattville called *The Autauga Times*, there were only two of us journalists who covered the regular beats – county commission, city council, police, fire, courts, etc. Now, I use the word “journalist” here instead of the word “reporter” because I sincerely believed back then, as I do today, that there is a difference.



Lori Quiller

One day, I went home at lunch and watched about an hour of *All the President's Men* with Dustin Hoffman and Robert Redford. I remember tearing back into the office, full of fire, and ready to rip out my articles from my morning interviews. My editor banned me from watching that movie so long as I worked for him. He warned me about crossing THAT line that would make me a “reporter” and not the “journalist” I wanted to be.

That movie still makes me crack a smile whenever I watch it. I imagine that movie has fired up many a green writer since it was filmed and won four Oscars® in 1976.

Can't say I've seen any good movies or even movie roles for public relations practitioners, though.

A few weeks ago, *Thank You for Smoking* was on cable...again. That's the thing about cable. If you miss it once, just wait a little while, and you'll get another chance. I have a rule about movies and books – no matter how bad they are, I try to muddle through to the end. And, I've seen and read some really, REALLY bad movies and books. Granted, the movie is meant to be satirical, but still...

The main character, Nick, is a lobbyist for Big Tobacco, and from the start...it's all

about the spin. On a talk show, Nick manages to turn the tables on the medical industry's argument about how smoking caused cancer in a young child by arguing that the health officials want the child to die even more than the tobacco officials so the child can be a martyr for “The Cause.” Nick's favorite saying in the movie is, “If you argue correctly, then you're never wrong.” Interesting...

I'll admit that we'll never see a buddy movie about PR practitioners like *Lethal Weapon*, and I seriously doubt Quentin Tarantino will take up our cause on the Hollywood silver screen. But, wouldn't that just be the coolest thing in the world? Think about that for a minute! Who would play YOU?

My point is this – Public relations is probably one of the most misunderstood professions to be one of the fastest growing professions in America.

Even though the lead character in *Thank You for Smoking* is a lobbyist, he's still practicing a form of public relations by being the voice of Big Tobacco.

Our profession is misunderstood because of how our profession has been practiced by the “flacks” of years gone by. Unfortunately, that's a moniker I doubt we will ever live down. There will always be “flacks” in our world, just like there will always be “reporters,” no matter how hard we work to break those molds. It doesn't mean that we have to stop trying.

We **have** made considerable strides in the right direction to elevate our profession. Several years ago, after an especially trying day (if you read the profile Belinda Bazinet did of me in July, then you'll understand), a friend asked me why I chose a profession that's so demanding. I didn't have to think about my answer. It was simple from my point of view.

Because, someone needs to tell the story.

### CHAPTER MEETING

## PR and Ethics

### Have We PR Practitioners Lost Our Way?

Monday, Sept. 8  
RSA Plaza Terrace  
11:45 a.m.

#### GUEST SPEAKER

### Sonny Brasfield

Assistant  
Executive Director

Association of County  
Commissions of Alabama

Members: \$12  
Non-members: \$20

RSVP to Diane Christy  
[dchristy@ascpa.org](mailto:dchristy@ascpa.org)

RSVP Deadline:  
Noon Friday, Sept. 5

### SPECIAL NOTE

Members who make reservations for chapter luncheons but fail to cancel by noon the Friday prior to the meeting **ARE** responsible for payment. **We will invoice you!**

## Membership renewal time is NOW!

For many in Alabama, fall signals cooler weather, leaves changing colors and tailgating parties every Saturday. For PRCA, it's also renewal season.

Stay connected with PR practitioners in your local community and throughout the state by renewing your PRCA membership today.

Don't miss out on the benefits of being a member...

- You have access to a regional network of professionals who make up the state's longest-operating and largest group of public relations practitioners.
- Your professional network reaches beyond the state of Alabama to members of PRCA's sister organizations in Louisiana, Mississippi and northwest Florida to form the 900-plus-member Southern Public Relations Federation.
- You get special rates to attend various professional development seminars throughout the year. Local chapters also award scholarships to cover registration costs for the state conference.
- You are eligible to be Accredited in Public Relations. PRCA reimburses members who have taken the APR exam \$100 to offset any out-of-pocket expenses not covered by members' employers. SPRF also reimburses \$100 to those taking the APR exam.
- You can earn recognition for your work through awards at the local, state and regional levels, including the Medallion Awards, the Philip R. Forrest Jr. Practitioner of the Year Award and SPRF's Professional Achievement Award. SPRF also hosts the Annual Lantern Awards, recognizing excellence in various areas of public relations.

As a PRCA member, you have the opportunity to take advantage of all of these benefits and more. Renew your membership today. For more information, e-mail **Belinda Bazinet** at [Bazinetb@MAXWELLAF.MIL](mailto:Bazinetb@MAXWELLAF.MIL).

## Member Profile...



**Carolyn Kinney** is the associate director of public relations and marketing for the Girl Scouts of Southern Alabama, Inc. She has a bachelor's degree from Huntingdon College and is responsible for news releases, photography, updating the Web site, designing and editing the internal staff newsletter and the tri-annual external newsletter. Girl Scouts of Southern Alabama covers 30 counties, so Carolyn stays busy maintaining strong relationships with media and community programs through the surrounding areas.

### ***Do you have any tips to being a top PR practitioner?***

**Carolyn:** Be very flexible. Most organizations or companies don't have large PR staffs. As a result, most of us must perform several tasks. Flexibility is important.

### ***What are the top three skills needed in PR?***

**Carolyn:** 1) Creativity; 2) Flexibility; 3) Communication skills.

***From where did your interest in PR originate?*** **Carolyn:** My interest in PR began my freshman year at Huntingdon. I began as a Psychology major, but it didn't take long for me to change my major. I was in my advisor's office one day and to my surprise, she told me I should consider Communication Studies. She said she noticed a lot of potential in me, and I was excelling in her speech classes. I was encouraged to take a few more classes and from this I found my "niche."

### ***Why did you join PRCA?***

**Carolyn:** I joined PRCA because I thought it was a great organization to not just meet, but build relationships with other PR practitioners in the Montgomery area. I have a deep desire to learn more about the PR industry and PRCA gives us this opportunity every month with exciting new speakers and events.

### ***What experience most shaped your career?***

**Carolyn:** My first job out of college, I was the Administrative Assistant to Public Relations at Hyundai Motor Manufacturing Alabama. Through this experience, I was able to build very important relationships. At the time, I wasn't aware how much the people I worked with and met daily would influence the upcoming events in my life. The relationships and experiences I gained from working at HMMA enabled me to work for the Girl Scouts. I am incredibly blessed and thankful for that opportunity. The relationships I made have now turned in to friendships and will be with me for the rest of my life.

### ***What would you like to be doing in five years?***

**Carolyn:** I hope to have left my mark on Montgomery as a young professional who made a difference in this community. I hope I can look back on this city and community in five years and say I was a part of its growth. I hope to still be making a difference in the lives of girls by instilling values and morals in young women and truly building girls of courage, confidence and character, who make the world a better place.

### ***What was the greatest lesson you learned through PR?***

**Carolyn:** The greatest lesson I've learned is to be open to new ideas and most importantly change. I came to work for the Girl Scouts during a major restructuring and reorganization of not only our council but councils all over the country. Change is a hard thing for most people, but looking back over the past year we've become more technologically advanced than a lot of other similar organizations. Change is important to the growth of any organization.

### ***What is your greatest achievement?***

**Carolyn:** I hope I haven't seen my greatest achievement, at least not yet! But for now, I must say my career. I've come a long way since I graduated from college and I'm proud of the steps I've made to better myself and my career.

# 2008 PRCA State Conference

# get in the game

Agenda • October 2-3 • Montgomery • [www.prcaonline.com](http://www.prcaonline.com)

## WEDNESDAY, OCT. 1

10 a.m. APR Boot Camp Begins

10:15 a.m. **APR: Basic Training and Making Rank**  
*Michael Tullier, APR*

11:45 a.m. **Camp Lunch**  
*Guest Speaker: Dave Rickey, APR*

1:10 p.m. **Crafting Successful Campaigns**  
*Carol Mann, APR, and John Forde, APR*

4 p.m. Adjourn

5:30 – 7 p.m. Opening Reception and Trade Show (*All conference participants invited!*)

## THURSDAY, OCT. 2

8 – 9:15 a.m. PRCA State Board of Directors Meeting

9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Conference Registration

9 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Medallion Awards Display

9:30 – 11:30 a.m. Opening General Session

- 9:30 a.m. **Prepare to Meet the Media! (or The Gumbo Soup of Media Training)**  
*Dr. Joe Trahan, APR, PRSA Fellow  
Trahan & Associates  
McDonough, Ga.*

- 11:30 a.m. **Lunch and Student Medallion Awards**  
*Guest Speaker:  
Dr. David G. Bronner  
CEO, Retirement Systems of Alabama*

1 – 3 p.m. Afternoon General Session

- 1 p.m. **The Changing Role of Political PR in Alabama**

*Marty Sullivan  
Senior Vice President for Public Affairs and Communications  
Business Council of Alabama*

- 2 p.m. **Public Relations in the Medical Profession: Does PR Belong in Medicine?**

*Dr. Sarah King  
Director of Public Relations  
Medical University of South Carolina*

3 – 3:15 p.m. Afternoon Break

3:15 – 4 p.m. Afternoon Concurrent Sessions

- Session 1 **Sports Media in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

*Doug Amos  
Assistant Athletic Director for Media Relations  
Faulkner University*

- Session 2 **Governmental Policy and Public Relations**

*Brian Taylor  
Policy Director and Counsel  
Office of the Governor*

- Session 3 **When PR Isn't PR: How to Use Advertising with a PR Spin**

*Bill Cunningham  
President  
Cunningham Group, Inc.*

4 – 4:45 p.m. Repeat Concurrent Sessions 1, 2 and 3

6 p.m. until Off-Site Dinner and Murder Mystery Theatre

## FRIDAY, OCT. 3

8 a.m. – 12 p.m. Conference Registration

8 a.m. – 12 p.m. Medallion Awards Display

8 – 9:30 a.m. Conference Breakfast and Trade Show

9:30 – 11:30 a.m. Morning General Session

- 9:30 a.m. **Going Off the Record with PBS's "On the Record"**  
*Tim Lennox, Bob Corley and Sandra Polizos*

- 10:30 a.m. **Critical Mass: An In-Depth Look at the Omaha Mall Shooting**  
*Nicole Spreck and David Keating  
General Growth Properties  
Chicago, Ill.*

- 11:30 a.m. **Conference Luncheon**  
*Guest Speaker: Comedian Jenny Nolen*

1:30 – 4:45 p.m. Afternoon General Session

- 1:30 p.m. **PR and New Media: Who Needs Podcasting and Blogging Anyway?**  
*Robert French  
Communications Professor  
Auburn University*

- 2:30 p.m. **Pursuing the Truth: Communicating through Crisis and Bureaucracy**  
*Aaron Henninger  
Senior Military Analyst  
Public Affairs Center of Excellence  
Air University at Maxwell  
Air Force Base*

3:30 – 3:45 p.m. Afternoon Break

- 3:45 p.m. **Student Workshop: Tips and Hints for Future Professionals**  
*A Panel Discussion*

4:45 p.m. Adjourn

6 – 9 p.m. Medallion Awards Ceremony

## Want to attend the 2008 PRCA Annual Conference...

*...but you can't afford the registration fee?*

We've got you covered! The PRCA Montgomery Board of Directors has two **need-based** scholarships for \$250 each for our members who would like to attend the conference in October but cannot afford the registration fee. Remember, these scholarships are NEED-BASED, which means you or your employer cannot or will not pay your registration fee.

If you would like to be in the drawing for a scholarship, please e-mail **Lori Moneyham** at [Lori.Moneyham@arec.alabama.gov](mailto:Lori.Moneyham@arec.alabama.gov).

**The deadline for entering is Friday, Sept. 12.** Winners will be notified by e-mail and sent a registration form for the conference.

## Congratulations to Montgomery's SPRF Award Winners and Honorees!

**Alabama State University** – Award of Excellence

**Alabama Development Office** – Award of Excellence

**Bill Cunningham of Cunningham Group** – one Lantern Award, one Award of Merit, four Awards of Excellence

**Kathy Johnson of the Alabama Governor's Office** – Award of Excellence

**Nancy Dennis of the Alabama Retail Association** – Award of Excellence

**Nia Johnson of Community Bankers Association of Alabama** – three Awards of Excellence

**Peggy Collins of the Alabama Department of Tourism and Travel** – Senior Practitioner Designation

*\*Please accept our apologies if you received an SPRF award and your name is not listed here. The SPRF Awards Committee did not sort the awards by chapter, and we have tried to include all the Montgomery Chapter winners here. If you received an award, please e-mail **Lori Quiller** at [lquiller@acca-online.org](mailto:lquiller@acca-online.org) so you may be recognized for your hard work!*

**“Only those who dare to fail greatly can ever achieve greatly.”**

**Robert F. Kennedy**

## Mark Your Calendars...

Mark your calendars for the 2007-08 Montgomery Chapter monthly meetings! All meetings are at the RSA Plaza Terrace beginning at 11:45 a.m. There is free parking in the parking deck. Cost to attend meetings is **\$12 for members** and **\$20 for non-members and guests**. RSVP your attendance to **Diane Christy** at [dchristy@ascpa.org](mailto:dchristy@ascpa.org) no later than noon on the Friday prior to the Monday meeting. Those who make reservations for chapter luncheons, but fail to cancel by noon the Friday prior to the meeting, **will** be responsible for payment.

**Oct. 2-3 – PRCA State Conference      Nov. 3 – Regular Chapter Meeting**

**Dec. 8 – Chapter Holiday Party at The Lattice Inn**

