

PRCA MONTGOMERY

CHAPTER NEWS

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



I have mixed emotions as I write this – my final President’s Message. I won’t say I’m sad to be passing on the gavel. That’s not the word. But there is a sort of reluctance to taking a back-seat role in leading this organization. Furthermore, I’m realizing I will be rotating off the Board of Directors altogether in just one year. Next September, I will be wrapping up my term as Past President/Ethics. Then, I will have served on the board for more than eight years. But let me not get ahead of myself. There is still work to be done as I finish out this year and help support Lori and the rest of the board in the new fiscal year. You haven’t seen the last of me!

On the other hand, I’m excited at the prospect of yet another fresh start for PRCA-Montgomery under the capable hands of Lori Quiller, as well as the role I will play on next year’s Board of Directors. I already have a few plans up my sleeve for a new project geared toward getting more member participation (my soapbox for the past year). And, other board members already have new projects in the works, too.

I would be remiss if I did not thank the membership for allowing me to serve as President. And, I hope it goes without saying that I could not have done it without terrific board members to help me. So, thanks specifically to Lori, Melissa, Belinda, Alicia, Lara, Carol, Kristi, Jim, Diane, Danielle, Melody, Heather and Peggy. These folks all have done a fantastic job. Stay tuned next month for an annual report that will detail all that’s been accomplished this year.

Stacy

Mark Your Calendars

The October meeting will be a PRCA-Montgomery After-hours Social and 2007-2008 Board Induction. The event will be held Monday, October 8, at 6 p.m. at the Eastside Grille. Please make plans now to join us!

CHAPTER MEETING

There will be no regular chapter meeting in September. Instead, PRCA-Montgomery members are encouraged to attend the PRCA/SPRF State Conference in Mobile. Check out page 2 for details. See you there!

Wrap-up of August’s Meeting

Last month at our membership meeting we were treated to an interesting and entertaining presentation by guest speaker Richard Cohen, executive director of the Southern Poverty Law Center. Mr. Cohen came to the SPLC in 1986 and was appointed to his current position as president and chief executive officer in 2003. He has successfully litigated a wide variety of important civil rights actions, and has also been the creative force behind some of the Center’s most successful education projects. He has served as executive producer for the six documentary films created for the Center’s Teaching Tolerance program. Four of those films were nominated for Academy Awards, and two won Oscars.

Mr. Cohen shared with us the important role PR plays in the Center’s operations. One example he gave involved the Center’s lawsuit against former Alabama Supreme Court Chief Justice Roy Moore for displaying a ten commandments monument in the state judicial building. He explained that legally the SPLC’s case was solid, but in the court of public opinion they had some work to do. He also shared with us how the Center frequently handles being in the national spotlight, including most recently a heated debate with CNN’s Lou Dobbs over immigration issues. We thank Mr. Cohen for taking time to speak to our members!

Wise Words ...

from our newest Senior Practitioners

The greatest thing I've learned about PR is that if you ever stop learning, you're out of business. This specialty has rapidly developed from just a few, short years ago, and continues to evolve at a remarkable pace. Being involved—literally “involved” —not just being a bystander, in PRCA has helped me stay abreast of the latest practices, guidelines and technologies. The future of PR is bright and exciting, and I'm proud to be a part of it.

– Kathy Johnson

Early in my career, I let every mistake bother me way too much. You're going to make mistakes — everyone does—but you have the opportunity to learn something from them. If you make a mistake, take responsibility for it, turn it into a learning experience, and move on. On the other hand, when you do something great, take credit for it when it's due, but don't forget to share the credit when others deserve it as well. – Kim Nix

2007 State Conference

You can still register to attend the 2007 SPRF/PRCA “Power PR” Joint Conference! If you haven't registered yet, you've missed the earlybird registration deadline, but you can still attend!! The conference is being held September 16-18, 2007, at the historic Battle House hotel in Mobile. Visit the state Web site at www.prcaonline.com for more information on registering.

A host of professional development topics will be presented by speakers who are experts in their fields. The conference also includes a Monday night social event, as well as a Tuesday night cocktail reception and awards banquet where Lantern and Medallion awards will be presented, as well as Practitioner of the Year and student awards. A complete listing of the schedule, and speakers is also available at www.prcaonline.com.

Two Named as Senior Practitioners

PRCA-Montgomery is proud to announce two members have been selected to receive the designation of Senior Practitioner: Kathy Johnson and Kim Nix.

With a PR career spanning 15 years, Kathy currently serves as director of public affairs for the State of Alabama Department of Finance. In that capacity, she is in charge of all internal and external communications, media relations, various department projects and more. She previously served as assistant manager for Hyundai Motor Manufacturing Alabama, where she was spokesperson for the global company. She was also responsible for media and community relations for the plant and supervised internal and external communications, media specialties and advertising.

Kathy is a past PRCA-Montgomery president and has previously served on PRCA-Montgomery Board of Directors for a total of four years. She has also been honored by the PRCA with two Awards of Excellence in the annual statewide Medallion Awards competition.

Kathy attended Jones County Community College in Ellisville, Mississippi and the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg. She is a graduate of the 2003 class of Leadership Alabama.

A veteran PR practitioner, Kim has served in the field full time for nearly 20 years. Following a 13-year stint with the Alabama Forestry Commission as a public information specialist, Kim transferred to the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources in 2001 for a promotion as public information manager and to serve as managing editor of Outdoor Alabama magazine. During her tenure, the magazine's paid subscriber base has grown from less than 5,000 to more than 18,000. Recently, she took over as information and education section chief for the Conservation Department. She serves as editor of Outdoor Alabama magazine and supervises video production, print media, and conservation education for the Department.

In 2006, Kim served as Publicity Chair for the PRCA-Montgomery Board of Directors. Her work with Outdoor Alabama Magazine has won several awards, including three Medallions from PRCA and two Starr Awards from PRCA-Montgomery, just to name a few.

Kim attended the University of Montevallo before transferring to the University of Alabama where she received a bachelor's degree in journalism.



Kathy Johnson



Kim Nix

New Members!

Beth Turner - Marketing Director; Goodwyn, Mills and Cawood, Inc.

Erin Elizabeth Harden – Account Manager of Public Relations and External Affairs; The Austin Group, LLC

Fellow PR Practitioner Dies

by Marianne Higgins, APR

A fellow practitioner whose PR leadership has influenced what you and I do today passed away Saturday, Aug. 18. He is Mike Deaver, the image advisor to President Ronald Reagan, who you may remember as "The Great Communicator" (thanks to Mike). Google searches on Mike's name will turn up many reports that have been coming out as people reflect on Mike's innovations and errors in PR; many are worth reading.

For the past 15 years, Mike has led the Washington DC office of Edelman. A tribute page to Mike has been set up by Edelman at www.edelman.com. Click the "Remembering Mike Deaver" link in the top right corner.

I hope you will join me in a moment of remembrance of Mike and the other PR pros who helped to pave our way.

Marianne is a member of the North Alabama PRCA chapter. She is public relations manager for Avocent Corporation in Huntsville.

PRCA Member Profile

Frank Miles is the Communications Manager at Auburn Montgomery. He enjoys keeping the public and the University community informed about all the great things happening at Auburn Montgomery. He earned a BS in Broadcast Journalism from Troy University.



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

Frank: I'm speaking to the choir, but KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE. It's probably the most important consideration when you have to communicate something, but it gets overlooked far too often.

What are the top three skills needed in PR?

Frank: 1.) Listening 2.) Caring 3.) Listening

From where did your interest in PR originate?

Frank: I previously worked in television news. While it was a great experience and I loved the folks I worked with, it just wasn't what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. I have found that the "other side" is much more to my taste, and it gives me more opportunities to write, which is something that I really love.

Why did you join PRCA?

Frank: I'm relatively new in the field and I'm looking for all the help I can get!

What experience most shaped your career?

Frank: In my very first year as a television news photojournalist, I was sent to interview the governor by myself. I actually made him laugh at one point, and that's when I knew I could do this.

What would you like to be doing in five years?

Frank: I hope I have the good fortune to still be working at Auburn Montgomery.

What was the greatest lesson you learned through PR?

Frank: That you actually have to talk to people in order to communicate. Think about it.

What is your greatest achievement?

Frank: I guess my wife actually did all the work, but I would have to say my two beautiful little girls!

Member Wins Night of Entertainment by Helping the Chapter Grow

Congratulations to Vernita Oliver-Lane, the big winner of the "Help PRCA Montgomery Grow" contest. She won two tickets to the Shakespeare Festival and a \$45 gift certificate to Bonefish Grill. We hope you enjoy yourself, and thanks for helping our chapter grow!

Help Wanted! *2007-2008 Board Positions Available*

Four positions remain vacant as we work to fill the slate of officers and directors for the 2007-2008 PRCA-Montgomery Board. Review the descriptions below and contact Lori Quiller at lquiller@acca-online.org for more information.

VP of Projects

The VP of Projects plans and helps execute chapter service and public relations projects. This position requires someone who is creative and a strong leader. This person will depend heavily on volunteer participation and will have to work to ensure volunteers follow through with their commitments. Quality of projects is valued above quantity. One small charity project that seeks donations and one larger PR project are typical during a year.

Treasurer

The Treasurer prepares the annual budget, collects money for monthly luncheons, maintains the chapter checkbook, pays bills, prepares a monthly budget report for the board and periodically reports financial standings to the membership. This position requires someone that is committed to regular chapter meeting and board meeting attendance, who is organized and who pays attention to detail.

Communications

The Communications Chair maintains the chapter Web site, writes and edits articles and lays out and distributes the monthly newsletter, as well as sends other member communications via e-mail. This position requires someone who is Web savvy, can edit Web pages (using Dreamweaver), has excellent writing and communications skills and enjoys following and reporting on the latest PR news, trends and professional development opportunities.

Publicity

The Publicity Chair writes and distributes news releases about meetings and projects to local media and collects news clippings concerning members' awards and activities to provide to the historian. This position is also tasked with promoting PRCA and the PR profession both within our own organization and to the public in general. This position may choose to appoint a committee to generate ideas and help accomplish tasks.

Historian

The Historian serves as the chapter photographer and puts together the chapter's annual scrapbook. This position requires someone that is committed to regular chapter meeting attendance, who is creative, organized and who pays attention to detail. This person will be responsible for editing and organizing materials provided by other board members to ensure the chapter's scrapbook adequately reflects the chapter's activities for the year, while maintaining consistent look and feel. This person may also be asked to help write monthly program wrap-ups.