Fall 1993

UA68/13/5 PR Perspectives

Kelly Thompson Chapter, Public Relations Student Society of America

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PRSSA and WKU Remember "Mr. Western"

By Alex Rose

In 1977, Western's PRSSA chapter name was changed to the Kelly Thompson Chapter in honor of Dr. Kelly Thompson, a former Western Kentucky University president and the first president of a university to move through the ranks of public relations. Although Dr. Thompson passed away in August, he will always be a part of Western Kentucky University.

When Thompson died on Aug. 14, 1993, the university lost one of its greatest ambassadors.

Thompson, who also earned the title "Mr. Western," served the university for 64 years as a field representative, director of public relations, assistant to the president, and president. He also was president of the College Heights Foundation and chairman of its board until his death.

During his 14 years as president, Thompson guided Western through immense physical expansion and academic development. While Thompson was president, Western grew from 1,684 in the spring of 1955 to 11,069 in the fall of 1969.

A high point in his career and in Western's history took place on June 6, 1966, when the Kentucky General Assembly elevated Western Kentucky State College to Western Kentucky University.

According to a story in Western's Alumni publication, Thompson first came to Western in 1928 on a football scholarship. After a shoulder injury ended his sports career, Western President Henry Hardin Cherry chose him to be a field representative.

PRSSA Makes it to Second Phase of National Campaign

By Dora Epley

The real working world, that's what PRSSA is supposed to help us prepare for, right? Well, for those who worked on the Halls® Mentho-Lyptus® and PRSSA 1993 Music Contest a taste of the real world was what they got.

The Halls of Music Contest was designed by the Warner-Lambert Company and Golin/Harris Communications to increase consumer awareness of the benefits of Halls®, to encourage product trial, and to recognize and encourage young talent in the area of music.

The challenge for the PRSSA chapter was to develop a customized publicity campaign to promote and implement the contest on campus. Each proposal was then evaluated by Warner-Lambert executives who then chose 15-20 chapters. Each of these chapters were given $1000 to execute the program and $500 for prizes.

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Pro-Am Day
Pro-Am day was held Nov. 10 in conjunction with the Bluegrass Chapter of PRSA in Louisville. Nineteen people from the Kelly Thompson Chapter of PRSSA attended the event. The event pairs PRSSA members with a PR professional for a day in Louisville. During the luncheon Heather Hauer, was the recipient of the Steve L. Hunt memorial Scholarship.

National Conference
The 18th National Conference was held Nov. 13-17 at the Walt Disney World Complex in Orlando, Florida. Representing the Kelly Thompson Chapter were Heather Hauer, Kevin Lloyd, Amy Warren, Marianne Reinskou and chapter advisor John Barnum. Dr. Robert Blann and his wife also attended. The theme this year was "Catch the Magic".

1992-93 Officers
This year’s officers are: Heather Hauer, president; Karen Moss, vice-president; Rebecca Flynn, program director; Dora Epley, PR director; Alex Rose, treasurer; Julie Hickman, secretary; Wayne Hallet, national liaison/alumni relations; and Kevin Lloyd, Agency Director

Mr. Western
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He earned his bachelor’s degree in 1935, and was appointed public relations director at the college.

Dee Gibson, a former director of community relations and public affairs at Western, said in The Alumni that Thompson was a “public relations genius.”

“No one could outdo him as a public relations person. When he was president, he had an open-door policy. And it was open to students, faculty, staff, townspeople, visitors or what-have-you. He wanted to keep a family-type atmosphere at Western. He thought by leaving his door open, it might be the difference in salvaging

students and in being able to do something good for the community.”

Western president Thomas Meredith said that his “promotional and public relations abilities are legendary.”

“Kelly Thompson was an extremely positive man,” Meredith said. “Although it probably came from his public relations background, he would always look for the good, then concentrate his comments in that direction. Although he obviously saw the negative on occasions, he refused to dwell on it. Perhaps this is a lesson for us all.”
What PR Field is Right for You?

By Julie Hickman

When people ask you what profession you’re entering, it may no longer suffice to say “public relations.” A more appropriate answer may be “corporate PR” or “investor relations,” for the profession has expanded to include a wide range of specialties, each with its own personality.

Public relations professionals are no longer limited in their choice of job options because in today’s society everyone wants and needs good public relations. Knowing where your interests lie before graduating and looking for a job may make your search easier. But what exactly is out there to choose from? The following descriptions will give you a brief overview of some of the major classifications of public relations.

AGENCY:
Many businesses attain their public relations by hiring an outside firm. Agency professionals may work with several clients a day, never having to promote the same ideas all the time. Some believe this variety to be exciting, others consider the constant changes to be strenuous.

ASSOCIATION:
Almost every profession, from retail managers to physicians, has an organization that binds their practitioners together. It is usually the responsibility of the public relations department to manage membership recruitment, retention, and relations.

CORPORATE:
Corporations, which can include anything from sports teams to computer companies, usually have their own public relations staff on hand to create awareness and gain public support. This aspect retains one of the largest populations of public relations professionals.

GOVERNMENT:
This classification involves many aspects of PR. A professional may find himself trying to get a political candidate elected, working to get public support for government actions, lobbying government officials to pass legislation, or a vast majority of other tasks.

HEALTH CARE:
This field grew tremendously in the past decade, but its future is uncertain. PR departments are awaiting the outcome of Clinton’s health care reform to know how they will be affected. In the mean time, professionals in health care facilities are faced with a broad scope of responsibilities, often having to combine their PR skills with marketing and advertising.

NON-PROFIT:
There are numerous non-profit organizations looking for trained PR professionals, often paying well to get them. The challenge here lies with trying to gain both human and financial support, expand knowledge, and change opinions with what is often a limited amount of funds and staff.

INVESTOR RELATIONS:
This aspect of public relations has recently become an established and successful specialty. PR professionals may work for an independent firm, a corporation, or a financial institution to encourage investment. Always taking risks, they must deal with the fluctuations of the economy, not only on a national level but also on a global level.

EDUCATORS:
As PR is being recognized as a necessary component of an organizational culture, there is a need, both at a college and recently at a high school level, for trained educators to teach the next generation how to be public relations professionals.

Of course, there are other specialities and opportunities that a public relations graduate can consider—new markets are practically being created for the profession everyday. Armed with flexibility and talent, you will find that there are many PR positions waiting to be filled.
A Note From the President

What an exciting year this has been so far for The Kelly Thompson Chapter of the Public Relations Student Society of America! In just this short semester, we held a successful membership drive, continued operating Creative Exchange, our student-run agency, and were chosen to compete in the second phase of the 1993 Halls® and PRSSA Campus Challenge.

For me, the most challenging part of the year was the membership drive. Our main goal was to combine both old and new recruitment ideas to increase awareness and interest in PRSSA among WKU’s public relations students. Our success in this area is measured by the 27 members who joined for the Fall 1993 semester.

Creative Exchange, under the direction of Kevin Lloyd has also flourished this fall. We have continued to provide quality public relations for organizations both on and off Western’s campus. Our newest client, ResuMag, is a new corporation in Bowling Green. Over the next few months, we will be implementing an awareness campaign that will help them become one of Bowling Green’s best businesses.

The 1993 Campus Challenge has been another challenging, yet rewarding project. I just want to take this opportunity to thank project coordinator Dora Epley for all of the hard work that she has done to ensure our success with this national campaign. Under her guidance, we sent a proposal to Golin/Harris Communications and Warner-Lambert outlining our plans for holding a Halls® of Music Contest at WKU. We were then chosen as one of 15 schools throughout the United States to execute our proposal. We are now in the process of carrying out the campaign and expect to hear the results in January.

Finally, I want to thank all of the PRSSA officers this year. They have done an outstanding job, and I wouldn’t have been able to do everything without them. I also attended the PRSSA National Conference in Orlando along with three other chapter members. It was a great opportunity to learn more about public relations. I now hope to implement many of the new ideas I gained into The Kelly Thompson chapter.

New Space for Journalism Dept.

By Gina Goff

The journalism department is looking forward to the addition of a reading resources library to be established next spring.

The library will be located on the third floor of Wilson Hall next to the public relations department office. Professor James Highland’s office will be moved to Garrett Conference Center to make room for the library.

The resource center will become the home of many publications currently in storage in the Helm-Cravens library, said Dr. Robert Blann.

The faculty and students will both have use of the facility, and a nearby copier will be available when copies of materials are necessary. A better knowledge of what public relations publications are available will be acquired once the center is organized.

According to Dr. Blann articles and publications many students have not even heard of will be available for reading. “I have over 160 drawers of things I have saved, plus all these (shelves reaching nearly to the ceiling),” he said. “It will be really great to have easier access to all the materials the department receives.”
Creative Exchange Gains New Clients

By Claude Bacon

The Kelly Thompson chapter of PRSSA at Western Kentucky University has been hard at work with its student run public relations agency, Creative Exchange. Creative Exchange has turned over a new leaf compared to the former agency, Kentucky Consultants.

The agency has several new clients and is flourishing with student participation.

The agency was created to provide cost-effective public relations to Bowling Green and South-Central Kentucky, as well as experience for future public relations professionals.

Some of the agency's projects include the Commuter Link, an 8-page color newsletter made for student health services; The Side Dish, a 2-page newsletter for Marriott food services; a 16-page journalism newsletter that will contain departmental information and alumni updates; and a 4-page semesterly accounting newsletter containing departmental information.

"The agency is working with new clients on exciting projects, as well as maintaining a continual working relationship with our charter clients," said Kevin Lloyd, executive director of Creative Exchange.

The agency has 11 members, which is nearly half of PRSSA's membership. Each member volunteers to be a part of one or all four areas of the agency. The areas are development and support, media relations and awareness, special events, and publishing. Each area has a manager, supervisor, and staff.

Creative Exchange has an excellent opportunity to handle all phases of a campaign for their most recent client, ResuMag. ResuMag is a resume data service that circulates resumes of students to businesses that subscribe to their service. ResuMag guarantees that the resumes will be distributed to at least 250 businesses, specializing in the southeastern United States. ResuMag is a new corporation that started in Bowling Green and will expand to eight states and 60 colleges by January of '94.
The contest began on Oct. 22, and ended on Dec. 10, with status reports submitted bi-weekly to Golin/Harris.

The main objective was to develop a contest that would not only work on this campus, but on any university campus throughout the United States. What they came up with was a musical competition that would unite students from WKU and Warren County high schools.

The proposed competition was broken down into two contests. One on Wed. Nov. 3 for WKU students and Thurs. Dec. 2 for the high schools. The first contest was held at the recital hall in the Ivan Wilson Fine Arts Center and the second at Tate Page Auditorium.

A theme was developed to tie the Halls® name and the contest together to attract publicity. The theme, "Feel Good about Yourself," was chosen to combine the ideas of education, music and health, which are all attributes that Halls® would like to portray.

Halls® information booths were set up at the Downing University Center, WKU football and basketball games, and area high school basketball games to give out free samples of Halls® Mentho-Lyptus® Cough Suppressant Tablets. Media kits were distributed to the area television, radio and newspapers to generate publicity for Halls®.

Programs from each of the 15 chapters chosen are now being evaluated. Winners will be declared in January. "Win or lose it has been a great learning experience that I will never forget," said Heather Hauer, chapter president. "We've put in a lot of hours and lost a little sleep, but overall I know we did our best. The most important thing was that we were given a chance to experience something like this. All we can do now is learn from it."