

PROFOUND COUNSEL FROM A DEPARTED LEADER: J. CARROLL BATEMAN'S CREDO

"I believe that public relations is a profession which should concern itself not with the manipulation of people, but with their continuing enlightenment;

"I believe that public relations practice should strive to elevate its audiences rather than to degrade them, and that our communications should be addressed to reason and judgment rather than to emotion and prejudice;

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

"While I may undertake to present one point of view for public consideration, I believe in the inalienable right of those with opposing points of view to present their cases also. For I recognize that

my right to speak can be assured only if the guarantee exists for all, including those whose causes are unpopular;

"I believe that the democratic process must prevail in the marketplace of ideas, as well as in political and economic affairs;

"I believe that the public interest takes precedence over the interests of those I represent; and I conceive my function as being to assist in conforming the interests of those I represent to the interests of the public when the two do not coincide;

"I recognize that the consequences of my actions are effected in the minds of men; and because the human mind has unmeasurable potentials for good and for evil, I must approach my task in reverence and awe, and with over-riding respect for the inviolable right of the individual to make his own judgments."

¶Bateman, the only person to serve as pres. of both PRSA and IPRA, died April 24 at age 65. A pioneer in curriculum planning & accreditation of college public relations sequences, he set a noteworthy standard upon retirement as pres. of the Insurance Information Institute by becoming a professor of public relations at Univ of Tenn. He presented this credo to the VII Public Relations World Congress in Boston. It is reprinted from tips & tactics 9/13/76.

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

DIED. Cincinnati counselor Betty Blake, 51, who rose from dpr to pres of Delta Queen Steamboat Co, almost single handedly saved the famed old paddle-wheelers.

AWARDS. Dennis Wilcox (journalism prof, San Jose State U) receives Rex Harlow award for outstanding contributions to the profession; Graham Kislingbury (pres, Graham Kislingbury

PR, SF) receives public service award for 30 yrs of comty involvement from PRSA's SF, East Bay & Peninsula chaps.

Nat'l Council for Community Relations names Larry Romine (chief pr ofcr, Lane Community College, Eugene, Ore.) Practitioner of the Year.

HONORS. A. Newell Garden (dpr, Raytheon, Lexington, Mass.) appointed chrm, Nat'l Boating Safety Advisory Council.

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INFLUENCE PEDDLING BY DC PR FIRMS REBOUNDS
IN WASHINGTON POST'S ANTI-INTERVIEW MEMO, THO BRADLEE SAYS
HE DIDN'T MEAN IT LITERALLY: EX-GOV'T TYPES TO BLAME?

Meg Greenfield, editor of the editorial page, got mad at pressure put on her office by practitioners trying to set up meetings with the Post's editorial board. She sent ed. Ben Bradlee a 2½ pg angry memo. He agreed with her, added a note of his own and circulated it to editorial staff & to publr. Donald Graham. Copies were bootlegged immediately to several pr people & publications.

It appeared the Post was adopting a stance against working with practitioners. "PR firms, assorted other press agents & lawyers" are promising to "deliver" us, Greenfield wrote. Legit news sources shouldn't have to pay high fees to an intermediary to talk to the Post. Don't "be a party to political interviews, or really any interviews, set up by professional public relations firms" were the words Bradlee used. Gray & Co, Hill & Knowlton and Carl Byoir were named as transgressors. News sources should call on their own, directly to the editors -- whom Bradlee claims answer their own phones.

But -- "The Post has no intention of turning its back on pr people as sources of information," dpr Virginia Rodriguez told prr. "We deal with these people all the time and we need their information." Bradlee wasn't talking about "pr practitioners per se," only those who give the impression they have special influence or imply it is necessary to go thru them. "You don't have to hire someone to get in here."

Rodriguez sees the flap as positive for the great majority of practitioners -- by emphasizing the Post's policy of giving access to everyone, whether or not they're big names with contacts. Post's own belief in pr was reinforced recently when it added the former DC supt of schools to its public relations staff.

Possible contributing causes to the problem are intense competition between practitioners, publicity given "power brokers" with high gov't contacts. Such ex-gov't

THE REAL ISSUE: PR ETHICS

Rodriguez concludes: "As a pr person myself I can understand where she's (Greenfield) coming from. I for one wouldn't want anyone to think that if you don't have contacts here you can't deal with us. Secondly, I wouldn't want anyone to think that the news or editorial pages of this newspaper are for sale. And I don't think a pr person worth his or her salt would want to do business with a paper that operates that way because no one is going to believe what they write."

PRSA's Code of Professional Standards deals with the issue twice. Art. 6 outlaws "any practice which tends to corrupt the integrity of channels of communication." Art. 13 inveighs against promising "the achievement of specified results beyond the direct control" of practitioners.



staffers as Bob Gray, Peter Hannaford & Lynn Nofziger have been touted by the media for their contacts. Headline over page one Wall Street Journal article on Gray said it clearly: "A PR Man Uses Access to Influential People to Lure, Help Clients." Publicity fosters belief practitioners are merely connectors or back-room operators, not professionals applying a behavioral science body of knowledge.

DEFINITION OF "PUBLIC FIGURE"
IN LIBELS STILL NOT DEFINITE
BUT TREND EMERGING, SAYS REPORTERS CMTE

Standard defense in libel suits is to claim the plaintiff is a "public figure." What that means has evaded precise definition. Public figures are divided into

two categories -- "all-purpose" and "limited-purpose" -- according to Reporters Cmte for Freedom of the Press in 4th annual issue of "News Media & The Law." Limited purpose figures are public only to the extent they voluntarily involve themselves in a controversy -- a situation many practitioners or their clients might find themselves in. Plaintiffs ruled "public" (usually by a judge, not a jury) have the burden of proving "actual malice": that the defamatory statement was published with knowing or reckless falsity.

US Supreme Court ducked 31 of 33 libel cases brought before it last year. Litigants in other 2 cases reached out of court settlements, preventing further clarification. Settlements may indicate press' reluctance to give Court the chance to rule on 2 important questions: 1) Does a public figure who has vanished into obscurity remain a public figure? and 2) Who bears the burden of proof, in a case involving a private figure, in showing whether a news story is true or false? Cases discussed in the magazine include:

1. Head of a large, innovative cooperative supermarket sued a trade publication for a critical article, was ruled a public figure. Court said his "path-breaking market policies became the subject of public debate within the supermarket industry and beyond...."
2. Environmental consulting firm under contract to gov't agency is neither a public official nor a public figure for purposes of a libel suit. Reporters Cmte sought Supreme Court review of the decision, arguing ruling would hamper reporting on public affairs where outside consultants are hired to advise gov't on public policy. Appeals Court ruled firm was a private figure because it was a private firm with only tangential connection to public matters.
3. Critical statements made by an accreditation consultant during two onsite inspections of a law school are opinions and therefore not libelous. School dean, who was fired, sued consultant and won \$50,000 judgment. Appeals Court reversed, saying criticisms were reasonable opinions based on the investigation and therefore protected. Dean, ruled a public figure, had to show the consultant acted with actual malice.

(Copies from 1125 15th St. NW, Rm 403, Wash DC 20005; \$3 per issue.)

CUSTOMERS' CHANGING CONCERNS PROMPT
UTILITY TO PLAN EMPLOYEE EDUCATION
TO CUT LOSSES ON PUBLIC RELATIONSHIPS

Public Service of New Mexico has initiated a companywide training program to sensitize all employees to the public relations impact of company decisions. VP Bud Mulcock

told prr the move was sparked by unexpected public response to subjects previously considered too specialized or having built-in public acceptance, e.g. options on a

power plant purchase, research & demonstration projects, prototype solar housing experiments.

Program will emphasize customers' new alertness to utility decisions involving costs & long range planning. It supplements PNM's traditional employee information vehicles: newsletter, news briefs, magazine, video tapes, quarterly company wide discussion meetings. Project recognizes that an organization's public relationships are formed by all its members -- particularly employee interactions with neighbors & friends.

Proactive Employee Outreach
Used By Hospital

Hospitals need to be known as caring institutions. With that goal in mind, Hospital of the Univ of Penn began a hospital-wide "I Care" program. Series of 4-hr workshops each limited to 20 employees includes: 1) identification of employee & patient/visitor needs & benefits; 2) discussion of how fulfillment or deprivation of needs influences the way people act; 3) case studies and 4) self & prgm evaluations. Attendance is mandatory. One result has been a 43% reduction in calls to the patient relations department.

HUMOR IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

Originally a lawyers' joke, prominent counselor Harold Burson adapted the following story to the public relations practitioner who dies & goes to heaven. He is met at the pearly gates by 2 angels who say, "John Smith, the Lord gave instructions that the minute you get here He wants to see you."

"Me? John Smith?" "Yes," the angels reply, "the Lord said that the minute you step across these pearly gates you are supposed to go up to the throne room and see Him."

So they take him upstairs and there is the Lord sitting on a big throne. "I certainly am glad to welcome you here," says the Lord.

"I appreciate this, Sir. I'm very flattered," John replies.

"Well, we've been waiting a long, long time to get you here. Someone who's waited so long to get up here deserves this kind of reception."

"Lord, what do you mean 'waited a long time'?" John asks.

"126 years is a long time," says the Lord.

"What do you mean, 126 years???"

"Well, you're 126 years old, aren't you?"

"No, Lord, I'm just 55."

"According to our records, John, you're 126."

"I don't like to disagree with You my first hour in heaven, but I don't know where You got Your information. I'm just 55 years old."

So the Lord reaches down and brings out this big, long computer printout and says, "John Smith. You're 126 years old."

John scratches his head and says, "I don't understand it, there must be some mistake."

"Well," replies the Lord, "I've added up all your billable hours & you've got to be 126 years old!"