



PAT JACKSON'S LASTING CONTRIBUTION TO PUBLIC RELATIONS

Our loss of Pat Jackson, both personally and professionally, is immeasurable. He was a leader in our field of public relations, known for his commitment and creative thinking. We will miss him greatly, but his principles will continue to guide us:

- Pat believed that **any profession exists only by public consent** and that public relations provides an overriding social benefit when people have a voice. His ideal was Jeffersonian democracy. Public relations becomes a true profession when it brings people in touch with organizations, ideas and leaders. Every organization needs a person who can listen to what people are thinking and bring about harmonious relationships.
- **Harmony is an outcome of public relations practiced over a long time.** On the way, there is room for conflict and conflict management. Harmony by itself, however, will not be effective unless it is part of a process of mutually beneficial behavior, such as buying products and coming to work. When real trust develops it is a sign that we have done our job properly. Trust arises from only one thing, and that is consistency. You can't profess to have an open communication policy and then stonewall when there's bad news.
- **Harmonious relationships – not just relations – fortified with trust require coauthorship,** which was a favorite concept of Pat's. It is the win-win idea, in contrast to the *victory syndrome*. An organization must become so close to its publics that its policies, products and stands on issues reflect the thoughts of key publics. (He seemed to prefer the word *publics* to *stakeholders*.) Don't, however, pander to publics. Create enough understanding so they can participate in an organization's thinking. Then turn some of the decision-making authority over to publics.

- Pat criticized management schools for creating anti-human systems. It is the role of public relations to help overcome that tendency reminding managers that their **communications role is to transmit not only information but emotions and intuition.**
- Pat wasn't worried about being criticized for manipulation – didn't Freud say life begins with manipulation (getting mother to feed you)? But he believed in going the whole way on the hierarchy of effects (one of his favorite models) to **seek changes in behavior.** Thus he spoke of behavioral public relations, an idea he continually pursued.
- Public relations people need high self-esteem, not ego titillation. They rarely get praised, even if they deserve it. **Our role is to serve as catalysts.** Although we must have enough ego to achieve maximum impact, he strongly believed “if you need a lot of ego gratification, get out of pr.”

Pat said we should all be proud to be public relations practitioners. His life was dedicated to that belief. He once said he was glad pr reporter wasn't just a business, but a mission. As its editor, he faithfully attended to each issue for 25 years and sought to advance new ideas of a field he saw as performing a vital social role. Our staff will help Pat continue that tradition.

– Otto Lerbinger, Publisher

FRIENDS & COLLEAGUES REMEMBER PAT JACKSON

- Pat Jackson was one of the great figures in public relations, a person who helped to shape the profession with his wisdom, conviction and dedication to his craft. His passion and enthusiasm for the profession he practiced for more than half a century was legendary and made him one of the best known and most admired practitioners in the business. It's no wonder that he became known as “**the public relations counselor's public relations counselor.**” And yet the business he founded, Jackson Jackson & Wagner, remained remarkably private, never revealing its client list except to say they ranged from “starving non-profits to international ‘Fortune 50’ companies.” My personal guess is that he touched and influenced a very significant number of those of us who today call ourselves public relations professionals.

Pat was that rare combination of genius and generosity. He was forever on the forefront of refining and redefining the contemporary practice of public relations. Pat was the most fervent advocate of practicing **public relations both as an art and a science**, and he forged new ground in terms of establishing our profession as an integral part of the management of businesses, organizations, government and public service. His vision sometimes exceeded our grasp, but he was unceasing in his commitment to teach us and inspire us to take public relations into new realms, new responsibilities. He showed us what public relations could be at its very best, and then by his own professional achievements and his tireless commitment to teaching and lecturing and writing, he helped us learn.

This true genius, when combined with his generous spirit, played an integral role – no, *the* integral role – in the development of the Public Relations Society into the organization it is today. He was always there, to chair a blue ribbon task force or counsel on a thorny problem; to help us see our way through an issue or create a new way of doing things. Without his incisive and insightful leadership that continued, full force, long after his term on the national board ended, PRSA today would be a far less successful organization.

– Kathy Lewton, Chair & CEO
PRSA

The Arthur W. Page Society was fortunate to be able to list Pat Jackson among our members. And as he did with anything he became involved with, he was open and generous in giving our organization the benefit of his monumental experience and talent.

At our 1995 Spring Seminar, which dealt with the changing employee social contract, he spelled out his philosophy of public relations: "PR today must be strategy and counsel. **We must become coaches, trainers, champions.** We're on the spot because we've become agents of change."

At our Annual Conference the following year, he elaborated on his passion for "motivating, modifying or reinforcing behavior among stakeholder groups" with these words: "If we insist on continuing to be communications product producers – one-way communicators, media driven – it seems to me that other disciplines such as human resources and law can be more helpful because they have a broader perspective than that. But if we are strategists and the consciences of our organizations, then it seems to me that maybe we have truth going more in our direction."

– Jim Murphy, President
Arthur Page Society

- A wise man said that your greatest legacy in pr is not good programs or nifty ideas. Instead it is the leaders you create and the lives you shape. If that's true, Pat Jackson's legacy is profound. I cannot think of anyone during the past three decades whose ideas and example touched more people or did more to **foster professionalism in public relations.**

Pat spoke with the authority of a lion in charge. Every practitioner was a member of his pride and we listened because he challenged us every step along the way. He wanted us in the hunt at his level. That was a tall order for many, but I know how hard practitioners have worked to emulate to achieve his standards. He expected all of us to do our best and we dared not disappoint.

– Jim Fetig, Lockheed Martin

- For so many, including me, Pat Jackson was a source of confirmation, inspiration and motivation. The energy, the passion, the intellectual determination that characterized his life and work are what make him a true American original.

Pat Jackson always had a soft spot in his heart for school public relations professionals. With his infectious passion, he knew how important public education was to our democratic society, and he **freely did all he could to help school leaders understand how critical relationship-building pr was to the future of public education.**

Pat came to nearly every national NSPRA Seminar since 1980, and he was on everyone's must-see list of presenters because he made us think, he made us disagree, he made us laugh, and he made us feel that our profession was one of extreme importance – almost to the level of a higher calling. Pat gave us the confidence to tell the media to go away (aka *to hell*), and to tell our CEOs that they were screwing up by doing stupid things. And he made us understand that achieving behavioral results is what our profession is all about. Pat, indeed, taught us what public relations can and should be.

– Rich Bagin, Executive Director
National School Public Relations Association

Fortunately, **he left behind a tremendous body of work to educate us, to influence us and to stimulate further analysis and insight.** He also was, if you had the chance to meet and talk with him or hear him speak, one of the most memorable people you'd ever have met.

He was a living example of the power of verbal communication, through his incredibly dynamic verbal analyses – the way we all learn best, by being shown and told. His writing style reflected this same enormous energy and focused pragmatism:

- Helping others understand, learn and make progress – from their perspective – was the genius of his approach. Public relations is so much about the “I,” but Pat taught us that to be effective our profession had to be about “you,” the other guy’s concerns.
- Impatience with the foolishness and time-wasting rituals of our profession, and our misplaced reliance on the news media.

He hated wasting time on the unimportant, the immaterial, and the barriers to accomplishment. He was a man of wisdom and insight. **He sought to distill the meaning of events and ideas** so that we all could be better practitioners, better counselors, better citizens and better people.

His advocacy for direct communication with those constituencies directly affected by the actions of others remains a seminal insight for our profession, and a prophetic one given the declining power of traditional media and the emerging impact of the worldwide web.

He was a thinker, an analyst, a pragmatist, and an unselfish, fearless friend of our profession. Let's hope there will be more among us like him.

– Jim Lukaszewski
The Lukaszewski Group

- Sometimes we just can't unravel the confusing and conflicting information we have at hand. We need a guide. Pat was for me a Rosetta stone. I heard him speak, and suddenly, all the confusion was gone. From that moment on I started to be an effective practitioner who could anticipate issues and head them off. I will miss his guidance and friendship but **the gifts of wisdom he gave me will endure.** Something of Pat is now a part of me. I will do my best to live up to it and pass it on.

– Ken Morgan
US Department of Energy

Pat Jackson was the prototype of what I think a public relations professional should be. **He approached his work as an intellectual – constantly reading, thinking, theorizing and researching** about what he did. Pat actively consumed academic research on public relations and related fields, used it in his professional practice and wrote about it in pr reporter. He consistently supported public relations research and education.

He and I appeared together on many programs over the years and worked together on a number of projects. I think Pat and I had the perfect symbiotic relationship of a scholar and a practitioner: We learned from each other and changed each other in ways that made me a better scholar and, I think, Pat a better practitioner. I don't think anyone can ever replace him.

– Jim Grunig
University of Maryland

- If there ever was a link in the public relations field between the academy and the practice it clearly was Pat Jackson. He was one of our true legends not only because of what he contributed to the practice, but also because of his many contributions through professional organizations to making our field better today than it was yesterday. He was always open and generous with his thoughts, with his ideas and with his time.

He advocated behavioral public relations at a time when most in the field were press agents or publicists. He steered his clients in the direction of two-way communication when most were comfortable using methods that did not stimulate feedback.

Pat Jackson was intellectual but practical. He not only made many of us think, but he challenged us while doing so. He knew how to effectively tug and push even the most stubborn among us as he raised us to a higher level. When you disagreed with Pat he always listened carefully to the criticism. And, rather than being defensive, frequently would respond by explaining how he could work with the person he disagreed with to make public relations better.

I always thought of him as the Jefferson of our field – **a true visionary with an enormous sense of what the field could become.** While many of us in the 70s and 80s suspected that we were onto something big in this craft, it was Pat who articulated the power of pr, and its fundamental importance to the viability and success of organizations. All of us who now enjoy the success of what has become an important industry owe much to his intellect, common sense, innovation and decency. We were in the presence of a giant.

– Mitch Kozikowski

– Don Wright
University of South Alabama

- I grew to hold Pat in high esteem because he was one of the few pr practitioners who had the ability to **translate the theoretical of pr into the real world, and then evaluate and document its impact.** We have lost a pr visionary.

– Dick Dunne
Northrop Grumman

- On behalf of my co-authors Elizabeth Toth and Linda Hon, I want to express our deepest sorrow at the passing of Pat Jackson. In the process of our writing the first book about women in public relations, Pat was a **steadfast and insightful supporter.** To me, this was further evidence of how deeply he cared even about issues that did not obviously and directly affect him. As a result, he made time to participate fully in PRSA's committee on women, work and family issues. The women's community of practitioners and educators in public relations will miss him terribly.

– Lauri Grunig
University of Maryland

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INTERCONNECTEDNESS OF PROFESSION STIMULATES UNIFIED GOALS

As pr practice becomes very similar in every type of organization, and socio-economic-political impacts are global in effect, practitioners in one area now need to understand & care about what's happening in the others.

- Corporate pr cares about schools, because education is a business concern
- Since they are important supporters, school pr must know about corporations
- Corporate pr also must know healthcare, a major cost & employee benefit issue
- Higher ed pr has to know all the above, since they're taught on campus
- All interact with pr in NPOs, far beyond the United Way campaign level, because social responsibility projects lie there – as does volunteerism
- All must understand government & its pr, as they attempt to influence policy

And on & on. Evidence of this is seen in the far easier access to jobs between industry areas. Practitioners move from schools to corporations, from military to higher ed, from NPO to government etc.

INSTANTANEOUS INFO ANOTHER PUSHER

Change in structure of pr units is responsive to the absolute need for

One Clear Voice – in an era where something said to a single member of one stakeholder group can be worldwide within the hour.

- Boxes separating employee relations, media, community relations etc are either disappearing in favor of problem-solving teams – or tighter coordination is introduced
- Influencing this movement are rightsizing & cost reduction, with smaller staffs dropping low-return tasks to focus on the Big Opportunities

Strategies like Total Relationship Mgmt ([pr 12/6/93](#)), Integrated Com'ns ([pr 5/4/92](#)) & Reputation Mgmt ([pr 5/25/99](#)) turn these influences into positive programs. A strategy begins to emerge – one that started in school pr & now fits almost everywhere:

UNIFORM 5-STEP RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING STRATEGY

1. **Go Direct** to stakeholders, around the 3 gatekeepers that want to interpret your message for you: media, politicians, special interests
2. **Target Key Stakeholders**, the ones able to give supportive behaviors now or in the short term
3. **Focus On Reaching The Opinion Leaders** in these groups, since they drive decision-making anyway – and there's neither time, budget nor the mechanisms for reaching everyone
4. **Use The Employee Family** as the outreach arm that builds relationships, carries out community & industry projects, satisfies customers, leads grassroots lobbying, serves as sales ambassadors – the whole 9 yards
5. **All Activities Are Local**, because all issues & concerns are – but a network of local action adds up to a large national/global impact

