

35-Year Anniversary Historical Highlights



1968 - Our Beginning **September 18, 2003 membership meeting**

Presenter: Dr. Jack Detweiler, APR, CPRC

In 1968, the Osceola Chapter of the Florida Public Relations Association was formed. This chapter represented public relations practitioners in both Gainesville and Ocala. Chief Osceola was an icon seen often on our chapter materials. Our chapter newsletter at that time held several different names including *Osceola Update*, *Bull Sheet*, *Gainesville-Ocala Update*, and *Here's the Latest*.

The first president of the Osceola Chapter was Robert Lynch, who was at that time a professor at the UF College of Journalism. In 1969, Rae Weimer, Dean Emeritus of the UF College of Journalism, became president.

In 1981, the Osceola Chapter divided into two separate chapters: the Gainesville and Ocala Chapters. Both chapters have continued to grow and prosper. Today, the Gainesville chapter has over 100 members and the Ocala chapter has approximately 40 members.

First Bosses Day Event **October 16, 2003 membership meeting**

Presenter: Debbie Amirin, APR

I'd like to welcome all the bosses here today. It is obvious that you play a vital role in what we do -- not only by recognizing the value of our work and providing the resources we need to do it well, but also by enabling us to sharpen our skills and our focus as public relations professionals through participation in FPRA.

During my presidency in the dark ages of 1994-95, we placed a great deal of emphasis on communicating the value of FPRA membership to upper management. We started off the year by sending a letter to the supervisor of every board member thanking them for supporting their employee and mentioning some of the benefits participation at that level would bring, ranging from expanded professional contacts to enhanced job-related skills. We followed up later in the year with the first -- that we know of -- Boss's appreciation day luncheon in April 1995, a tradition that outstanding presidents like Karen have continued and improved upon over the years.

Accreditation

November 20, 2003 membership meeting

Presenter: Jim Terhune, Ph.D.

As you know by our 35th Anniversary promotion this year, our chapter was formed in 1968. I had the privilege of serving as the chapter president in 1985. About 11 years before I became president, that would be 1974, the Florida Public Relations Association began offering two levels of professional recognition to its members - Accredited Public Relations Professional, or APRP, and Certified Public Relations Counselor, or CPRC. In 1979, our chapter had six members who had earned their APRP designation.

On January 1, 1998, our accreditation program was accepted by the Universal Accreditation Board and the designation was changed to APR or Accredited in Public Relations. Currently, our chapter has thirty APRs and six CPRCs, which equates to 30 percent of our chapter membership. Our 30 members join a group of 5,000 accredited PR professionals throughout the nation.

If you are interested in achieving accreditation or certification, visit our chapter website for details.

First President's Award

December 16, 2003 Holiday Mixer

Presenter: Larry Lansford, APR, 1988-89 Chapter President

During my reign as president of our chapter, way back in the last century, we initiated a President's Award to recognize a Gainesville chapter member who provided services to the membership above and beyond normal expectations. The criteria for the award included:

- Participating in most of the chapter functions during the year
- Giving extraordinary time and energy to one or more projects, tasks, or programs during the year
- Displaying a professional attitude, showing support for the chapter and its members, and generally setting an example for others to follow.

The first President's Award was given to Susan Williams, APR, who happens to be here tonight. Susan, it just so happens that I have the picture that captured your reaction when you received the inaugural President's Award (show picture).

I'm gratified to see that the tradition of honoring an outstanding member has continued in what is now referred to as the Member of the Year Award.

**Community Relations in FPRA
January 15, 2004 membership meeting**

Presenter: Valerie Incantalupo, APR, 2002-03 Chapter President

Throughout our chapter's history, our members have been involved in the local community, through FPRA and other community organizations. In 1988, our chapter established the Gainesville Public Relations Advisory Council comprised of seasoned members and past presidents to fulfill our chapter's community service commitment.

Over the years, members continued to serve in an advisory capacity, when called upon, until 1999, when I had the pleasure of reviving our chapter's Community Relations committee. Through this committee, our chapter provides programs and services to our local community to promote FPRA and provide PR services to non-profit organizations. Since its revival in 1999, we've held two Media Breakfasts that included local media representatives and a media guide for each participant, and a PR 101 seminar for non-PR professionals, specifically targeting non-profit organizations. We have also provided PR services for Morningside Nature Center, ACORN Clinic, the Arthritis Foundation, Cultural Arts Coalition, and Maddie's Project Pet Rescue Foundation that included event planning, press releases, sponsorship packages, a PR kit, and brochures.

**Roast and Toast
February 19, 2004 membership meeting**

Presenter: Ruth Smith, 1984 Chapter President

It's hard to believe that it's been 20 years since I was the president of the Gainesville Chapter! In 1984, our theme was "Esprit de Corps in 1984." During my year as president, we held the first "Roast and Toast" as a fundraiser and our first roastee was Phil Emmer. We had 240 attendees at the Roast and Toast, which was held at the Turkey Creek Golf & Racquet Club, now known as Heritage Links. More than \$4,000 was raised from this event. This money was used to fund scholarships in the College of Journalism and Communications, with the funds specifically designated for PR students at the University of Florida.

In the following years, our chapter hosted several more successful Roasts and Toasts. In 1988 when Donna Davis was president, we roasted Alan Squiteri with 250 people in attendance, one of them Senator Bob Graham, and raised \$4,000 for scholarships.

Image Awards
March 18, 2004 membership meeting

Presenter: Marilyn Maple, APR

On September 18, 1978, the Gainesville Chapter of FPRA held its first local Image Awards competition. It was billed as the Imie Awards. We think it was a takeoff of the Emmy Awards, but we can't find anyone who remembers! Two of the award winners are still members of our chapter!

I'm one of those winners. I received a first place Imie Award in the Public Affairs category for a film I did for the March of Dimes entitled "A Normal Pair of Shoes." Terry Van Nortwick, who just celebrated her 30-year milestone as a chapter member, won two Imie Awards: first place in the Brochures category with her informational piece entitled, "This is Farm Bureau," and second place in the Public Affairs category for her "Florida Farm Bureau Consumer Affairs Program." Of course Terry and I were both fresh out of college when we entered and won these awards 26 years ago!

Today we have the opportunity to again recognize the best public relations programs, printed materials, and audio-visual tools as we recognize our award winners.

First Professional Development Seminar
April 15, 2004 membership meeting

Presenter: Rod Hemphill, APR, CPRC, 1998-99 Chapter President

Our chapter held its first Professional Development Seminar on May 2, 1979. Of course, back then we were still the Osceola Chapter, which served PR professionals in the Gainesville/Ocala area.

The title of the seminar was "How to Let People Know You're a Good Guy." The 6-hour seminar included workshops that covered survey research, money-saving printing techniques, working with the local media, internal and external public relations, and improving your organization's newsletter. The seminar was sponsored by our chapter, the Gainesville Area Chamber of Commerce, and the UF College of Journalism and Communications. 205 people attended the seminar.

Since that first seminar 25 years ago, our chapter has held many Professional Development Seminars to help our members enhance their professional skills and learn new skills, which is just another benefit of FPRA membership.

**Diversity in FPRA
May 20, 2004 membership meeting**

Presenter: Arline Phillips-Han, APR, CPRC, 2003 Professional of the Year

When FPRA was founded in 1938, the vast majority of its members were men who worked for real estate companies, private corporations, or were PR consultants. The membership meetings focused on how sales were promoted more than public relations.

When our chapter was founded in 1968, 30 years later, there were more women members but the leadership of the chapter was primarily male. Over the last 35 years, our membership has grown to include PR practitioners from both nonprofit and government organizations, as well as many other areas. Today, 75 percent of our members are women. We continue to provide membership benefits, like our quality luncheon programs, that attract PR practitioners, both men and women, from differing cultural backgrounds and organizations. More importantly, as PR practitioners, we are learning how to effectively work with diverse audiences, and make FPRA an organization that meets the needs of a diverse group of PR practitioners.

**Chapter Communication
June 17, 2004 membership meeting**

Presenter: Nancy Walsh, APR, 1997-98 Chapter President

As Public Relations professionals, we are communicators! As a chapter, we've been using tools to communicate among ourselves since our chapter was chartered 35 years ago as the Osceola chapter, serving PR professionals in both the Gainesville and Ocala area. Newsletters were the communication tool of choice and were given clever names like Osceola Bull Sheet!, Here's the Latest!, and Osceola Update. In 1981, Gainesville and Ocala each became a chapter and we continued to print a monthly newsletter called the Update.

Our chapter newsletter evolved over the years, was redesigned several times, and won chapter newsletter of the year honors. When I was president in 1997-1998, we held a focus group with some of our members to rethink the way we communicate. That year, our chapter web site was born, our printed newsletter was distributed quarterly instead of monthly, and we began faxing a 1-page newsletter called the Gainesville FPRA Brief Update in the months we didn't distribute a printed newsletter. In 1998, we won the state Communications award for our efforts!

In 1999-2000, we stopped faxing a monthly Brief Update and started emailing it instead! In 2000-2001, our chapter communications function was divided into two areas: printed communication and electronic media and responsibilities were redefined. We discontinued our printed newsletter in 2002 and began distributing our monthly electronic newsletter, the eNews. In 2003, our chapter won an award for the Best Chapter Web Site.

Communication continues to evolve in our profession as well as in our chapter. Who knows what we'll be talking about in another 35 years!

Past Presidents' Council
July 15, 2004 membership meeting

Presenter: Nancy Dohn, APR, 2001-02 Chapter President

As a past president of the Gainesville Chapter of FPRA, I have the privilege and responsibility to serve on the Past Presidents' Council. The first mention of the Past Presidents' Council in our chapter history was in 1988, when our past presidents met and conducted a storyboard session to help our chapter leadership focus the direction of our chapter.

The Past Presidents' Council was officially established in 1989 to serve as a formal review panel of the current chapter board of directors' success in implementing its goals. The Immediate Past President convenes the council at the end of each chapter year, typically in July, to evaluate the year's activities and offer direction for the incoming board of directors. Recommendations made by the Past Presidents' Council are presented to the incoming board, who we are voting on today, at our chapter board retreat and these recommendations are incorporated into the goals, objectives, and action plans for the upcoming year.

Between the Past Presidents' Council and your input on our chapter member survey, our board of directors continually fine tunes the direction of our chapter to make sure we are meeting the needs of all of our members.

Leadership Development
August 19, 2004 membership meeting

Presenter: Kathy Giery, APR, CPRC, 2000-01 FPRA State Association President

Each year, our chapter provides leadership development opportunities to chapter leaders and members who want to become leaders. These opportunities are delivered in the form of workshops, seminars, and short courses. Through the years, there have been many interesting topics.

Do you remember the quality push in the early 90s? Our chapter held a Total Quality Management, or TQM, leadership training session in 1992 to make sure our members were "quality savvy." A leadership training workshop at the Mental Health Services Ropes Course was planned for 1995 to promote leadership team building. But I think the most unique leadership training event was planned in 1997, entitled "Alien Encounter for PR Professionals." We were unable to find the details of that leadership event!

Leadership training is available for any FPRA member interested in taking a leadership role in our chapter, either as a committee chair or future board member. Our chapter does an excellent job of grooming our leaders and even won an award for Leadership Development at this year's annual conference. Our incoming president, Wendy Crites Wacker, APR, will be focusing on Building Leadership during her year as president. If you are interested in becoming a leader in FPRA, make sure you take advantage of the many opportunities we offer at both the chapter and state level.