

# **We've a Story to Tell**



Baptist Communicators Association

**Second Edition  
Compiled By**

R. Chip Turner

**1986 Edition  
Compiled and Edited By**

James H Cox

**Published by BAPTIST COMMUNICATORS ASSOCIATION ©2004  
A national organization of Southern Baptist professional communicators**

[www.baptistcommunicators.org](http://www.baptistcommunicators.org)

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## Preface

In 1987, when *We've A Story To Tell* first was distributed, I had been a member of the Baptist Public Relations Association for ten years. Some of the founding members were still active in the organization but it was obvious then that a fourth edition\* of our history was becoming increasingly important. Another 17 years down the road at the 50th Anniversary observance of BCA\*\*, such an account remains an important signpost, preserving the rich tradition of our association.

Who could have imagined what would transpire since 1987 in the field of communications and certainly in Southern Baptist life? Many have said that these intervening years are unparalleled in our half century of existence. Though by no means exhaustive, this historical update is both a way of reminding us of our rich heritage and of challenging us to reach greater heights in the years to come.

In this second edition of *We've a Story to Tell*, we reproduce for you the earlier recorded history of our organization as told by the various presidents to James H. (Jim) Cox. The length of Jim's active service with the organization ideally equipped him to compile and edit the book.

The history continues with reports from 1987 through 2004, our 50th anniversary as an organization. As in Jim's earlier work, we sought wherever possible to have the presidents recap the highlights of their terms.

Our members have always sought to utilize current media tools to continually improve our craft. Thus, this history piece is being delivered on CD. While I admit a proclivity for the printed page, I cannot argue with the portability, cost, and efficiency of this format. And, with the inclusion of a current membership directory, this CD becomes an even more valuable resource.

Completing a project of this scope always involves a number of volunteers. While there is a danger of overlooking someone (with apologies for these unintentional omissions), I would like to express appreciation to Ele Clay, Miller Murphy,, Kimberlee Duncan, Keith Beene, Sean Copley and associate for many hours of selfless service. In addition, appreciation is due to several past presidents who submitted reports from their years of service to bring us up to date.

We still have the greatest story in the history of the world to tell to our nation and our world!

May the next 50 years be our most effective yet as we deliver THE story . . .  
HIStory!



R. Chip Turner  
BCA Historian  
2001–2004



**2003–2004 BCA OFFICERS** (see page 114 for position titles)

Left to right: Keith Beene, Jan Kelley, Doug Rogers, Jennifer Newcomb,  
R. Chip Turner, Rusty Cowling, Cathy Humphrey, Allen Spencer, Mark Snowden,  
Joe Conway, Paul Huse

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\*In the 1986 edition of *We've A Story To Tell*, compiler and editor Jim Cox writes of his involvement in three previous history accounts of Baptist Public Relations Association (see page 73, President's Report 1985–1986).

\*\*Baptist Public Relations Association members approved the name change to Baptist Communicators Association at their annual meeting in March, 1996. The name-change proposal came from a special study committee chaired by Mike Duduit. Effective date of the change was July 1, 1996.

# The Storytellers

Baptist Communicators Association members continue to recount the story under far more than a hundred different job titles.

Some of them are artists. Some are writers. Some, editors. Some, managers and supervisors. Photographers. Journalism teachers. Audiovisual producers. Publications coordinators. News and information specialists. Advertising agents. Tour guides and courtesy personnel.

They are students. Volunteers. Freelancers. Part timers. Full timers. Communicators of every description, but professional in what they do.

Creators of the spoken word.  
The written word.  
The word picture.  
Promoters of the Word.

The single thread common to them all, and their varied counterparts, is that they have the greatest message in the world to convey: That Jesus came to separate a lost world from outer darkness.

Every agency, commission, board, institution, committee, office, auxiliary, entity in Southern Baptist life shares that purpose at its core. Baptist Communicators Association's rank and file subscribe to it. They create favorable impressions for employers who sanction this message. They are charged with bringing tidings of great joy. The story of Jesus is the one they tell, both in overt and in subtle ways.

The storytellers are a story in themselves. Their story goes behind the scenes of the producer's studio, transcends the strokes of the artist's brush [and digital composition], the terminal of the writer's keyboard, the lens of the photographer's camera to focus on those who give an account.

This is their story.

Theirs is a message of peace, hope, love. They present it in different ways, but the message is the same.

Their story is one worth telling, too.

## A BPRAer's Prayer

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Make us mindful, O Lord, that we are really teachers  
and that what we do because of what we teach we do to human things.

Help us always to play the man; deliver us from the untruth, the half truth  
and evasiveness with men, women and children.

Help us to see that we can present the claims of Christ and the cause of his  
kingdom  
without lies in pretty packages or semantics that make the bad seem good.

Grant us, we pray, the power and the fortitude to tell our story  
with the hearts of men and women who know Christ and his desire  
for all to know him.

Lift us as men and women of vision  
who seek to help mankind rise above the flood tide of conformity and  
complacency to greatness and achievement in the name of Christ.

*Amen.*

(Originally provided in the first edition of *We've a Story to Tell* as a reprint from the first history of the organization,  
*BPRA Years of Achievement 1953–1972*)

# In The Beginning

## In 1954

- The United States Navy was thrust into the nuclear age with the launching of the Nautilus.
- Four terrorists, shooting from the visitor's gallery in the House of Representatives, wounded five Congressmen in the name of Puerto Rican independence.
- France became disillusioned with the war in Viet Nam when Ho Chi Minh's army overran Dien Bien Phu.
- The Supreme Court ruled that racial segregation in the public schools was unconstitutional. That decision was announced May 17 and about two weeks later the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Saint Louis approved a recommendation endorsing it.
- The pastor of Brownwood Baptist Church, Lumpkin, Georgia, was asked by his deacons to resign because he said the Supreme Court decision on racial segregation was "just, right and Christian."
- Royal Ambassadors, formerly a program of Southern Baptists' Woman's Missionary Union, was transferred to joint sponsorship by WMU and the Brotherhood Commission.
- The Radio-TV Commission was first refused and then granted permission to move from Atlanta. The Southern Baptist agency later announced that its new home would be Fort Worth.
- Baptists in the Oregon-Washington convention offered the first of many requests for the Sunday School and Home Mission boards to serve Baptist churches in western Canada.
- Southern Baptist church membership topped eight million.

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- A Baptist gym teacher, Walter Kirk, was forced from his job for refusing to teach dancing in class. “Much sin and ungodliness is committed on public dance floors,” he said.
- In Saint Louis, a small group of Baptist public relations people met to found the Baptist Public Relations Association.

C.E. Bryant recalled the year of BPRA's birth in a nostalgic discourse given during the organization's silver anniversary celebration in 1979.

**THE ORIGINS OF THIS FRATERNITY** are spread to three cities.

**Fort Worth, Texas** was the site of the first annual workshop, February 17–18, 1955. A program format was established then which has essentially been followed at almost all subsequent annual meetings. It consists of serious program content, including plenary and shirtsleeve sessions in small groups, coupled with a generous mixture of free and fellowship time. Many members claim, as Floyd Criag did in his keynote address to the 1986 workshop at Glorieta, New Mexico, that hallway and mealtime conversations during BPRA workshops are “moments that meant something.”

Craig suggested that the 1986 workshop registrants would have similar experiences to his own dating back to the first workshop he attended in 1960. Occasions when members discuss the accomplishments and frustrations of their work with one another mean “even more than the formal workshop session,” said Craig. Experiences of many firmly entrenched in BPRA traditions across the years would suggest that Craig was right on target.

**Saint Louis, Missouri** actually hosted the 13 men and women who attended Baptist Public Relations Association's organizational meeting. Held eight months before the Fort Worth workshop, the historic date was **June 3, 1954**; the place was the Jefferson Hotel. The Southern Baptist Convention was then in annual session in Saint Louis. Those 13 participants were on the staffs of SBC boards, seminaries, state conventions, commissions and the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention.

**Nashville, Tennessee** was truly the city of BPRA's conception, however. Retired Sunday School Board staffer Agnes Ford recalls a bitterly cold day December 15, 1953 when she and eight other denominational servants met in a small room of the Sam Davis Hotel. Now demolished, the old establishment was a Nashville landmark of that era. Situated on Seventh Avenue, North, at the southeast corner of Commerce Street, the Sam Davis faced west toward the Sunday School Board's properties.

The purpose of that historic meeting, according to Mrs. Ford, was to discuss the feasibility of establishing an organization of people who were employed by the denomination in public relations capacities.

Present that day were: Joe R. Abrams, *The Baptist Record*, Jackson, Mississippi; Arthur S. Davenport, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, Oklahoma City; Frances M. Davis, SBC Executive Committee, Nashville; Badgett Dillard, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky; Clarence E. Duncan, Radio-TV Commission, Atlanta, Georgia; Leonard L. Holloway, Baptist General Convention of Texas, Dallas; Albert McClellan, SBC Executive Committee, Nashville; R. Alton Reed, Relief and Annuity Board, Dallas, Texas; and Mrs. Ford, Sunday School Board, Nashville.



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Abrams, Davenport, Holloway, McClellan and Reed were elected to a prestigious panel at that embryonic session charged with beginning an “organization of public relations, publications and promotional representatives for Southern Baptists.” Holloway was chairman. The five of them drafted a constitution and bylaws for a formal alliance.

The result of their labors was a document consisting of seven articles and accompanying bylaws for the duties of officers and committees, for voting and holding office, for quorum requirements, changes in bylaws and spelling out who would be charter members.

There was a proposal that charter members officially include any who had attended the historic embryonic Nashville meeting in December 1953. In addition, charter members would include other “eligible individuals” who expressed interest in membership by communicating with a temporary chairman before the end of the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1954.

That section was later amended to allow anyone who joined Baptist Public Relations Association by December 31, 1954 to be admitted as a charter member.

**ON THAT DATE, 25 PERSONS** had qualified, including:

Joe R. Abrams	Charles R. Gage
Hazel Rogers Bland	Ione Gray
Robert M. Brooks	L.O. Griffith
Cyril E. Bryant	Leonard L. Holloway
Ralph D. Churchill	A.R. Howard
Arthur S. Davenport	Frank Junell
Frances M. Davis	Albert McClellan
Badgett Dillard	R. Alton Reed
Clarence E. Duncan	James M. Sapp
Ben C. Fisher	Al Scroggins
Cort R. Flint	Grady Sparkman
Agnes G. Ford	Leonard E. Wedel

**THE CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS** drafted by the committee of five which had been designated earlier in Nashville was adopted with only slight modifications during the organizational meeting in Saint Louis.

The association’s first permanent officers were also elected in Saint Louis.

Named were:

Joe R. Abrams, president  
Leonard L. Holloway, program vice president  
Agnes G. Ford, membership vice president  
Frances M. Davis, secretary-treasurer  
Arthur S. Davenport, newsletter editor

Each of them had been present at the historic gathering in Nashville. Three of them were part of the temporary committee elected there.

The first annual workshop was set for Fort Worth early in the following year. Ralph D. Churchill and other staff members of Southwestern Baptist Theological

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Seminary were designated as hosts for the event.

The fledgling organization, only a vague concept in the minds of a few pioneer religious public relations practitioners in 1953, was ready to try its wings as the denomination's newest fraternity of professional personnel a few months later. While its future was uncertain, the opportunities seemed filled with promise. Would Baptist Public Relations Association meet the expectations of its founders? Time would tell.

**A WALK THROUGH THIS FIRST HALF CENTURY** in the life of the organization will at least suggest that many new plateaus have been attempted, and a number of them reached, along the way.

## 1954–1955

Joe R. Abrams, president

### MEETINGS

Organizational: June 3, 1954, Jefferson Hotel, Saint Louis, Missouri

Workshop: February 17–18, 1955, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary  
Fort Worth, Texas

Fellowship: May 19, 1955, Columbus Hotel, Miami, Florida

### OFFICERS

President Joe R. Abrams, *The Baptist Record*

Program Vice President Leonard L. Holloway, Baptist General Convention of Texas

Membership Vice President Agnes G. Ford, Baptist Sunday School Board

Newsletter Editor Arthur S. Davenport, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma

Secretary-Treasurer Frances M. Davis, Executive Committee

### ACTIVITIES

- The organizational meeting was held at 1:15 p.m. CST. A “baker’s dozen” was present, 12 members and a visitor, Edward F. Eubanks, a local PR practitioner who delivered BPRA’s first address. The 12 BPRAers were: Joe Abrams, Ralph D. Churchill, Arthur S. Davenport, Frances M. Davis, Clarence E. Duncan, Agnes G. Ford, Ione Gray, L.O. Griffith, Leonard L. Holloway, Albert McClellan, R. Alton Reed, Leonard E. Wedel. Following Eubanks’ presentation, minutes of the December exploratory meeting at Nashville were read and approved. Holloway, chairman of a committee named at Nashville to offer a permanent name, purpose, constitution and bylaws for the organization, reported. Recommendations of his committee including Abrams, Davenport, McClellan and Reed, were adopted in 14 parts and then as a whole. First permanent officers were elected.
- It was agreed in an officers’ (or executive committee) meeting the following afternoon at the Jefferson Hotel that the first workshop would be held at Southwestern Seminary early in 1955. The secretary was instructed to notify all members that annual dues of \$10 for charter members and \$15 for others were payable 30 days after the Southern Baptist Convention, June 2–5. A motion was adopted that the next “annual” meeting be held in Miami, Florida when the SBC was again in session. In these early days, business of the association was generally transacted during the SBC gatherings while workshops offered “educational enlightenment.”

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- The oldest newsletter available in the BPRA archives at the SBC Historical Commission is dated February 17–18 at Southwestern Seminary. In asking for items for the newsletter, it suggests: “Every member of BPRA is an assistant editor of this BPRA newsletter.” A good idea then and now.
- The initial workshop, at Fort Worth, was a mixed bag of secular and religious PR specialists. Examples: Luther Adkins, director of public service programming, WBAP-TV, Fort Worth; Ralph D. Churchill, director of publicity and associate professor of journalism, Southwestern Seminary; Cullum Greene, Sunday editor, *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*; Frank Junell, vice president, director of public relations, Citizens National Bank, Lubbock, Texas; Albert McClellan, director of publications, Executive Committee, Nashville.
- There were 17 members and four guests present at the second “annual” meeting at Miami. Four newsletters had been issued during the year. After beginning with 24 charter members (those who joined in 1954), the association included 30 active and two associate members at Miami a year later. Eighty letters written by the membership vice president cultivated prospects during the year.
- A motion at Miami urged BPRA members to talk with their executive secretaries, requesting spots on state convention programs to present the need for state PR directors.

## 1955—1956

Leonard L. Holloway, president

### MEETINGS

Workshop: February 15—16, 1956, Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville, Tennessee

Fellowship: May 31, 1956, Municipal Auditorium, Kansas City, Missouri

### OFFICERS

President Leonard L. Holloway, Baptist General Convention of Texas

Program Vice President Albert McClellan, Executive Committee

Membership Vice President Joe R. Abrams, *The Baptist Record*

Newsletter Editor Agnes G. Ford, Baptist Sunday School Board

Secretary-Treasurer Hazel Rogers Bland

### ACTIVITIES

- The second workshop was lengthened by one day over the first one. The first opened at noon one day, closed at noon the next. In 1956 at Nashville the agenda was programmed two full days. Speakers included James L. Sullivan, Sunday School Board executive secretary-treasurer (“What Is Public Relations?”); Porter W. Routh, who held a similar post with the Executive Committee (“The Increasing Importance of Communication”); and a closing message at a James Robertson Hotel banquet by H. Franklin Paschall, who had been pastor of Nashville’s First Church one month. Panel discussions and simultaneous seminars claimed much of the schedule. Sections included: schools and colleges, agencies, states, hospitals, children’s homes. Assisting Albert McClellan in program planning were Joe R. Abrams, Agnes G. Ford, Leonard L. Holloway, Harold E. Ingraham.
- At that time, the fellowship gathering in connection with the annual sessions of the Southern Baptist Convention was seen as BPRAs’ primary business meeting. Officers’ elections and other matters were considered then. At Kansas City, it was reported the association had 37 active members and that two newsletter issues had been published during the year.
- A motion was adopted to study “the whole field of planning future meetings,” with the possibility of grouping area meetings in related fields.
- Another motion created a panel to study the possibilities of using BPRAs as counselors in the field of public relations.
- H.E. Ingraham presented plans for church public relations conferences that summer at Ridgecrest and Glorieta, urging BPRAs members to help build attendance.

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## **OBSERVATIONS**

These were the years Southern Baptists were getting comfortable using the term “public relations” to identify a SBC ministry and a vocational career. Texas and Oklahoma Baptists had established public relations departments and the SBC Executive Committee had appointed a public relations committee. Harold Ingraham, Sunday School Board Service Division director, studied the future of Southern Baptist communications and started the church public relations seminars at the summer assemblies.

I wrote three booklets: “A Model Program of Church Public Relations,” “A Preacher and His Public Relations” and “An Associational Public Relations Program.” Seminary faculties were encouraged to include public relations courses in their religious education curriculum. The best we could hope for was that ministerial students would take the course as an elective.

To a few leaders “public relations” was a manipulative practice and there was a concern that the SBC would bring “Wall Street type” communications into the convention. It was a year of being patient but constantly talking about public relations as a viable Christian ministry.

## 1956—1957

Arthur S. Davenport, president

### MEETINGS

Workshop                      February 11—12, 1957, Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville, Tennessee

### OFFICERS

President:                      Arthur S. Davenport, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma

Program Vice President        Harold E. Ingraham, Baptist Sunday School Board

Membership Vice President    Marjorie Saunders, Baylor University Medical Center

Newsletter Editor              L.O. Griffith, Home Mission Board

Secretary-Treasurer          Theo E. Sommerkamp, Executive Committee

### ACTIVITIES

- For the first time, the workshop was declared the “main annual meeting.” Business and elections would – in the future – transpire here rather than at the fellowship meetings during the Southern Baptist Convention. As a result, Arthur Davenport became the only president never to preside at a fellowship meeting for none was held during his shortened term.
- At only its third workshop a BPRA committee was appointed to rewrite portions of the organization’s constitution that it “seems best to revise.” In different but similar terminology, the process would be repeated again and again in subsequent years even until the present day as members vote to update this document in light of changing conditions. At a 1957 business session, Arthur Davenport appointed the first revision panel: Leonard Holloway, chairman; Clarence Duncan and Marjorie Saunders. Davenport, a framer of the original constitution and bylaws, was added to this first group of visionary “revisionaries.” These four left a legacy few other committees in this organization’s history would ever match!
- By workshop time at Nashville, 56 persons had joined Baptist Public Relations Association.
- Through its first three years, the newsletter editor had produced the publication at the expense of the agency or institution employing him or her. It was decided at Nashville that, where possible, BPRA funds would be available in the future to produce and mail the newsletter. The minutes noted that, due to steady membership growth, a “healthier financial condition” prevailed.
- A six-member panel on “need for a national press representative” took note of an “extended study” then being conducted in communications by the SBC Executive Committee through its staff, promotion committee and a special advisory committee named on public relations. A year earlier, BPRA had suggested that the Executive Committee look into the possibility of employing a “media representative.” In a subsequent motion in 1957 BPRA offered its “encouragement and assistance” to

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bring this study to a “full and complete consummation.” BPRA, in its latest motion, recognized that the matter was “much more complex” than could be “solved by the employment of one person.” Ione Gray was chairman of this BPRA group.

- The printed workshop program, four pages in 1955 and six pages in 1956, doubled to 12 in 1957. On its cover were these purposeful words: “Workshop for Broader Concept and Greater Skills in Better Public Relations to Further the Cause of Christ.” Inside, participants were asked to register. Registration was without charge to members. “Our Baptist agencies and institutions in and around Nashville are being asked for nominal registration fees so that any of their people may attend,” it explained. “Other individuals are invited to pay a registration fee of two dollars.” How times have changed.
- The 1957 Nashville workshop included five simultaneous discussion sections, based on members’ employment: children’s homes, convention-wide groups, hospitals, schools and colleges, and state convention boards. Representatives of Nashville agencies and institutions in these fields assisted in the program planning.



## 1957–1958

Ben C. Fisher, president

### MEETINGS

Fellowship: May 30, 1957, Conrad Hilton Hotel, Chicago, Illinois

Workshop: February 17–18, 1958, Baptist Tabernacle, Atlanta, Georgia

### OFFICERS

President	Ben C. Fisher, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary
Program Vice President	L.O. Griffith, Home Mission Board
Membership Vice President	Marjorie Saunders, Baylor University Medical Center
Newsletter Editor	Leonard L. Holloway, Baptist General Convention of Texas
Secretary-Treasurer	Ione Gray, Foreign Mission Board

### ACTIVITIES

- A nine-member BPRA committee met at Union University, Jackson, Tennessee, May 21–22, 1957 to prepare public relations syllabi on several phases of Southern Baptist work. The syllabi included suggested PR program outlines for state conventions, hospitals and schools. These were later mimeographed for wider distribution. Leonard Holloway was chairman.
- The promotion committee of the SBC Executive Committee approved the following item of interest to BPRA members, reported in BPRA's newsletter July 15, 1957: "Study the possible expansion of the Baptist Press into a coordinated and comprehensive news agency representing all areas of Baptist activity. This study should embrace the possibility of a leased wire teletype circuit operating a few minutes each day, linking all the major news centers of our convention."
- At Chicago, a motion naming a committee to explore possibilities of having a BPRA booth during the meetings of the Southern Baptist Convention was approved. Ben Fisher appointed Grover J. Andrews, chairman; Gainer E. Bryan Jr., Agnes G. Ford and James A. Lester.
- Subsequently, a report from the committee at Atlanta urged the association to sponsor a booth at the next annual SBC meeting in May, 1958, at Houston, Texas. Purpose: To distribute without charge "representative" newspapers from states across the convention. Preliminary contracts had been made with 31 newspapers at the time of the recommendation. At least 17 papers had agreed to furnish daily editions and underwrite the cost of booth rental space in the exhibit hall. Braniff Airways had also agreed to consider transporting the papers each day without charge. A local committee would be responsible for carrying the papers from the airport to the auditorium where BPRA members would be asked to volunteer to operate the booth. The committee's report was adopted and an experiment begun that year which would be continued for awhile. When the newspaper booth eventually became

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“too burdensome” to operate, BPRAs – having now established some small but conspicuous imprint on the convention itself – would not be satisfied until a reasonable alternative was discovered. The answer would be in sponsoring an exhibit awards competition among the agencies and institutions, a practice still in effect.

- By the Atlanta meeting, membership had grown to 72, although only 64 had then renewed as dues-paying members.
- Following an address to the Atlanta workshop by T.B. Lackey, executive secretary-treasurer of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, copies were made available to heads of agencies, boards and commissions of state Baptist conventions and the SBC. Albert McClellan said it would be published in *The Baptist Program* and reprints would be made available. Title: “An Executive Working with His Public Relations Staff.”
- The association endorsed the SBC’s 30,000 Movement then in progress, pledged full cooperation through various avenues and said as individual public relations workers “we support the Movement in every possible way.”

## 1958–1959

Albert McClellan, president

### MEETINGS

Fellowship: May 23, 1958, Rice Hotel, Houston, Texas

Workshop: February 16–17, 1959, Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville, Tennessee

### OFFICERS

President	Albert McClellan, Executive Committee
Program Vice President	Gene Kerr, Tennessee Baptist Convention
Membership Vice President	Roald H. Sorensen, Missouri Baptist Children's Homes
Newsletter Editor	J. Marse Grant, Charity and Children
Secretary-Treasurer	Harry R. Koontz, Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary

### ACTIVITIES

- According to the January, 1959, BPRA newsletter, the SBC Executive Committee authorized its PR advisory committee and PR committee on December 15, 1958, to negotiate with interested agencies concerning “setting up a leased wire circuit for a six months trial period.” Such a system would be similar to wire service teletypes in newspaper and radio station offices. In effect, it was seen as a communications network for all state and SBC offices east of Oklahoma City and Dallas. Wire costs further west made extension there impractical.
- The workshop at Nashville charged a \$2 registration fee for visitors, none for members. A banquet at Montgomery Bell State Park, 35–40 miles west of Nashville, was the group’s first lengthy excursion away from a primary meeting site.
- Agnes G. Ford offered her own original script and production of “New PR Gadgets and Gimmicks” in one workshop session. It was such a hit Porter Routh requested her to repeat it a few months later when the Executive Committee came to town. The program was restaged, but not without hilarious consequences that kept the Sunday School Board in local newspapers almost seven weeks afterward. (See “It Happened at BPRA” in the 1986 archival section on the CD-ROM.)
- Eighty persons attended the Nashville workshop, 37 members and 43 visitors.
- A new tradition was begun, that of carrying the secretary-treasurer over from year to year as a sort of “permanent” officer. For seven years Harry R. Koontz would consider BPRA his personal labor of love.
- Arthur S. Davenport (Oklahoma) and Leonard L. Holloway (Texas), the first two state PR directors, left denominational work for other PR interests during the year. These BPRA charter members were given

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“honorary” status and allowed to retain their membership in the group.

## **OBSERVATIONS**

The fledgling organization grew rapidly and by 1958 had created wide interest among almost all Baptist communications people. I was elected president, although I was not a true public relations person. My title was publications secretary for the SBC Executive Committee. I was more an editor than a public relations specialist, though I was also SBC press representative and director of Baptist Press. That the association would turn to one not fully in PR shows the breadth of its vision. I suppose my involvement in the Sam Davis Hotel meeting and my four-year membership in PRSA nudged it in my direction.

It was with some sadness that I was appointed to the newly created office of program planning secretary of the SBC Executive Committee for I was leaving the wonderfully dynamic field of PR. I would no longer be part of the fellowship that originated around the table in the Sam David Coffee Shop six years before. But it was with joy that spring that I welcomed W.C. Fields as my successor with the title of public relations secretary of the SBC Executive Committee.

## 1959–1960

J. Marse Grant, president

### MEETINGS

Fellowship: May 21, 1959, Home of Badgett and Polly Dillard, Louisville, Kentucky

Workshop: February 1–2, 1960, First Baptist Church, Birmingham, Alabama

### OFFICERS

President J. Marse Grant, Charity and Children

Program Vice President George E. Bagley, Alabama Baptist State Convention

Membership Vice President Roald H. Sorensen, Campbell College

Newsletter Editor Badgett Dillard, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

Secretary-Treasurer Harry R. Koontz, Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary

### ACTIVITIES

- The newsletter's "first experiment in photographs" published in the April 1959 issue included a postage stamp-sized group shot of the five recently elected officers.
- The May issue proclaimed that W.C. Fields, editor of Mississippi's *Baptist Record*, had just been elected new PR secretary of the SBC Executive Committee, and was a "good prospect for BPRA!" Undoubtedly, he was. Since joining a short time later, he is one of few members who may not have missed a single meeting, and who has served on dozens of committees across the years. He retires in March 1987 and was honored by the association in 1986 for his "significant" contributions to it across the decades. His first of many addresses to BPRA, delivered at Birmingham in 1960: "Utilizing Denominational Publications More Effectively."
- One of only two events for the entire body of BPRA ever scheduled in a private home was held at the residence of Badgett Dillard, near Southern Seminary, one evening after sessions of the SBC at Louisville had concluded. A newsletter account indicated nearly 30 persons attended, and the group departed for hotels at 11:57 p.m.
- The Birmingham workshop, as were several held in those early years, was divided into simultaneous sessions geared to members' work experiences. There were sections exclusively for PR professionals in state conventions, agencies, children's homes, and educational institutions and in hospitals.

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- Mrs. Agnes G. Ford urged that any members with “new or old promotional or publicity materials” send them to her at Birmingham for exhibit during the workshop. She wrote the membership that she hoped “all may have opportunity to see what others are doing in the area of public relations printed materials.” A forerunner of the current awards program, perhaps?
- While most of the workshop sessions were conducted in the facilities of the then downtown First Baptist Church, a banquet was held at Howard College\* and a concluding luncheon and business meeting at Holiday Inn.
- Notation was made that, in this year, membership had broken the 100 mark for the first time, having climbed to 103. Interestingly, the visitors at the 1960 workshop outshined the members, numerically, at least. There were 49 members and 54 visitors present, suggesting that if there ever was a time for an aggressive membership campaign, it was surely at hand!
- A couple of workshops earlier, the association had agreed that its healthier financial condition would perhaps allow it to begin underwriting costs of producing and mailing the newsletter, rather than asking the newsletter editor’s agency or institution to do it. At the Birmingham workshop, a motion was unanimously approved making available a maximum of \$250 to the program vice president for committee members’ travel in connection with program planning. Such expenses had previously been borne by the budgets of the organizations represented by those who planned the annual programs. Surely, happy days were here again!

\*Howard College is now Samford University.

## 1960—1961

Badgett Dillard, president

### MEETINGS

Fellowship: May 18, 1960, Saxony Hotel, Miami Beach, Florida

Workshop: January 3—February 1, 1961, Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis, Tennessee

### OFFICERS

President	Badgett Dillard, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary
Program Vice President	James M. Sapp, Brotherhood Commission
Membership Vice President	Agnes G. Ford, Baptist Sunday School Board
Newsletter Editor	W.C. Fields, Executive Committee
Secretary-Treasurer	Harry R. Koontz, Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary

### ACTIVITIES

- The April 1960 issue of the BPRAs newsletter observed that on March 1 Southern Baptists became the first religious denomination in history to operate daily teletypewriter service between some of its major offices. There were, at that point, 25 stations in 19 cities and 13 states and the District of Columbia linked together Monday through Friday for eight hours. A subsequent newsletter disclosed that, on June 1, 1960, Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly was added to the network for summertime operation. James H. Cox, Sunday School Board staffer, was assembly teletype supervisor. Theo E. Sommerkamp, assistant director of Baptist Press, later addressed the Memphis workshop on the subject, “SBC Teletype After Eleven Months.”
- Not all those 54 visitors at the Birmingham workshop were viable contenders for BPRAs membership, it seemed. Only 11 persons swelled the ranks in the ensuing year, bringing total membership to 114. Where had all the prospects gone? The Memphis meeting drew 88 bonafide members but only 11 visitors, 44 fewer visitors than a year earlier.
- The workshop at Memphis was the first to continue longer than two days and, in that regard, set a pattern for most subsequent annual meetings. While most sessions were held at Bellevue Baptist Church, a tour of Baptist Memorial Hospital and a coffee and open house at the Brotherhood Commission were programmed.
- It was agreed then that proceedings of each annual workshop would be printed by the program vice president and mailed without cost to the entire membership following the meetings. The cost of printing and distribution was to be paid by the association.
- The alliance requested W.C. Fields to prepare a small informational brochure about the nature of

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Baptist Public Relations Association for circulation to members and other interested person. Format, copy and number to be printed were to be approved by the executive committee, with costs borne by BPRA.

- A constitutional amendment was proposed and unanimously accepted which allowed continued participation of the outgoing president in directing affairs of the association by including the immediate past president as an officer. While a few years would elapse before this officer was given a specific assignment, namely that of awards chairman, it was while at Memphis that the organization first recognized the benefit of drawing upon his or her experiences.
- Note was taken that the Baptist Sunday School Board's Church Administration Department had recently compiled a public relations bibliography. A request was made that the department prepare a complimentary BPRA imprint edition of that bibliography.
- For the first time, consideration was given to the many hours the secretary-treasurer was required to put into his duties on behalf of the association. The matter of "token remuneration" for performing his function was taken "under advisement" by the executive committee.



## 1961–1962

James M. Sapp, president

### MEETINGS

Fellowship: May 24, 1961, Sheraton-Jefferson Hotel, Saint Louis, Missouri

Workshop: January 29–31, 1962, Monteleone Hotel, New Orleans, Louisiana

### OFFICERS

President	James M. Sapp, Brotherhood Commission
Program Vice President	William C. Bolton, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
Membership Vice President	Lloyd Wright, Baptist General Convention of Texas
Newsletter Editor	Richard T. McCartney, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma
Secretary-Treasurer	Harry R. Koontz, Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary

### ACTIVITIES

- Upon recommendation of its executive committee, the New Orleans crowd unanimously voted to adopt a Code of Ethics. Officers were instructed to prepare it.
- The constitution was amended to fully implement action taken a year earlier at Memphis permitting the immediate past president to function as a member of the executive committee. While he had no specific duties at the outset, he served in an “advisory” capacity. In a few years, he would be designated awards chairman.
- Recognizing BPRA’s growing influence, the SBC Inter-Agency Council requested a BPRA representative to attend its meetings. Steps were taken at New Orleans to amend the constitution, adding this officer to the executive committee. The Inter-Agency Council representative would be elected for three years.
- Brooks Hays, special assistant to the president of the United States, addressed the fraternity at New Orleans. The agenda included a tour of Baptist mission points, seminary and hospital in the Crescent City.

### OBSERVATIONS

BPRA’s growth had been steady but not spectacular by the time it reached its eighth year. A certain pride in holding membership had developed, however.

The group was becoming recognized by personnel at state and convention levels. Many employees in Baptist agencies had little or no training in communication. They found a good place to get help and encouragement at BPRA workshops.

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Members appeared to be learning how to work together in the denomination. (This was before any effort at cooperation between agencies was mandated in the SBC.) BPRAs' efforts toward excellence began to be perceived by agency and institutional heads who often attended the meetings. Some agency administration types even joined.

This, of course, did not take place only in 1961–1962. It was all a part of the 60s scene in BPRA, however.

Memory dims what has happened in the lives of those with whom I was associated then. Some, like John Roberts, have gone on to be an outstanding editor. Catherine Allen gave me a healthy respect for women in the communication field. The consummate skills of Badgett Dillard, C.E. Bryant, Clarence Duncan, Roy Jennings and many others I first met in BPRA have added much to my life. The ongoing influence of W.C. Fields, Albert McClellan, Ben Fisher, Walker Knight, Floyd Craig and Everett Hullum have helped make me a better craftsman and person.

Most subject to pleasant memories were "Rook sessions" which inevitably followed after the evening session or meal. I never realized how bereft Texas is of some of the more "cultural" aspects of life until I retired. Out here, you see, it's Dominoes or 42. And no matter what model car you drive, there is also a pick-up in the picture...with no Rook partners as far as you can see!

It just isn't fair.

## 1962–1963

John E. Roberts, president

### MEETINGS

Fellowship: June 6, 1962, Whitcomb Hotel, San Francisco, California

Workshop: January 21–23, 1963, Burlington Hotel, Washington, D.C.

### OFFICERS

President	John E. Roberts, Charity and Children
Program Vice President	C.E. Bryant, Baptist World Alliance
Membership Vice President	Theo E. Sommerkamp, Executive Committee
Newsletter Editor	John D. Bloskas, Relief and Annuity Board
Secretary-Treasurer	Harry R. Koontz, Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary

### ACTIVITIES

- After second reading, a proposal to amend the constitution, allowing for a new office — that of SBC Inter-Agency Council representative — was approved at Washington. It was understood that expenses of the officer in attending the council's meetings would be underwritten by the council. A new era in cooperation began with the naming of the first BPRA representative to this council a year later. BPRA's participation in I-AC activities continued 14 years. Five individuals would eventually fill the new office: John E. Roberts, Richard T. McCartney, David K. Morris, Lucy R. Hoskins, Jennifer Bryon. Each would gain greater access to coordinated planning efforts on a convention-wide level, and at the same time expose agency representatives to the help available to them through BPRA.
- The association took an active leadership role in developing the summer journalism seminars, which W.C. Fields eventually spearheaded. At Washington, details of a seminar scheduled June 10–14, 1963 at Boston University were presented and "approved." Seventeen persons had attended a similar event the previous summer.
- A promotional letter issued in late December 1962 on the Washington workshop observed: "A folder about Washington's many tourist attractions was included in our previous mailing. We hope that your wife or secretary may have seen it, too — and they'll be making the trip here with you. Nobody ever finds life dull on a visit to Washington."
- Sixty persons registered but no record tells how many were members, wives or secretaries!

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- A matter referred from the New Orleans meeting a year earlier concerning a Code of Professional Standards was again considered. The association agreed to adopt such a code at the “next annual session” and instructed its newsletter editor to “keep this matter before our membership during this year” for study and suggestions to the executive committee.

## **OBSERVATIONS**

I had some interesting correspondence during my year as president with institutional people who were in public relations and development. The directors of development were insisting on more recognition and program emphasis in the areas of fund raising, endowment and all aspects of financial support.

I insisted that ours is a professional organization for communicators with our first emphasis on public relations and communications. Development is closely linked, but is not the parent body to public relations.

Baptist Public Relations Association was very helpful to me during my years in public relations. After I became editor of the *Baptist Courier* in 1966 I continued my membership, and have continued to enjoy fellowship with those in the organization. My attendance has not been as good as it was during those PR years, but that is my fault and I am the loser.

## 1963–1964

Gomer R. Lesch, president

### MEETINGS

Fellowship: May 9, 1963, Radisson-Muehlebach Hotel, Kansas City, Missouri

Workshop: January 22–24, 1964, Hotel Texas, Fort Worth, Texas

### OFFICERS

President	Gomer R. Lesch, Baptist Sunday School Board
Program Vice President	John Earl Seelig, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
Membership Vice President	Grady Sparkman, <i>The Baptist Message</i>
Inter-Agency Council Representative	John E. Roberts, Charity and Children
Newsletter Editor	Marjorie Saunders, Baylor University Medical Center
Secretary-Treasurer	Harry R. Koontz, California Baptist College

### ACTIVITIES

- Floyd A. Craig was appointed by Gomer Lesch in the summer of 1963 as awards chairman. He became the forerunner of a long line in that role who — three years hence — would be the immediate past presidents. There were 124 entries in that initial competition. Honors were presented at a breakfast meeting, a tradition carried forward in giving them at a meal function — breakfast, brunch, luncheon or dinner.
- A tradition was also begun that year, continuing several years, of recognizing former leaders at a past presidents' banquet. A "Chuck Wagon Dinner" was held in their honor at Southwestern Seminary.
- A Code of Ethics,\* under study for two years, was adopted.
- The unresolved matter of several years concerning matters of interest specifically to development personnel came to a head at Fort Worth. The question of a need for two organizations was debated. The majority indicated their belief that development is "part and purpose of public relations," therefore changes were not merited.

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- At this 10th workshop, note was taken of the need to secure and preserve the history of BPRA in one place. This was referred to the executive committee and later housing the materials was assigned to the office of the public relations secretary of the SBC Executive Committee.
- Workshop attendance at Fort Worth totaled 147, including 97 members, 20 program personalities and 30 guests, spouses and student.

## **OBSERVATIONS**

The cold language of the minutes does not adequately reflect the heat of the discussion that day at Fort Worth as we considered whether a separate development organization was needed. The development people felt strongly that their needs could best be served by a separate entity. Public relations people felt just as strongly that PR was the umbrella under which other such functions should fall. It was finally agreed that more emphasis should be given to “this (development) public relations aspect in both programming and communication.”

We were given king-sized leather name tags and program booklets at Fort Worth. I was gifted with a pair of boots I still have, although they're now relegated to yard work. They were presented with the comment that I had a talent for putting my foot in my mouth, and maybe the boots would be a deterrent. They weren't!

A program personality, who was clearly a comer, home on furlough as a young missionary to Indonesia, was R. Keith Parks, who addressed us on “International Image Makers.” His ascendancy to the FMB presidency can doubtless be traced to his appearance before that influential BPRA assemblage!

\*See 1986 Code of Ethics (Code of Professional Standards) on page 114

## 1964–1965

Richard McCartney, president

### MEETINGS

Fellowship: May 20, 1964, Ambassador Hotel, Atlantic City, New Jersey

Workshop: January 20–22, 1965, Holiday Inn West, Richmond, Virginia

### OFFICERS

President Richard T. McCartney, Baptist General Convention of Texas

Program Vice President Fon H. Scofield Jr., Foreign Mission Board

Membership Vice President Oscar Hoffmeyer, Jr., Missouri Baptist Children's Home

Inter-Agency Council  
Representative John E. Roberts, Charity and Children

Newsletter Editor James H. Cox, Belmont College

Secretary-Treasurer Harry R. Koontz, California Baptist College

Awards Chairman G. Norman Price, Foreign Mission Board

### ACTIVITIES

- The “Code of Professional Standards for the Practice of Public Relations” adopted by the association at Fort Worth was carried in full in the March 1964 issue of the newsletter. The idea of a code had been under study at least two years.
- Meeting at Nashville in September 1964, the SBC Executive Committee adopted what was believed to be the first set of goals by any Baptist body for corporate communications. “Corporate communications,” it was explained, is the process of making known to Baptists “the ideas, ideals, facts, relationships and significance of the work of Baptists.” They included seven for internal use and seven for external use. They were spelled out in the November issue of the BPRa newsletter.
- The second annual awards competition included 14 categories. Entries were expected to be submitted for judging at Richmond January 6, 1965, where the workshop would open a mere 14 days later! In modern times, the volume of entries demand that judging often be done weeks, if not months, before the workshop.

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- Twenty new members were received during the year, along with two associate members.
- The Richmond workshop, carrying back to a discussion at Fort Worth a year earlier, was split into two sections the first day to offer a choice of sessions: one for public relations practitioners, the other for those in development and fund raising. The association was making a serious attempt to accommodate persons of more than one orientation. Seventy members and seven visitors attended. A tour of the Foreign Mission Board, a session there and a keynote address by W.C. Fields were other highlights. Lyndon Johnson was inaugurated to a full term as president a few miles up the road the same day BPRA opened.
- A resolution was adopted at Richmond expressing appreciation to the Baptist Sunday School Board for developing “a public relations consultation service for the churches and for providing organized assistance in publication and field services through the Church Administration Department.”
- The January 1965 newsletter summarized these highlights among the agencies and institutions which occurred in calendar year 1964: Southwest Baptist College, Bolivar, Missouri, began making plans for the step toward senior college status in the fall of 1965. There was a unique Baptist youth festival designed “to raise the seventh flag over Texas, the Christian flag,” at Six Flags over Texas June 2. It was the year John L. Plyler, for 25 years president of Furman University, Greenville, South Carolina, announced his retirement. The June 6 Strawberry Festival at Missouri Baptist Children’s Home, Bridgeton, drew 5,680 persons who consumed 277 gallons of strawberries, 1,560 hot dogs, 162 gallons of coffee and 4,000 soft drinks. Baylor University Medical Center, Dallas, admitted its one-millionth patient.



## 1965—1966

Jay C. Durham Jr., president

### MEETINGS

Fellowship: June 2, 1965, Baker Hotel, Dallas, Texas

Workshop: January 19–21, 1966, Hotel Continental, Kansas City, Missouri

### OFFICERS

President	Jay C. Durham Jr., Home Mission Board
Program Vice President	John W. Goodwin, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
Membership Vice President	George H. Smith, Samford University
Inter-Agency Council Representative	John E. Roberts, Charity and Children
Newsletter Editor	Floyd A. Craig, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma
Secretary-Treasurer	Lillian Owensby, Tennessee Baptist Convention
Awards Chairman	Gomer R. Lesch, Baptist Sunday School Board

### ACTIVITIES

- An addition to the slate of officers was approved during the year, but was not implemented for four years. John Earl Seelig moved that a president-elect be named annually to the executive committee.
- The newsletter observed that the SBC teletype network would cease operation October 31, 1965 due to rising costs. It had begun as a six-month experiment and continued more than five-and-a-half years. Some stations were switching immediately to TWX equipment in place of the teletype system.
- The Kansas City workshop drew 105 persons, including 50 members and 65 guests. Included in the latter group were 33 program personalities. A tour of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and a banquet there with James L. Sullivan, executive secretary-treasurer, Baptist Sunday School Board, as speaker was a program highlight.
- Named by Jay Durham to a panel to study membership qualifications, dues, proceedings and institutional membership were David K. Morris, chairman; John D. Bloskas, Floyd A. Craig, Gomer R. Lesch, and George Smith.

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- When a three-member awards committee made a report at Kansas City, it declared: “The task was so demanding that Lillian Owensby left denominational employment, Theo Sommerkamp left the country and there is no announcement concerning Gomer Lesch’s plans.”
- A study committee for the BPRA-sponsored SBC exhibit urged the association not to sponsor an exhibit as such at the SBC meeting in Detroit that year. Rather, the group, including Gomer R. Lesch, chairman, James C. Austin and Al Shackleford, suggested “we hold a judging of the exhibits.” They proposed recognitions for exceptional merit, merit and honor, with the individual agency- and institution-sponsored exhibits classified by production costs: \$1–\$500; \$501–\$1,000; \$1,001–\$2,000; \$2,001 up. This plan has been followed with little change for two decades.

## **OBSERVATIONS**

I remember my presidential address at Kansas City . . . the nervous knees, the sweaty palms and the dry mouth. (Mine, not the group’s.) But for the life of me . . . and I find this humbling, I can’t remember anything I said. This hits me hard when I remember Gomer Lesch’s presidential address “Let’s Rock the Boat” in 1964!

I do remember something about the SBC exhibit problem because prior to the exhibit competition we were arranging for local papers to be flown in. We placed them in our booth for free distribution. We were trying to make an impression. One strong one that impressed us was, “This is a lot of work.” Hence, the committee’s report.

I don’t remember the membership study committee but what a bunch of movers and shakers! I’m proud of myself for appointing that one.

## 1966—1967

David K. Morris, president

### MEETINGS

Fellowship: May 26, 1966, Pick-Fort Shelby Hotel, Detroit, Michigan

Workshop: January 18—20, 1967, Edgewater Gulf Hotel, Biloxi, Mississippi

### OFFICERS

President David K. Morris, Alabama Baptist State Convention

Program Vice President Joe R. Abrams, *The Baptist Record*

Membership Vice President John D. Bloskas, Annuity Board

Inter-Agency Council Representative Richard T. McCartney, Baptist General Convention of Texas

Newsletter Editor Floyd A. Craig, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma

Secretary-Treasurer Floyd H. North, Foreign Mission Board

Awards Chairman Jay C. Durham Jr., Home Mission Board

### ACTIVITIES

- While the immediate past president of Baptist Public Relations Association had, for several years, functioned as an officer for a year following his presidency, he still had no specific responsibilities. He was generally thought of as an “advisor” to the incoming president, but little more. All of that changed when Jay Durham reached his “retirement.” After his tenure at the helm, he fell all the way to the “bottom of the slate,” becoming the association’s awards chairman at the conclusion of his presidency. From that time forward, a new pattern for selecting the awards chairman — often seen as a “dreaded opportunity” — became automatically the ex-president’s task. Every ex-president for the last two decades had functioned in this capacity. “It’s the price you pay,” said one, “for whatever joy, honor and glory comes your way as head of this illustrious body!” The observation seems shared by most of the others, but as another put it, “somebody has to do it.”
- It took 13 years for BPRAs to generate a theme for its workshops. The first to do so, at Biloxi, was under the banner: “Communicating in a Changing World.” A seafood jamboree, nearly 20 miles down the coast at Gulfshore Baptist Assembly, near Pass Christian, plus a sightseeing tour of Mississippi’s “grand strand” were added highlights. This was just 55 months before Hurricane Camille nearly put the

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Mississippi Gulf coast resort area out of business forever, bringing death and destruction to nearly everything in its path.

- There was a misunderstanding, according to the printed proceedings issued after the Biloxi workshop, as to who was responsible for recording the minutes there. The minutes were never officially written down, but were put together from the recollections of several persons present.
- A journalism or public relations scholarship to be awarded each year to a Baptist college student looking toward a career in church-related communications was discussed at length, then approved. Members voted to increase their annual dues from \$10 to \$15 to provide necessary funds for the scholarship program. They also agreed to designate \$500 for the scholarship, payable at \$250 per semester.
- “Term” members were provided for in the constitution: “Individuals employed or retained by an active BPRA member to perform specific duties related to PR functions of the member.” Term membership was to be reviewed annually by the membership committee. This category was carried for several years.
- Forty-seven awards were presented to 21 organizations in honors competition. Floyd A. Craig won nine awards (nearly 20%). There were 250 total entries in 19 categories, 65 more entries than in the previous year.

## 1967–1968

John D. Boskas, president

### MEETINGS

Fellowship: June 1, 1967, Sea Isle Hotel, Miami Beach, Florida

Workshop: April 1–3, 1968, Bel Air East Motel, Saint Louis, Missouri

### OFFICERS

President	John D. Boskas, Annuity Board
Program Vice President	Floyd A. Craig, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma
Membership Vice President	James H. Cox, Baptist Sunday School Board
Inter-Agency Council Representative	Richard T. McCartney, Baptist General Convention of Texas
Newsletter Editor	Joan Harvison, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma
Secretary-Treasurer	Jimmy Morriss, Baptist State Convention of North Carolina
Awards Chairman	David K. Morris, Alabama Baptist State Convention

### ACTIVITIES

- Committee to study a scholarship, named earlier, reported some objection to such a program because the proposal to finance it out of BPRA dues would be contrary to the Business and Financial Plan of the Southern Baptist Convention. The matter was subsequently discussed with the Inter-Agency Council and administrative committee of the SBC Executive Committee. The possibility that the conflict existed was reiterated, even though the plan was considered “commendable” and was approved “in principle.” The committee recommended further study. Motion was made that the panel continue its study. Committee: Richard T. McCartney, David K. Morris, John Parrish, John Earl Seelig.
- Seventy-nine new members joined the association during the year for a 65 percent gain, to 189 total membership.
- Sixty-three awards were presented in 23 categories in the honors competition. Floyd A. Craig won the largest number of first place awards and also “best of show.”

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- Nominating committee urged that a panel study the “feasibility” of adding the position of president-elect to the executive committee.
- Charter members were granted dues-free status at Saint Louis for as long as they continued membership.
- A trade show offered at Saint Louis included representatives from related industries of PR and development.

## **Observations**

This year was a period in which the problem of change was the common denominator for PR people. Every speaker at our BPRA meeting in 1968 dealt with the problem of change in today's society.

A similar approach was made at the Religious Public Relations Council meeting which, for the first time ever, dovetailed BPRA by starting several hours after we adjourned. (RPRC is a national organization of religious communicators of various denominations and met in 1968 in the same city and hotel as BPRA following its conclusion.)

The primary point of my presidential address focused on the use of electronic computers as tools in public relations. I recommended an SBC computer center with a network linking all agencies and state conventions.

BPRA members, I remember, voted overwhelming approval of a motion to establish three lines of membership:

- Active members, who must spend more than 50 percent of their time in public relations. These could hold office.
- Associate members, former active members whose PR tasks were now less than 50 percent of their work; or who were now in other denominational work.
- Term members, those employed or retained by an active member to perform specific PR functions.

## 1968–1969

Floyd A. Craig, president

### MEETINGS

Fellowship: June 5, 1968, Rice Hotel, Houston, Texas

Workshop: January 15–17, 1969, River Terrace Motel, Gatlinburg, Tennessee

### OFFICERS

President	Floyd A. Craig, Christian Life Commission
Program Vice President	Thomas J. Brannon, South Carolina Baptist Convention
Membership Vice President	Joan Harvison, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma
Inter-Agency Council Representative	David K. Morris, Alabama Baptist State Convention
Newsletter Editor	C. Edward Shipman, Radio and Television Commission
Secretary-Treasurer	Wesley M. (Pat) Pattillo Jr., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary
Awards Chairman	John D. Bloskas, Annuity Board

### ACTIVITIES

- 110 persons registered for the workshop at Gatlinburg under the theme “Communicating in an Age of Crises.” Recalling this workshop nearly 18 years later, Tom Brannon especially remembered program personality Clarence Jordon, “one of the greatest Christians I’ve ever known.” The program was “a little different” that year, said Brannon, as the group dealt with critical issues like racism and hunger rather than “how to” sessions. Gene Kerr was local arrangements chairman.
- In the business meeting at Gatlinburg BPRA voted to cooperate with a professional assistance project of the Foreign and Home Mission boards by helping collect data. A committee of David K. Morris, chairman, John D. Bloskas and W.C. Fields was given the assignment of compiling a dossier on every BPRA member for this activity.
- At Gatlinburg: The constitution was debated and amended; the executive committee was instructed to propose a permanent meeting date for the annual workshop; and a telegram was sent to the association’s first president, Joe Abrams, then hospitalized in Jackson, Mississippi.

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## **OBSERVATIONS**

It was cold and snowy at Gatlinburg when Clarence Jordon of Cotton Patch Translations and Koinonia Farms spoke of the harassment his family had experienced in Americus, Georgia and their struggle to build no-interest homes for low income families. He urged us to be a positive force in overcoming racial injustice and prejudice.

This was the time many BPRAers took their first skiing lessons. And, like myself, many could not keep from backing down the hill during instruction, and falling in embarrassing ways on the trip down the beginner's slope. My wife, Anne, has never since put on a pair of skis.

Anne and I remember long visits with friends at the River Terrace. A special memory is a conversation with Grady Nutt, then in PR at Southern Seminary, about his future and the possibilities that his increasing speaking schedule presented. In the midst of a late night session at Gatlinburg, Grady phoned his wife, Eleanor, and came back with a gleeful account of how Eleanor had, that day, expressed her utmost confidence in his ability to earn a living "out on his own:" she went out and bought a whole houseful of furniture! This was to be his last BPRA meeting as a member.

I still have on my office wall a large bronze "Best of Show" plaque from BPRA 1969 for the Christian Life Commission "Issue & Answers" series.

I also prize the Tennessee cherry gavel presented me as president during that meeting. It graces my office as a reminder of what BPRA has meant to me over the years, both in professional skills improvement and the long time friendships which have been acquired and strengthened through the association.



## 1969–1970

John E. Seelig, president

### MEETINGS

Fellowship: June 11, 1969, Roosevelt Hotel, New Orleans, Louisiana

Workshop: April 5–6, 1970, Sheraton Chicago Hotel, Chicago, Illinois

### OFFICERS

President John E. Seelig, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

President-elect W.C. Fields, Executive Committee

Program Vice President Marjorie Saunders, Baylor University Medical Center

Membership Vice President Stanton H. Nash, Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary

Inter-Agency Council Representative David K. Morris, Alabama Baptist State Convention

Newsletter Editor Earl D. Mercer, Louisiana Baptist Children's Home

Secretary-Treasurer Wesley M. (Pat) Pattillo Jr., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

Awards Chairman Floyd A. Craig, Christian Life Commission

### ACTIVITIES

- The meeting at Chicago was “abbreviated” in every sense of the word. It began late Sunday afternoon – the first time BPRA had met on Sunday, but not the last – with a business session followed by a vesper service. A scant 25 hours later, the workshop had concluded.
- The brevity of the Chicago workshop was created by programming with a national Religious Communications Congress held in the same hotel in Chicago, Wednesday through Friday of that week. Between the opening of it and the close of BPRA other groups to which a handful of BPRAs belonged such as RPRC (Religious Public Relations Council) convened. The idea of a week of intensive communications meetings of persons of varying religious persuasions has prevailed. A similar event was held at Nashville in 1980 and a third is planned there in 1990. A BPRA newsletter issue reported 450 registrants at the Chicago congress.

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- Floyd A. Craig, who had been appointed by Gomer R. Lesch in 1963 to chair an original awards program for BPRA, acquired the post a second time in 1969 by being the association's immediate past president. He would be the only person to officially carry this duty more than once, although years later Bob Desbien could claim to have been elected to the office once, to have arranged the on-site logistics and judging of the awards once and to have presided in the absence of the elected awards chairman once when the chairman was out of the country during the time of the workshop. Other ex-presidents who managed their way through only one such year of service have protested, sometimes rather loudly, than even once was too much! The immediate past president has automatically been designated the association's awards chairman since 1966.
- Another office received special attention that year. During the business session at the previous workshop at Gatlinburg, Tennessee, a president-elect was officially designated for the first time. The question of need for such an officer to "get ready" to perform his or her duties had been debated in 1966. Ironically, it was John Earl Seelig, president, when the new office was staffed at last — who made the motion in 1966 at Kansas City that a president-elect be added. Even though Seelig's motion was approved, it took four years to implement it. It may have taken two years to amend the constitution to provide for the office. But BPRAs seemed less than enthusiastic about acting on that 1966 decision. When they finally did so, in 1969, the arrangement lasted only briefly. Six years later the office of president-elect was deleted, termed "no longer necessary." The office [was] returned to the executive committee slate [in 2001–2002].

## 1970—1971

W.C. Fields, president

### MEETINGS

Fellowship: June 3, 1970, Denver Hilton Hotel, Denver, Colorado

Workshop: March 29—31, 1971, Jack Tar Francis Marion Hotel, Charleston, South Carolina

### OFFICERS

President	W.C. Fields, Executive Committee
President-Elect	Catherine B. Allen, Woman's Missionary Union
Program Vice President	Wesley M. (Pat) Pattillo Jr., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary
Membership Vice President	Stanton H. Nash, Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary
Inter-Agency Council Representative	David K. Morris, Alabama Baptist State Convention
Newsletter Editor	Evelyn Strickland, Tennessee Baptist Convention
Secretary-Treasurer	Agnes G. Ford, Belmont College
Awards Chairman	John E. Seelig, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

### ACTIVITIES

- A committee to improve the Code of Ethics was appointed by W.C. Fields: James Sapp, chairman, John D. Bloskas and Jay C. Durham Jr. At Charleston, a motion instructed the committee to consider comments made there and make the code "more useful." Suggestions included asking new members to sign the code, that they NOT sign it and see that the code is "implemented and not buried." (The revised set of Baptist Communicators Association Professional Standards, adopted at the 1995 annual business meeting is included in this document under Appendix A).
- The Arthur S. Davenport Award was created in the honors competition recognizing this charter member and third president, the first of the presidents to die.
- W.C. Fields appointed a four-member panel to produce a first history of the organization: Eugene Hill, chairman, Joe Abrams, James H. Cox and Agnes G. Ford. BPRA Years of Achievement, a 44-page booklet, was released early in 1972. It recounted the beginnings to the present day.

# ***We've a Story to Tell***

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## **OBSERVATIONS**

I remember sitting around a breakfast table at Chicago with Marjorie Saunders, Pat Pattillo, Stanton Nash and John Seelig — newly elected officers, the group looking like a tree full of owls — planning the year ahead.

Marjorie, a Silver Anvil winner with the Public Relations Society of America, later requested release from her position as BPRAs president-elect and Catherine Allen was named to the post.

At the 1970 BPRAs breakfast in Denver, during the SBC's 125th anniversary meeting, Stanton Nash and Floyd Craig raised a hue and cry to have the unicorn adopted as the BPRAs mascot and emblem. Those were the days of fashionable sideburns. I remember Floyd, Leonard Hill, Jim Newton and Tom Brannon sporting prodigious mutton-chop whiskers when they walked away with top BPRAs awards.

I was a bit apologetic to BPRAs membership at the time for the rather high cost of the breakfast at Denver: \$5.00! I should live so long!

During the year one BPRAs member brought a charge against another of violating the Code of Ethics. I asked Jim Sapp, Jay Durham and John Bloskas to study this. There was a lively discussion at Charleston. In the end there was agreement that the code was important as an ethical guideline but BPRAs was primarily an organization for fellowship and service and should not engage in judicial review looking toward punishment of code infractions.

Information retrieval from my memory storage does not always work swiftly, but the bits and bytes, the chips and discs of the mind are jammed with a lot of good data about one of my favorite groups in all the world, the talented women and men of the Baptist Public Relations Association.

## 1971–1972

Catherine B. Allen, president

### MEETINGS

Fellowship: June 2, 1971, Sheraton-Jefferson Hotel, Saint Louis, Missouri

Workshop: April 4–6, 1972, Palacio del Rio Hilton Hotel, San Antonio, Texas

### OFFICERS

President Catherine B. Allen, Woman’s Missionary Union

President-Elect Thomas J. Brannon, South Carolina Baptist Convention

Program Vice President C. Edward Shipman, Radio and Television Commission

Membership Vice President Jesse C. Fletcher, Foreign Mission Board

Inter-Agency Council  
Representative Lucy R. Hoskins, Baptist Sunday School Board

Newsletter Editor William A. Nunnolley, Samford University

Secretary-Treasurer Agnes G. Ford, retired, Baptist Sunday School Board

Awards Chairman W.C. Fields, Executive Committee

### ACTIVITIES

- At its September 19, 1971 meeting at Nashville, the executive committee considered a matter that has given the association concern numerous times: conflicting meeting dates with other groups. On the occasion, the problem was with the annual meeting of Religious Public Relations Council. As more BPRAers joined RPRC, the latter group grew apprehensive that those with dual membership would favor BPRA’s workshop when they could attend only one. BPRA officers felt it wasn’t feasible to alter their published San Antonio dates and plans for the next spring.
- In reporting to the officers at Nashville February 21, 1972, the history committee offered some suggestions: that the office of secretary-treasurer be divided into two offices; that the SBC Historical Commission be designated a repository for BPRA records; that the association prepare written guidelines for its officers. The office of secretary-treasurer was divided 1972–1975 and again in 1977. An arrangement with the Historical Commission was initiated and an officers’ manual developed.

# ***We've a Story to Tell***

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## **OBSERVATIONS**

I can't remember when or where, but it was in the aisle of a hotel ballroom after a BPRA workshop session that Floyd Craig and W.C. Fields spoke to me about becoming the future president of BPRA. What a shock. I wasn't even 30 years old yet. There had never been a female president. This was in the very early days of the women's lib movement. Pat Pattillo called me the "women's liberation candidate." I really think the nominators were trying to make a point about and for women.

Although I was the first woman president, I was certainly not the first woman leader. That honor goes to Agnes Ford. I believe Agnes did more to solidify BPRA than almost anybody. I admired her and appreciated her loyalty.

It was sheer joy to be president, although joy is a thin line from terror. Among the terror moments: having to respond to a learned address by Bill Hull in a workshop. It was my first opportunity to see him up close. We struck up a fine friendship. Another terror: presiding over the workshop at San Antonio, when I knew very little about the program content. Ed Shipman, program vice president, had left the employ of the denomination, and carried out his program duty by the seat of his pants! He did not show up for the workshop. It was a difficult time.

While we had a strong faculty and I think one of the best workshops, the bad news was that it was one of the most expensive. That caused some rough feelings. On the positive side we had Hispanic musicians, Mexican food and a generally good time all around.

## 1972–1973

Thomas J. Brannon, president

### MEETINGS

Fellowship: June 7, 1972, Sheraton Hotel, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Workshop: March 26–29, 1973, Bourbon Orleans Ramada Inn, New Orleans, Louisiana

### OFFICERS

President	Thomas J. Brannon, South Carolina Baptist Convention
President-Elect	Clarence E. Duncan Jr., Radio and Television Commission
Program Vice President	John C. Ivins, Baptist General Association of Virginia
Membership Vice President	W. Isaac Terrell, North Carolina Baptist Children's Homes
Inter-Agency Council Representative	Lucy R. Hoskins, Baptist Sunday School Board
Newsletter Editor	William A. Nunnolley, Samford University
Secretary	Marjorie C. Rowden, William Carey College
Treasurer	Agnes G. Ford, retired, Baptist Sunday School Board
Awards Chairman	Catherine B. Allen, Woman's Missionary Union

### ACTIVITIES

- There had been growing concern that some of the awards winners had not actually held membership in BPRA. The rules of the honors competition were strengthened to permit only members to submit entries in the future.
- A pictorial directory was prepared by BPRAer John D. Bloskas and by Milton Bradley, Annuity Board staff.
- A BPRA self study committee appointed by Tom Brannon and chaired by Pat Pattillo disclosed some provocative facts. A total of 134 BPRA members participated in the survey. A third were under 35, a third were between 35–45 and a third were above 45. The median age was 40. There were other interesting statistics on education, prior experience, years in PR and specific duties. The median salary

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of BPRAers in 1972 was \$14,000. Regarding membership services, the most desirable ones that could be offered were, in descending order: workshop, newsletter, membership directory, PR idea publication, placement service, problem-solving service, PR projects for SBC at large, and scholarships. In a separate survey answered by 63 agency and institution executives, 75% felt BPRA had “excellent potential” to be of denominational service. A mere nine percent said BPRA was of “no help” to employees or the denomination. Other self-study panel members: Gomer R. Lesch, Catherine B. Allen, W.C. Fields, and Clarence E. Duncan.

- The workshop at New Orleans began with a new member orientation session. First event for all was breakfast at Brennan’s Restaurant, touted in publicity hoopla as “the most famous breakfast restaurant in the world.” Nights were “free” — what else in New Orleans?

## **OBSERVATIONS**

The president was still called on for an address at the workshops in those days. Mine was “The Courage to Start over Again.” I tied it to that lonely Biloxi coast that had been swept away by Hurricane Camille in 1969, but residents had the courage to start over again. Result: the area was more beautiful than before. I pointed out that good PR is often the same way. Traditions sometimes have to go in order to build something even better.

As you can imagine, I was reasonably reserved and soft spoken with my message. Then Jerry Clower, who was just “coming into his glory,” hit the floor wide open immediately after me. A great lesson in contrasts!

My memories of BPRA, especially during the time I was president, are priceless to me. I wouldn’t take anything for them.



## 1973–1974

Clarence E. Duncan, president

### MEETINGS

Fellowship: June 13, 1973, Portland Hilton Hotel, Portland, Oregon

Workshop: March 19–21, 1974, Sheraton-Palace Hotel, San Francisco, California

### OFFICERS

President	Clarence E. Duncan Jr., Radio and Television Commission
President-Elect	Wesley M. (Pat) Pattillo Jr., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary
Program Vice President	Stanton H. Nash, Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary
Membership Vice President	Marjorie Saunders, Baylor University Medical Center
Inter-Agency Council Representative	Lucy R. Hoskins, Baptist Sunday School Board
Newsletter Editor	Janie Lott, Birmingham Baptist Hospital
Secretary	Robert O'Brien, Baptist General Convention of Texas
Treasurer	Agnes G. Ford, retired, Baptist Sunday School Board
Awards Chairman	Thomas J. Brannon, South Carolina Baptist Convention

### ACTIVITIES

- One of the actions at New Orleans in 1973 had been to authorize an updated, second edition of the original BPRA history issued a year earlier. At the request of Clarence Duncan, Agnes G. Ford and James H. Cox – two members of the original history committee – revised it to bring out a new 44-page book. It included a historical synopsis of the association from 1953–1974, constitution and bylaws and officers' roster for each year. The new history was dedicated to several late active members: F. Paul Allison, Lon G. Amick, Harold G. Basden, David A. Cheavens, Arthur S. Davenport, and Fletcher Stanley Hardee Jr.
- There were 289 entries in the 1974 awards event. Because of logistics, it was decided only the winning entries would be carried to San Francisco for display.

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- Having provided this service on several occasions, Clarence Duncan agreed that the Radio and Television Commission would offer cassette recordings of the workshop program. Tapes were sold following the workshops and partially subsidized by that agency.
- The executive committee agreed to provide free registration and program-related meals at San Francisco to all Baptist College and seminary students in journalism, communications, public relations, and related fields. The same offer had been extended a year earlier.

## **OBSERVATIONS**

Of the several organizations in which I have held membership, none has brought me more pleasure than Baptist Public Relations Association. I count myself fortunate to have been in the little groups who gathered in the coffee shop of the Sam Davis Hotel at Nashville that wintry December day in 1953.

From the outset, the association met twice annually. Once was at a hotel near the site of the Southern Baptist Convention for a bit of early morning fellowship and to assure members that their organization was solvent, that the BPRA treasurer had not absconded with the funds and defected to some other denomination. The second meeting was a workshop.

During my presidency the convention met at Portland. We liked the West Coast so well that when Stanton Nash invited us we voted to have our workshop at San Francisco. We had a chance to visit Golden Gate Seminary, roam Market Street, Ghiradelli Square, and Fisherman's Wharf, and ride the cable cars. As they say, "if a meeting fails in San Francisco, it is not the San Andreas Fault!"

## 1974—1975

Wesley M. (Pat) Pattillo Jr., president

### MEETINGS

Fellowship: June 12, 1974, Statler Hilton Hotel, Dallas, Texas

Workshop: February 25—28, 1975, Cascades Motel, Williamsburg, Virginia

### OFFICERS

President	Wesley M. (Pat) Pattillo Jr., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary
President-Elect	Roy Jennings, Brotherhood Commission
Program Vice President	Thomas E. Miller, <i>Religious Herald</i>
Membership Vice President	James H. Cox, Belmont College
Inter-Agency Council Representative	Jennifer Bryon, Baptist Sunday School Board
Newsletter Editor	Eugene W. Baker, Union University
Secretary	Frances Carrington, Baylor University
Treasurer	Agnes G. Ford, retired, Baptist Sunday School Board
Awards Chairman	Clarence E. Duncan, Radio and Television Commission

### ACTIVITIES

- The menu at the awards banquet on the closing night of the Williamsburg workshop listed:
  - Silver tureens of Tidewater peanut soup*
  - Filet of fresh water trout*
  - Williamsburg spoon bread*
  - Rockingham cornish game hen*
  - Baby Belgian carrots with pecans*
  - Colonial sour cherry trifle*

BPRAs may have had some real duds as speakers along the way, but they've usually eaten well en route to their boredom!

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- Upon recommendation of the nominating committee, Gomer R. Lesch, chairman, the office of president-elect — which had functioned for only six years — was discontinued at the close of the 1974–1975 year. There simply was “no justification” for continuing the office, the association concluded. Since the immediate past president remained on the executive committee a year following his presidential term, he was readily available to “advise” the incoming president and other officers as needed.
- Of the 126 registrants at Williamsburg, 65 were recorded as members “and prospective members,” and 17 were wives, four were students, 20 were program personnel and guests and there were 20 “others.”
- A long range planning committee was appointed at Williamsburg. It lived up to its name by taking a long time to report. Recommendations for changes in the categories of membership spelled out in the organization’s constitution were not presented for approval until 1977 at the Clarksville, Indiana, workshop.

## **OBSERVATIONS**

Baptist Public Relations Association, in the era of my presidential term, began to expand beyond the rank and file. At this time it started attracting people in middle management to its membership; young professionals who needed “mentoring.”

Personally, I had joined the organization just seven years earlier. Four of those years I held other offices. Thus, my year as president capped a period of involvement for me.

I remember it was a time that several charter members were still around, and remained actively involved. But this was also a period where they began to retire or die. Thus, it was a changing group, with some of the older ones leaving the organization, and new, younger professionals coming in and taking their places.

## 1975—1976

Roy Jennings, president

### MEETINGS

Fellowship: June 11, 1975, Deauville Hotel, Miami Beach, Florida

Workshop: April 13—15, 1976, Sarasota Hyatt House, Sarasota, Florida

### OFFICERS

President	Roy Jennings, Brotherhood Commission
Program Vice President	Fred H. Cooper, Stetson University
Membership Vice President	Oscar Hoffmeyer Jr., <i>The Baptist Message</i>
Inter-Agency Council Representative	Jennifer Bryon, Baptist Sunday School Board
Newsletter Editor	Thomas J. Brannon, South Carolina Baptist Convention
Secretary-Treasurer	James H. Cox, Belmont College
Awards Chairman	Wesley M. (Pat) Pattillo Jr., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

### ACTIVITIES

- At Sarasota, President Roy Jennings presented a shadowbox plaque on behalf of the association to Joe R. Abrams, first BPRA president. Abrams, who was not present, was to be given the plaque by Don McGregor, who received it for him, at an appropriate ceremony at the Mississippi Baptist Convention.
- Statistics: The membership swelled by 54 during the year. Ninety-four persons attended the Sarasota workshop, including 64 members, 27 family members and three other guests.
- W.C. Fields was recognized for submitting names of the most new members in a membership drive during the year. This was significant, for a year later, another member won a similar contest, and that individual — who had won several times before Fields — has continued to do so every year but one since.
- This item was reported in the January 1976 newsletter: “W.C. Fields’ daughter, Becky, worked with her dad in the press room at the Southern Baptist Convention last June in Miami Beach. Foreign Mission Board photographer Warren R. Johnson Jr. also worked in the convention press operations. Last month

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(December 22) Becky and Warren were married in Nashville. It could be called a BPRA wedding since officiating clergy included W.C. Fields and Jesse C. Fletcher, and photographers were Floyd Craig and James Lee Young. The moral of this story is: It pays to work in the press room.”

- The June–July 1975 newsletter introduced a BPRA logo that Roy Jennings had commissioned Herschel Wells, associate art director for the Brotherhood Commission, to design. At that time Wells said the logo was intended to communicate: “types of communication, Christianity, peace and completeness of the message of peace.” At the Sarasota workshop, Philip Dougliis, director of Dougliis Visual Workshops, said he and his associates had gotten a different message: some thought it was a medical symbol; others, a symbol for sexuality! Meanwhile, judges for the 1976 honors competition awarded the officers’ letterhead, containing the logo, second place in letterhead design.
- Dues for retired members of Baptist agencies were limited to \$5. Charter members, retired or not, continued to pay no dues.
- A study was approved on paying expenses of one or more students to work in the pressroom during the SBC annual sessions.

## **OBSERVATIONS**

I recall I assumed the presidency without a place for the next meeting. Fred Cooper arranged for us to meet at Sarasota with help from the Florida stewardship secretary.

We did nothing earth shattering, but we did improve the bank balance of the organization.

## 1976—1977

Stanton H. Nash, president

### MEETINGS

Fellowship: June 16, 1976, Holiday Inn-Scope, Norfolk, Virginia

Workshop: March 28—30, 1977, Marriott Inn, Clarksville, Indiana

### OFFICERS

President Stanton H. Nash, Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary

Program Vice President James H. Cox, *Western Recorder*

Membership Vice President M. Judson Cook, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma

Inter-Agency Council Representative Jennifer Bryon, Baptist Sunday School Board

Newsletter Editor Leonard E. Hill, Executive Committee

Secretary-Treasurer Evelyn Strickland, Tennessee Baptist Convention

Awards Chairman Roy Jennings, Brotherhood Commission

### ACTIVITIES

- A long range planning committee, formed in 1975 during the Williamsburg workshop, referred a proposed change in the constitution to the executive committee. Upon the recommendation of both committees, wording was altered and combined in sections 1 and 2 of article 3 to declare three categories of membership: individuals employed by Southern Baptist organizations whose duties included PR or communications, those whose services are employed to assist Southern Baptist organizations in such functions, and members who wished to continue in BPRA following retirement. The question was asked and answered affirmatively that someone other than a Southern Baptist could hold membership.
- The nominating committee, chaired by Catherine B. Allen, suggested that the offices of president-elect and Inter-Agency Council representative be deleted from the constitution as “neither functions.” The newly installed executive committee agreed to make a formal recommendation at the fellowship meeting a few weeks later.

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- The Louisville area workshop (Clarksville) was the best attended in the history of BPRA through 1986, with 190 persons including members, program personalities and guests registered. Sixty-four persons gained membership status during the year.
- The workshop included a film festival, orientation for new members, hospitality suite, sightseeing and shop tours, banquet at a Louisville restaurant hosted by seven Kentucky Baptist institutions and a banquet at Southern Seminary.
- The idea of creating an intern position in the news room at the SBC, funded by BPRA and proposed a year earlier at Sarasota, died a quick death at Clarksville.

## **OBSERVATIONS**

Unfortunately or fortunately, my year as president went too smoothly. It is only a neat blur in my memory.

One item of significance: I learned that Louisville Slugger bats were not made in Louisville. To an old baseball player this was almost like discovering pasta was not invented in Italy.

The tour of Churchill Downs was a notable event as we lived the memory of the great thoroughbreds who had made history on the spot.

It seems as though we tried to increase interest in new member enlistment (Jim Cox's specialty). He won the award for garnering the most new members that year – something he did almost every year – and was given an authentic Indian headdress and made honorary mayor of Indian City, Oklahoma for a day, including a round trip there. In making the announcement of the winner, Jud Cook stated that the runner-up had won TWO days at Indian City!



## 1977–1978

James H. Cox, president

### MEETINGS

Fellowship: June 15, 1977, Radisson-Muehlebach Hotel, Kansas City, Missouri

Workshop: February 12–15, 1978, Sunburst Hotel, Scottsdale, Arizona

### OFFICERS

President	James H. Cox, <i>Western Recorder</i>
Program Vice President	C. Thomas Newson, Grand Canyon College
Membership Vice President	Richard M. Styles, Foreign Mission Board
Newsletter Editor	Leonard E. Hill, Executive Committee
Secretary	Patsey P. Winfrey, Belmont College
Treasurer	Donald S. Hepburn, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
Awards Chairman	Stanton H. Nash, Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary
Placement Service Coordinator	Thomas J. Brannon, South Carolina Baptist Convention

### ACTIVITIES

- A blue ribbon panel appointed by James H. Cox went to work immediately to suggest new membership services. The panel included Oscar Hoffmeyer Jr., chairman, Bonita Sparrow, Joe Westbury, and Charlie Warren. As a result, these committees were created at Kansas City: newsletter projects, church education, intern program, communication research grant, speakers' bureau, and vocational guide. In addition, the placement service was implemented with Tom Brannon accepting a three-year term as coordinator. Many a colleague has been placed or replaced by this service.
- In late 1977 membership in the organization surpassed 300. For the first time, all 21 SBC agencies and institutions were represented in the membership with the addition of Seminary Extension Department and Southern Baptist Foundation staffers.
- C. William Junker was appointed BPRA archivist. He channeled the association's records to a permanent repository at the Historical Commission. He also edited a second pictorial directory.

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- A recurring question of employing a paid staff member for the association was considered. Major obstacle: raising dues to meet expenses. The matter was deferred.
- A new brochure, "Baptist Communications Vocations," was prepared to present job opportunities in the field.

## **OBSERVATIONS**

A year that began positively with the aggressive work by the blue ribbon panel on membership service went down hill, albeit in a rather hilarious way.

Those on bus #2 will never forget being lost on the way to George's Olé, near Phoenix, claimed by Tom Newsom as "a little Mexican hideaway well worth finding." As taco time approached, it appeared somebody's hot sauce would have a chance to cool. After a 45-minute search for our adobe hacienda, the bus paused at a rural casa and the driver went inside to inquire the way to the fiesta. Who on the bus can ever forget those six Mexican-Americans following our captain out of the house, each steadfastly pointing in a different direction? By then, the cause seemed lost, and all of us were splitting our sides!

Beyond that, it rained all night the evening we attended an outdoor cowboy cookout and we waded in mud to the tops of our boots; the BPRA president is still accused of telling the driest stories ever put upon an awards brunch crowd; some of the Baptist state editors, meeting at the same hotel at the same time, truthfully did not think our presence there funny at all (we've never tried that idea again); and Phil Douglass had us rolling in the floor as he flashed slides of Baptist publications on the screen, massacring them and us before the whole tribe!

## 1978—1979

Rick Styles, president

### MEETINGS

Fellowship: June 14, 1978, Hilton Hotel, Atlanta, Georgia

Workshop: April 22—25, 1979, Hilton Hotel, Fort Worth, Texas

### OFFICERS

President	Richard M. Styles, Hardin-Simmons University
Program Vice President	John Earl Seelig, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
Membership Vice President	Stan L. Hastey, Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs
Newsletter Editor	J. Michael Duduit, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary
Secretary	Evelyn Strickland, Tennessee Baptist Convention
Treasurer	Donald S. Hepburn, California Baptist Convention
Awards Chairman	James H. Cox, <i>Western Recorder</i>
Placement Service Coordinator	Thomas J. Brannon, South Carolina Baptist Convention

### ACTIVITIES

- A fiscal year of July 1—June 30 was adopted.
- A panel of awards chairmen to study that program was named by Rick Styles, including: Stanton Nash, chairman, Catherine B. Allen, James H. Cox, Floyd A. Craig, W.C. Fields, and Roy Jennings.
- For the first time in years, awards judging was staged in the city where the workshop was held rather than in the home town of the awards chairman. This eliminated transporting the surging number of entries to the place where they were viewed by the members. There were 293 entries. Fifty individual awards were given to 35 persons.
- The Photography Sweepstakes Award was renamed the Fon Scofield Photography Award honoring this late member.

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- At the 25th anniversary workshop an agreement was made with the Fort Worth Hilton Hotel to hold the golden anniversary workshop there Monday, April 26, 2004. The hotel stated it could meet an anticipated need of 800 rooms. Rates were projected at \$350 plus tax per night, single occupancy. The hotel estimated the banquet dinner would cost \$100, plus tax and gratuity.
- Five of BPRA's 24 charter members were at Fort Worth: Joe R. Abrams, Clarence E. Duncan, Robert Brooks, R. Alton Reed, James M. Sapp. They were duly recognized, as were all living former association presidents.
- A total of 131 members, guests and program personnel attended the silver anniversary meeting.
- BPRA increased by 65 new members during the year.

## **OBSERVATIONS**

One thing I found in 12 BPRA files was an undelivered speech I had written as a response to be used when I was presented as BPRA president. We ran out of time at the workshop so the response was printed in the first newsletter. Of course, it lacked my eloquence and scintillating personal presence, but the content was there. As I am prone to do, I dealt with alliteration, discussing participation, pride, professionalism, a pledge of responsible leadership and a prayer that we might use our collective God-given talents to creatively fill our roles as Christian PR professionals. These points still have validity in BPRA.

The workshop at Fort Worth was truly the outstanding one in my two decades as a member. Anniversary program participants read like an honor roll of SBC leadership: Jesse C. Fletcher, keynote address; Catherine B. Allen, Tom Brannon, Floyd A. Craig, Richard T. McCartney, Stanton H. Nash, workshop leaders; Bruce Corley, devotionals; Russell H. Dilday, speaker; Paul M. Stevens, host; and W.C. Fields, master of ceremonies at the 25th anniversary banquet. What an unbeatable combination!

## 1979–1980

Stan Hastey, president

### MEETINGS

Fellowship: June 13, 1979, Hyatt Regency Hotel, Houston, Texas

Workshop: May 12–13, 1980, Opryland Hotel, Nashville, Tennessee

### OFFICERS

President Stan L. Hastey, Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs

Program Vice President Jennifer Bryon Owen, Baptist Sunday School Board

Membership Vice President Kenneth Day, Home Mission Board

Newsletter Editor Tim Nicholas, *The Baptist Record*

Secretary Connie Rae Davis, Brotherhood Commission

Treasurer Donald S. Hepburn, California Baptist Convention

Awards Chairman Richard M. Styles, Hardin-Simmons University

Placement Service Coordinator Thomas J. Brannon, South Carolina Baptist Convention

### ACTIVITIES

- A “student membership” category was approved and the dues structure revised upward at Houston.
- The executive committee, in one of its meetings, reflected some “dissatisfaction” with the BPRA logo created in 1976. No action was taken.
- The speaker’s bureau, created in 1977, was abandoned by membership vote at Nashville.
- On completing a three-year term as the first placement service coordinator, Tom Brannon resigned.
- BPRA was part of a national religious communications congress, RCC80, which followed the Nashville workshop. (A similar event was held in Chicago in 1970.) More than 1,300 persons from 12 countries and 43 religious bodies registered at RCC80. BPRA was well represented: W.C. Fields was congress coordinator; Robert O’Brien, media coordinator; Roy Jennings, news room copy chief.

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- “High Hopes for the 80s” was theme of the BPRA workshop. The Sunday School Board hosted the awards banquet; concluding events were held at Andrew Jackson’s home, The Hermitage, east of Nashville.

## **OBSERVATIONS**

When elected at the 25th anniversary workshop at Fort Worth in April 1979, little did my colleagues and I realize the turbulence of the era in Southern Baptist life we were entering. When next we gathered, at Houston, the SBC meeting had witnessed the first overt effort to effect a fundamental change in the denomination’s direction. None of us suspected the increased pressures coming to those who labored in communications. 1979 was a fateful year for us.

I remember at the time feeling terribly inadequate for the task entrusted me by BPRA, having only been a member since 1976. But my experience as president taught me something important about the organization: BPRA does not depend solely on its veteran members to do the necessary work such a voluntary group requires. It seeks rather a blend of older and newer members in leadership roles, an approach that time has vindicated, in large measure by the high degree of loyalty to the organization by most of its members.

Quickly I learned that members rarely say “no” when asked to do a job; instead, they are eager to invest themselves in BPRA’s worthy objectives.

We entered this perilous decade believing we could improve on how we communicate the Good News. We’ve learned some hard lessons, testing to the fullest our professionalism and Christian character. More than ever before an organization like BPRA — devoted at once to the highest professional and Christian standards — is needed by those whose calling and task are to share that news.

## 1980—1981

Jennifer Bryon Owen, president

### MEETINGS

Fellowship: June 11, 1980, Stouffer's Riverfront Towers, Saint Louis, Missouri

Workshop: March 29—April 1, 1981, Hyatt Hotel, Birmingham, Alabama

### OFFICERS

President	Jennifer Bryon Owen, Baptist Sunday School Board
Program Vice President	Jack E. Brymer, <i>The Alabama Baptist</i>
Membership Vice President	Leonard E. Hill, Executive Committee
Newsletter Editor	Tim Fields, Christian Life Commission
Secretary	Barbara A. Little, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
Treasurer	Donald S. Hepburn, California Baptist Convention
Awards Chairman	Stan L. Haste, Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs
Placement Service Coordinator	Linda Lawson, Baptist Sunday School Board

### ACTIVITIES

- Meeting at Nashville September 24, 1980 the officers did some “fine tuning” of the awards program. A motion to update the BPRA history by expanding the directory to include it was approved. The BPRA logo, under fire for several years, was debated.
- At the business session at Birmingham it was reported that membership of 280 included 40 additions. Attendance was 141: 117 members, 10 spouses, 14 guests.
- The intern committee, created in 1977, disbanded.
- The resolutions committee (Bill Boatwright, Theo Sommerkamp, and Linda Thompson) presented one of the most extensive reports in history. It covered: Albert McClellan, Bobbie Durham, Cooperative Program, antidenominationalism, Baptist state papers, and BPRA program committee. The McClellan resolution expressed thanks for “the contributions he made to this organization and to the communications program of the SBC for three decades.” BPRAer McClellan was retiring as program planning secretary of the Executive Committee. Appreciation was given for Bobbie Durham, who had met death in an automobile accident.

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## **WORKSHOP**

The Birmingham workshop included a visit to Woman's Missionary Union, *The Alabama Baptist*, Baptist Medical Center, *Southern Living* and other shops. It opened with an awards banquet at Samford University. BPRAs were feted at a luncheon in the home of Catherine and Lee Allen, only the second time they had been invited into a private home.

## **OBSERVATIONS**

I felt during my presidency, as I do now, that the spirit of cooperation and hard work among this group of volunteers is the strength of BPRAs. People worked diligently; no one complained. Although the paying duties sometimes kept us from completing things or from doing all we wanted to, the attitude of cooperation was always there.

The Birmingham workshop was the first to which I took my spouse. He turned out to be the official photographer for the 1981–1982 officers' picture.

I remember that workshop as having lots of azaleas and sunshine. This was the workshop where Governor George Wallace spoke. Ironically, President Reagan was shot during our workshop. (Thank goodness, not at our workshop.)

I was the second female president of BPRAs. "The other woman," Catherine Allen, called me.

One of the things I let fall through was the officers' training manual. I still have the notes in my files! I felt a tremendous need when I became president to know what to do, how to do it and when to do it. The manual was a good idea; I regret not completing it.



## 1981–1982

Jim Newton, president

### MEETINGS

Fellowship: June 10, 1981, Hilton Hotel, Los Angeles, California

Workshop: March 29–31, 1982, Hyatt Regency Hotel, Kansas City, Missouri

### OFFICERS

President	Jim Newton, Home Mission Board
Program Vice President	Bob Desbien, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
Membership Vice President	Norman Jameson, Executive Committee
Newsletter Editor	Jim Lowry, Baptist Sunday School Board
Secretary	Jerilynn Armstrong, Baptist General Convention of Texas
Treasurer	Donald S. Hepburn, California Baptist Convention
Awards Chairman	Jennifer Bryon Owen, Baptist Sunday School Board
Placement Service Coordinator	Linda Lawson, Baptist Sunday School Board

### ACTIVITIES

- A plaque was present to Stanton H. Nash at Los Angeles making him a lifetime member of BPRA. The former president (1976–1977) was retiring as vice president for development at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary.
- The newsletter projects committee created in 1977–1978 was suspended.
- An officers' training manual was assigned to Jennifer Bryon Owen for development. Unfortunately, she was unable to complete the task, and it was not reassigned.
- Due to escalating workshop expenses, the executive committee agreed to set a limit of \$75 on workshop registration fees. If costs went higher, the executive committee was to be consulted by the program committee.
- The executive committee sponsored a "Last Great Logo Contest" for the association in view of the less than enthusiastic response in some quarters to the BPRA logo created in 1975–1976. President Jim Newton announced at Los Angeles that a winner would be named during the workshop at Kansas City. A \$50 prize was to be given. Criteria for the new logo: creativity, attention command, originality, symbolism, printing format adaptability, reflection of intent and nature of the organization. Officers

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felt there was no one “outstanding” entry, but two members submitting entries “with promise” were requested to develop them further. Each was given \$50 with the promise of \$50 more and a plaque on submitting an acceptable design.

- Thirty-five new members joined during the year. Jennifer Owen and Stan Hastey temporarily sidetracked the long string of wins by James H. Cox and jointly claimed first prize for having delivered the most new members. Cox vowed to “be back” again. Total membership stood at 292.
- The placement service coordinator received 60 inquiries from persons seeking employment. Meanwhile, 18 employers used the service. Several positions were filled using the service. Linda Lawson began updating a brochure produced earlier called “Baptist Communications Vocations.”
- Another of a long string of infamous reviews of the awards program was set into motion. This ongoing project has been continuously repeated since the inception of the honors competition in 1963. It may have even topped revision of the organization’s constitution and bylaws, the constructive thing BPRAs seem to enjoy doing most! “Frequent complaints regarding categories and ambiguous rules” prompted the latest study. Committee: Jennifer Bryon Owen, chairman; Bob Desbien, Stan Hastey, Roy Jennings, Jim Newton, and Rick Styles.
- There was a discussion in an officers’ meeting on ways to interest state editors in BPRAs membership. Several said they didn’t see the necessity; many professions are represented in the membership, and “if one were catered to, it would hurt others.” Good idea; I regret not completing it.

## 1982–1983

Bob Desbien, president

### MEETINGS

Fellowship: June 16, 1982, Hyatt Regency Hotel, New Orleans, Louisiana

Workshop: April 11–13, 1983, Airport Hilton Inn, Memphis, Tennessee

### OFFICERS

President	Bob Desbien, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
Program Vice President	Maurice Elliott, Baptist Memorial Hospital
Membership Vice President	Norman Jameson, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
Newsletter Editor	Jerilynn Armstrong and Terry Barone Baptist General Convention of Texas
Secretary	Mike Creswell, Foreign Mission Board
Treasurer	Donald S. Hepburn, California Baptist Convention
Awards Chairman	Jim Newton, Home Mission Board
Placement Service Coordinator	Linda Lawson, Baptist Sunday School Board

### ACTIVITIES

- Daniel B. Eules was announced as the winner of the “Last Great Logo Contest” at New Orleans. Bob Desbien termed Eules’ submission “an exceptionally good and clean piece of art work and design.” Eules was one of two members whose work submitted during the previous year was favorably received by that executive committee. The finalists were asked to improve upon their submissions, incorporating several suggestions offered by that panel, for reconsideration and decision later. As of this writing, the logo, which currently identifies BPRA, is the revised design created by Eules.
- By the time of the Memphis meeting, membership had climbed to 314, with 69 having joined the alliance during the year.
- After six consecutive years as treasurer, Donald S. Hepburn was recognized as having performed “the heaviest responsibility you entrust to your officers,” according to President Bob Desbien. Hepburn had recently accepted a new employment position (leaving California PR for a similar post in Florida). Thus, Desbien observed that it was, for BPRA, “an appropriate time to make a transition to a new treasurer.” At that point, it was further agreed at Memphis to limit future treasurers to a maximum of three one-year terms. The association declared that, while the continuity in carrying a treasurer over from year to year was “healthful” for BPRA, there were enough qualified members to

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hold the office and that more persons should be allowed that opportunity. In the first 29 years of BPRA's life, three persons had held the office of treasurer all but 11 of those years.

- The election of two persons as newsletter editor is the only case on record [to this point] when the association agreed for an office to be shared by elected members. There have been a very few occasions when a nominee was elected to an office, then failed to function in it and others were asked to do the work. At least twice (1970, 1977), the president appointed a replacement for an officer who resigned.

## **WORKSHOP**

Opening night at the Memphis workshop included dinner and a presentation on the Peabody Hotel, which had recently made a "comeback" after going out of business for a spell. BPRA members then took elevators to the hotel's roof to see the "penthouse pens" of its world famous ducks. The ducks daily take a stroll down red carpeting in the lobby of the renowned establishment for public appearances.

Optional tours during the workshop included Elvis Presley's home, Graceland; the Brotherhood Commission; Baptist Memorial Hospital; the package distribution hub of Federal Express, at its peak activity period (11:45 p.m. to 1:15 a.m.); and Mud Island, situated in the middle of the Mississippi River between Tennessee and Arkansas, depicting in thousands of yards of concrete, the Mississippi River bed from one end to the other.

## 1983—1984

Oscar Hoffmeyer Jr., president

### MEETINGS

- Fellowship: June 15, 1983, William Penn Hotel, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
- Workshop: April 16—18, 1984, Hyatt Regency Hotel, New Orleans, Louisiana
- Fellowship: June 13, 1984, Radisson-Muehlebach Hotel, Kansas City, Missouri

### OFFICERS

President	Oscar Hoffmeyer Jr., <i>The Baptist Message</i>
Program Vice President	Bonita Sparrow, Radio-TV Commission
Membership Vice President	Mike Creswell, Foreign Mission Board
Newsletter Editor	Daniel B. Eules, Baptist State Convention of North Carolina
Secretary	Virginia Flanagan, Campbellsville College
Treasurer	Tim Nicholas, <i>The Baptist Record</i>
Awards Chairman	Bob Desbien, Foreign Mission Board
Placement Service Coordinator	Irma Duke, Foreign Mission Board

### ACTIVITIES

- In January 1984 President Oscar Hoffmeyer Jr. appointed a panel to review the “feasibility” and “viability” of establishing a centralized coordinating office. After initial study, the committee recommended at New Orleans that an in-depth probe begin. The suggestion was well received. The matter had been discussed off and on for two decades. Some were surprised by the strong positive response at New Orleans. The study committee included Terry Barone, Thomas J. Brannon, Betty Ensminger, Ray Furr, Greg Warner and Philip Poole, chairman.
- In addition to the usual treats of New Orleans, including Bourbon Street and other cultural sights, BPRAs were taken on a personal tour of the New Orleans World’s Fair, which opened the week following the workshop.
- The fraternity voted at New Orleans to delay starting time of new officers’ terms. Instead of taking

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office at the close of the annual workshop, those elected would begin serving July 1. 1983–1984 officers thus became only the second group to serve at two fellowship meetings. (The first officers did this in 1954 and in 1955.)

- At Pittsburgh the classification of “associate member” was deleted from the constitution.
- The membership list was first placed on computer.

## **OBSERVATIONS**

Watching uninitiated non-Cajuns eat boiled crawfish during the fellowship banquet at New Orleans had to be one of the highlights of the 1984 workshop.

As the little red creatures were taken gingerly in hand, a pinkie finger raised in salute, the shells were peeled and daintily laid on the plate with a look of wonder of what to do with the small amount of meat remaining. But the initiated wasted no time in devouring the heaped plates of mudbugs.

The meal, at New Orleans Seminary, set the tone of southern hospitality in a cosmopolitan setting.

Theme of this 30th workshop was the memorable “Murphy’s Law and Other Communications Truths.” Registrants were given a giant poster bearing those laws. Among the workshop agenda’s clever subtitles:

“When in doubt, mumble. When in trouble, delegate.”

“Nothing is impossible for the man who doesn’t have to do it.”

“Anybody who can smile when everything is going wrong obviously has found someone to blame it on.”

“A Smith and Wesson beats four aces.”

With rapidly increasing membership, the time to explore a central coordinating office to assist the executive committee seemed right. After its report at New Orleans, the study committee was continued another year.

## 1984–1985

Linda Lawson, president

### MEETINGS

Workshop: March 26–29, 1985, John Marshall Hotel, Richmond, Virginia

Fellowship: June 12, 1985, Hilton Hotel, Dallas, Texas

### OFFICERS

President	Linda Lawson, Baptist Sunday School Board
Program Vice President	Ken Lawson, Foreign Mission Board
Membership Vice President	Linda Thompson, Baptist Sunday School Board
Newsletter Editor	Karen Benson, Baylor University
Secretary	Dixie Wooten, Mobile College
Treasurer	Tim Nicholas, <i>The Baptist Record</i>
Awards Chairman	Oscar Hoffmeyer Jr., Louisiana Baptist Convention
Placement Service Coordinator	Irma Duke, Foreign Mission Board

### ACTIVITIES

- Committee appointed by Oscar Hoffmeyer Jr. in January, 1984, was continued a second year to study the question of creating a staff position to assist BPRC in its work. The six-member panel reviewed what other groups were doing and surveyed BPRC members. Results showed 62 percent of BPRC membership favored such an office.
- Committee recommended at Richmond that a centralized office be established at Nashville on a three-year trial basis preferably naming a BPRC member as part-time “administrative coordinator.” This person would report to the executive committee. Dues would be increased by \$5 per year for each of three successive years, 1986–1988, to fund the office. Some of the duties included assisting in arrangement for BPRC functions, coordinating printed materials and mailings, maintaining the membership roster, mailing educational information and assisting the executive committee. After one year, duties of the placement service coordinator might be added. Motion passed overwhelmingly.
- Barbara J. Fly, public relations coordinator of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, Brentwood, was elected at Dallas to fill the position of administrative coordinator.
- As a byproduct of the study committee, an education panel was created at Richmond to provide the administrative coordinator with material on continuing educational opportunities to be sent to the membership. Six persons, named at Dallas, were to serve on rotating terms.

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- The placement service was expanded at Dallas to include internship possibilities in communications fields.

## **OBSERVATIONS**

There was strong thinking on the part of the executive committee that the administrative coordinator would work on assignment from the officers and not become a kind of executive director of the organization. While initially the special committee had recommended that the responsibilities of the treasurer be put into the staff coordinator's responsibilities, the executive committee declined to do this, feeling that financial control would give the administrative coordinator more responsibility than we felt wise. We had very strong signals from the membership that one of the strengths of BPRA has always been that it was run as a volunteer organization.

We held one meeting of the executive committee by conference telephone call as we were firming up the committee recommendation. This worked very well for us.

The 1984–1985 officers took office following the Southern Baptist Convention meeting, a plan not employed by the association since 1957. This came as the result of a bylaw change at the 1984 workshop. It allowed us to hold a planning meeting after our election, before we took office July 1. This change was at the initiative of Oscar Hoffmeyer Jr. and through the years will be an asset to BPRA.



## 1985—1986

Ken Lawson, president

### MEETINGS

Workshop: April 1—4, 1986, Glorieta Baptist Conference Center, Glorieta, New Mexico

Fellowship: June 11, 1986, Peachtree Plaza Hotel, Atlanta, Georgia

### OFFICERS

President	Ken Lawson, Foreign Mission Board
Program Vice President	Karen Benson, Baylor University
Membership Vice President	Philip Poole, Baptist Sunday School Board
Newsletter Editor	Kathy Palen, Oklahoma Baptist University
Secretary	Leisa Hammett, Home Mission Board
Treasurer	Tim Nicholas, <i>The Baptist Record</i>
Awards Chairman	Linda Lawson, Baptist Sunday School Board
Placement Service Coordinator	Irma Duke, Foreign Mission Board
Administrative Coordinator	Barbara J. Fly, Tennessee Baptist Convention

### ACTIVITIES

- The newly created position of administrative coordinator began functioning. A computerized mailing list was launched, mass mailings were coordinated and printing and mailing the newsletter was done in Nashville as a result.
- A history of the alliance was authorized. James H. Cox, who had assisted in preparing the three earlier editions, was requested to write the new one.
- The honors competition was named for W.C. Fields, who retired in the spring of 1987 after 27½ years as public relations secretary of the Southern Baptist Convention. Fields was recognized again by BPRA at Atlanta.
- Commitment was made to participate in a national Religious Communications Congress (RCC/90) in 1990 at Nashville, with the BPRA workshop taking place the same week. Similar events were held in 1970 at Chicago and 1980 at Nashville. The congress involves PR groups of many denominations and churches. Local coordinator for RCC/90 is BPRAer Lloyd T. Householder. Linda Thompson was appointed to provide continuity through the planning period as needed by BPRA officers.

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## **WORKSHOP**

The Glorieta workshop was the first at an assembly setting, although a banquet in 1967 was held at Gulfshore Baptist Assembly near Pass Christian, Mississippi. Much of the Glorieta program was divided into four tracks: verbal, visual, management, and one-person shop. In free time, sightseeing excursions to ski slopes and historical sites around Santa Fe were offered.

## **OBSERVATIONS**

We not only recognized W.C. Fields at Glorieta but paid honor to two others who had significantly influenced the organization.

Badgett Dillard, president in 1960–1961, was the third ex-president to die, March 30, 1986, two days before the Glorieta workshop. (He was preceded in death by Arthur S. Davenport, president in 1956–1957, and Ben C. Fisher, 1957–1958.) Recognition was made of the life and contribution of Dillard in many ways, especially during the early days of the organization.

A plaque was sent to former president Clarence E. Duncan Jr. (1973–1974) who retired from the Radio and Television Commission at the close of 1985. This was in recognition of his years of service and continuing relationship as a BPRA life member.

The Atlanta program honoring W.C. Fields was presented through narrative, music and slides by Pat Pattillo, Catherine Allen and Dick McCartney. Fields was given a plaque and was named a BPRA life member.

## 1986—1987

David M. Clanton, president

### MEETINGS

Workshop: April 13—15, 1987, Pierremont Plaza Hotel, Atlanta, Georgia

Fellowship: June 17, 1987, Adam's Mark Hotel, Saint Louis Missouri

### OFFICERS

President	David M. Clanton, Baylor University
Program Vice President	Jay C. Durham Jr., Home Mission Board
Membership Vice President	Anita Bowden, Foreign Mission Board
Newsletter Editor	Greg Warner, <i>Florida Baptist Witness</i>
Secretary	Marty Blankenship, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
Treasurer	Lonnie H. Wilkey, Education Commission
Awards Chairman	Ken Lawson, Foreign Mission Board
Placement Service and Administrative Coordinator	Barbara J. Fly, Tennessee Baptist Convention

### OBSERVATIONS

This year was characterized by a feeling of unrest for many members. It was prompted by emerging viewpoints within the SBC calling for a more conservative interpretation of scripture and changes in established leadership patterns within boards and commissions.

Many struggled with questions of personal integrity and professional obligation.

Today BPRAers function in video production, marketing, promotion, magazine design, counseling upper level management and other areas. They are on the leading edge of change seeking innovative ways to offer creative answers.

# We've a Story to Tell

## 1987–1988

Tim Nicholas, president

### MEETINGS

Board Meetings: September 21, 1987. The first board meeting was held in Nashville, Tennessee.

Workshop: April 18–21, 1988, Hyatt Regency Hotel, Louisville, Kentucky

### OFFICERS

President	Tim Nicholas, <i>Baptist Record</i>
Program Vice President	James (Jim) Cox, <i>Western Recorder</i>
Membership Vice President	Barbara Denman, Home Mission Board, then Florida Baptist Convention
Secretary	Dana Williamson, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma
Awards Chairman	David Clanton, Baylor University
Treasurer	Lonnie Wilkey, <i>Tennessee Baptist and Reflector</i>
Newsletter Editor	Tim Fields, SBC Christian Life Commission
Placement Service and Administrative Coordinator	Barbara Fly, Tennessee Baptist Convention

### ACTIVITIES

- At the annual business meeting, outgoing President David Clanton appointed three former award chairpersons to study the BPRA Awards Program: Linda Lawson, Baptist Sunday School Board; Oscar Hoffmeyer, Louisiana Baptist Convention; and Ken Lawson, Foreign Mission Board.
- Membership at the start of the organizational year stood at 359, according to Membership Vice President Anita Bowden.
- BPRA's executive committee instituted a \$5.00 processing fee for members who allowed their membership to lapse.
- The newsletter urged members to participate in the annual SBC Communications Seminar set for July 11–13, 1988. Sponsored by the Public Relations Office of the SBC Executive Committee, the event took place at the Continuing Education Center of the University of Georgia in Athens. The theme was "Communications Concepts."
- Members were encouraged to start planning for the once-a-decade Religious Communications Congress (RCC90) set for April 18–22, 1990, at the Opryland Hotel in Nashville.

## WORKSHOP

Among the highlights of the annual workshop in Louisville:

- A luncheon and cruise on the Ohio River aboard the Bonnie Belle
- Chapel at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary
- On-site tours of area communications operations including the Kentucky House for the Blind; world headquarters of Kentucky Fried Chicken; Churchill Downs; Hillerich and Bradsby, manufacturer of Louisville Slugger baseball bats.
  - Presentation of a plaque of appreciation and a hardbound copy of *We've A Story To Tell* to Jim Cox for his work on the organization's history.
  - Passage of a resolution on the freedom of Baptist Press.

## AWARDS

Grand prize winners in the 25<sup>th</sup> annual awards competition, were:

Public Relations: Colleen M. Nowak, Georgia Baptist Medical Center.

Audiovisual Production: Don Dahler, Foreign Mission Board.

Publications and Print Media: Timothy C. Seanor, Brotherhood Commission.

Publication Photography: Joanna B. Pinneo, Foreign Mission Board.

Writing: Greg Warner, *Florida Baptist Witness*.

# We've a Story to Tell

## 1988—1989

Anita Bowden, president

### MEETINGS

Board Meetings: September 11, 1988, Nashville, Tennessee. The initial board meeting was held following the Southern Baptist Executive Committee meeting.

Fellowship: June, 1989, San Antonio, Texas. The regular breakfast meeting was held at the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Workshop: April 16—19, 1989, Dallas/Fort Worth Airport Harvey Hotel, DFW Airport, Texas

### OFFICERS

President	Anita Bowden, Foreign Mission Board
Program Vice President	Ray Furr, Annuity Board of the SBC
Membership Vice President	Mark Jeffcoat, South Carolina Baptist Convention
Awards Chairman	Tim Nicholas, <i>Mississippi Baptist Record</i>
Treasurer	Lonnie Wilkey, <i>Tennessee Baptist and Reflector</i>
Newsletter Editor	Mary Speidel, William Jewell College
Secretary	Jim Veneman, Baptist Sunday School Board
Placement Service and Administrative Coordinator	Barbara Fly, Tennessee Baptist Convention

### ACTIVITIES

- Many BPRA members had increasing interest in desktop publishing. The September/October, 1988 newsletter's front page feature was "Mousing Around With Desktop Publishing."
- The organization initiated a scholarship program for students at Baptist colleges, universities and seminaries. Initial scholarships would be presented for the 1989—1990 academic year, according to BPRA Scholarship Chairman Charles R. Richardson (director of news and information at Hardin-Simmons University). An undergraduate award would be made in the amount of \$1000 and a graduate award would total \$500. The first scholarship recipients were Kaylyn McGowan, a first year student at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary; and Kate Margolis, a junior at Mississippi College.
- Newcomers to Baptist public relations (three or less years of experience) were invited to apply for assistance to the annual workshop to be held in Dallas. A total of \$1000 was allocated for this effort.
- BPRA's executive committee voted to enforce the policy that participants in the annual Wilmer C. Fields

# 1988–1989

Awards Competition must be approved as BPRC members the year before in order to be eligible for the competition.

- Promotion continued for the Religious Communications Congress, set for the Opryland Hotel in Nashville, April 16–21, 1990. It was agreed that the BPRC annual workshop would be held in conjunction with this event.
- Two life memberships were granted to longtime BPRC members who were retiring:  
Oscar Hoffmeyer, director of public relations for the Louisiana Baptist Convention and BPRC president in 1983–1984.  
Gomer Lesch, senior BTN consultant for the Baptist Sunday School Board and BPRC president in 1963–1964.

## **WORKSHOP**

Participants in the annual workshop in Dallas were treated to a western experience, including a visit to the Circle R Ranch. For professional development, attendees were able to choose from three study tracks:

News and Information

The One-Person Shop

Audiovisual (This track included tours of high-tech communications centers such as the Dallas Communications Complex and the Infomart.)

## **AWARDS**

BPRC members won more awards than any other organization (27 of the 110) for the Religious Public Relations Council's DeRose–Hinkhouse Awards Competition.

# We've a Story to Tell

## 1989–1990

David Wilkinson, president

### MEETINGS

Fellowship: June, 1990, the Landmark Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada. Fellowship breakfast at the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Workshop: April 18–21, 1990, Opryland Hotel, Nashville, Tennessee, site of the once-a-decade event, Religious Communications Congress (RCC90).

### OFFICERS

President David Wilkinson, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

Program Vice President Leonard Hill, *The Baptist Program*

Membership Vice President Robert O'Brien, Foreign Mission Board

Awards Chairman Anita Bowden, Foreign Mission Board

Treasurer Mark Wyatt, Southern Baptist General Convention of California

Newsletter Editor Mark Wingfield, Home Mission Board

Secretary Pam Parry, *Baptist True Union*

Placement Service and Administrative Coordinator Barbara (Fly) Owen, Tennessee Baptist Convention

### ACTIVITIES

- A special BPRA study committee was appointed to review officers structure/responsibilities and membership categories.
- The November 1989 newsletter's front page feature lamented the shrinking budgets for Baptist communications, noting "seminaries, state Baptist papers, state conventions and mission boards are among those who have felt the crunch of 'zero growth' budgets due to flat Cooperative Program receipts, decreasing donor gifts and increasing postage costs." Examples of cuts made in Baptist entity budgets were given, along with how they coped with the reductions — Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, *Baptist Message* (Louisiana), *Ohio Baptist Messenger*, Missouri Baptist Convention, Home Mission Board and Foreign Mission Board.
- Input was sought from BPRA members for an SBC task force assigned to develop a model public relations plan for Southern Baptists. The task force was asked to propose "a proactive, aggressive public relations program," according to Al Shackelford, vice president for public relations with the SBC Executive Committee. A preliminary report was to be given in February, 2000, to the public relations workgroup of the SBC Executive Committee. BPRA members Karen Benson (now Karen Wood) and Mark Wyatt were to be leading the task force at Shackelford's request.



- A contest to determine a new BPRA logo was launched at the annual workshop with a deadline for submissions of September 1, 1990.

## WORKSHOP

The annual workshop was held in conjunction with RCC90 at Opryland Hotel. A total of 131 BPRA members registered. RCC90 program elements included the following:

- Four major presentations were made by globally-acclaimed speakers.
- Participants had seven opportunities to choose from 120 conferences.
- Twice-daily worship services were held.
- Exhibits and video showcases were available throughout the congress.
- The Producer’s Showcase included 15 hours of video screenings spread over three days and aired on the hotel’s closed-circuit television system.
- Senator Al Gore (D-TN) addressed the opening session.
- Bill Moyers received the Communicator of the Decade Award.

During one of two BPRA luncheons at RCC90, Albert McClellan (retired director of program planning and promotion for the SBC Executive Committee) gave a brief history of BPRA.

## AWARDS

Grand prize winners for the 1990 Wilmer C. Fields Awards Competition were:

Arthur S. Davenport Award for Exceptional Achievement in Public Relations and Development:  
Communications Group, Woman’s Missionary Union.

M.E. Dodd Award for Exceptional Achievement in Audiovisual Production  
Ron Lawson, Home Mission Board.

Frank Burkhalter Award for Exceptional Achievement in Writing  
Greg Warner, *Florida Baptist Witness*.

Fon H. Scofield Award for Exceptional Achievement in Publication Photography  
Joanna Pinneo, Foreign Mission Board.

Albert McClellan Award for Exceptional Achievement in Print Media and Design  
Bill Bangham and Rachel Gill, Home Mission Board.

# We've a Story to Tell

## 1990—1991

Karen (Benson) Wood, president

### MEETINGS

*Fellowship:* June, 1991, New Orleans Hyatt Regency Hotel, New Orleans, Louisiana. "Sundaes on Monday" was the theme for the BPRA fellowship held at the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention. The event replaced the traditional breakfast meeting and was held from 9:30 to 11:00 p.m.

*Workshop:* April 22–24, 1991, Parc Fifty Five Hotel, San Francisco, California

### OFFICERS

President	Karen Benson (now Karen Wood), Woman's Missionary Union, SBC
Program Vice President	Eddy Oliver, Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary
Membership Vice President	Greg Hancock, Kentucky Baptist Convention
Awards Chairman	David Wilkinson, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary
Treasurer	Mark Wyatt, California Southern Baptist Convention
Newsletter Editor	Mark Wingfield, Home Mission Board
Secretary	Elizabeth Young, <i>Baptist Beacon</i>
Placement Service and Administrative Coordinator	Barbara (Fly) Owen, Tennessee Baptist Convention

### ACTIVITIES

- The contest for a new BPRA logo was extended to September 1, 1990. The winning design was submitted by Lynda Kokel, artist, Office of Public Relations, Baptist General Convention of Texas.
- "Dinosaur or Dynamo? The Future of Baptist Newspapers" was the front page feature for the September, 1990, issue of the newsletter.
- Shakeups at Baptist Press including the firings of Al Shackleford and Dan Martin also drew the newsletter's attention, along with formation of Associated Baptist Press.
- The newsletter also carried Mark Snowden's Foreign Mission Board report on successful use of media in helping reach people around the world.

### WORKSHOP

San Francisco was the site for the 1991 BPRA workshop. Among the highlights:

— Attendees toured Bay Area businesses to learn more about their communications operations, including Levi Strauss, Bank of America, Ketchum Public Relations and the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

- Other off-site events were a cruise on San Francisco Bay and lunch at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, California.
- Keynote speaker for the workshop was Carol Kinsey Goman who addressed “Surviving and Thriving On Change.”
- One of the numerous seminar offerings was “Response to the New Age” by Barry Stricker of Golden Gate Seminary. For many in attendance, this was their first introduction to the New Age Movement.
- Bill O’Brien, executive director of public relations for the Foreign Mission Board, presented a white paper commissioned by BPRM on “Implications of the SBC Controversy On the Future of Baptist Communications and Public Relations.” An open forum followed O’Brien’s presentation.

Starting with this workshop, the organization began offering a missions experience either prior to or following the annual meeting. Participants visited area churches which featured unique ministries and got a close-up look at San Francisco’s international population which was described by many as “a foreign mission field at home.” Local Director of Missions Karl Ortis was one of the missions experience hosts.

During the annual business meeting, the BPRM’s scholarship program was re-named the Al Shackleford / Dan Martin Scholarship Program.

## **AWARDS**

Grand prize winners for the 1991 Wilmer C. Fields Awards Competition were:

M.E. Dodd Award (Audiovisual Production)  
Woman’s Missionary Union, SBC.

Frank Burkhalter Award (Writing)  
Wayne Grinstead, Home Mission Board.

Fon H. Scofield Award (Photography)  
Warren Johnson, Foreign Mission Board.

Albert McClellan Award (Print Media and Design)  
James Preston, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

# We've a Story to Tell

## 1991–1992

Lloyd Householder, president

### MEETINGS

Fellowship: June 3, 1992, in Atlanta, with a tour of the World of Coca-Cola Pavilion and dessert at Buck's Restaurant. (Business session included.)

Workshop: April 29–May 2, 1992, Marriott Pavilion Hotel, St. Louis, Missouri

### OFFICERS

President	Lloyd Householder, Baptist Sunday School Board
President-Elect	Mike Duduit, Samford University
Membership Vice President	Kim Alley, SBC Historical Commission
Program Vice President	Philip Poole, Missouri Baptist Convention
Treasurer	Mark Wyatt, California Southern Baptist Convention
Newsletter Editor	Erich Bridges, Foreign Mission Board
Awards Chairwoman	Karen (Benson) Wood, Woman's Missionary Union, SBC
Administrative Coordinator	Dot Milner, Baptist Sunday School Board

### ACTIVITIES

- At the September meeting of the executive committee, Dot Milner, of the Sunday School Board, was elected administrative coordinator. She replaced Barbara Owen in this position. Both agreed to a three-month "overlap" in order for Milner to receive on-the-job training from Owen.
- Questions had been raised by members for some time concerning the legal status of BPRA. Therefore, the executive committee engaged the services of James Guenther, Nashville attorney, to study issues involved and report back to the organization. Guenther met with the officers on several occasions, and finally recommended that the organization be incorporated in the state of Tennessee, to assure legal protections and permanence. After the officers recommended this action, the membership approved, and the proceedings for incorporation were taken. Work was also done on the charter and by-laws in this connection.
- Steps were taken to assure closer cooperation with other public relations organizations in North America. Action was taken to send a representative and to make a modest contribution to the North American Public Relations Association. In this context, work was done on ethical issues in public relations, and the role of public relations in society. Conversations were held with the Religious Public Relations Council concerning common interests in religion and public relations. Also, explorations were held about bringing meetings into proximity for the sake of persons who belong to more than one organization. Further support was shown for participating in the international Religious

Communications Congress, held every ten years.

- Processes were set up for the celebration of the Association's forthcoming 40th anniversary. Advisors suggested to give input were W. C. Fields, Gomer Lesch, and Leonard Wedel.
- BPRA affirmed the worth of the existing scholarship program, and took steps to strengthen and refine it. The plan was continued to bring the award-winning students to the annual workshops. The Association continued to affirm its action taken to honor Dan Martin and Al Shackelford by naming scholarships for them.

## WORKSHOP

The 1992 annual workshop held in St. Louis was creatively and successfully planned by Philip Poole.

Following the theme, "Creative Communication: The Gateway to Growth," meeting highlights included addresses by J. Gordon Kingsley, president of William Jewell College. The speaker excited his audiences by exhibiting creativity, rather than just talking about it.

Much enjoyed and appreciated also were a series of workshops led both by members and guests. The beautifully restored Fox Theatre served as a backdrop for the annual awards presentations, where members also enjoyed a buffet and a concert on the theater's famous pipe organ.

## AWARDS

Winners of the Wilmer C. Fields Awards Competition were:

Arthur S. Davenport Award (Public Relations)

Dan Eules, Home Mission Board, representing the interagency Annie Armstrong Easter Offering Group for "A Time For Extravagance: A Season of Home Missions."

M.E. Dodd Award (Audiovisual Production)

Tricia Landers, Foreign Mission Board, for a music video "Big Ball Turning."

Frank Burkhalter Award (Writing)

Donald D. Martin, Foreign Mission Board, for news coverage of the aftermath of civil war in Liberia.

Fon H. Scofield Award (Publication Photography)

Don Rutledge, Foreign Mission Board, for special assignment photography of the aftermath of civil war in Liberia.

Albert McClellan Award (Print Media and Design)

Robert Eisele, William Jewell College, for college's admissions materials.

## OBSERVATIONS

My associations and interchanges with members of BPRA through several years brought many valuable and gratifying experiences. And the opportunity to serve as president of the organization was a challenging and appreciated experience. The timing was bittersweet in that I held this office during the transitional time of my retirement from the Sunday School Board. It was such an exciting time for me, yet sad because I knew that many of the opportunities I enjoyed in my professional life would be closing down and that I would have few chances in the future to work with my friends in the organization. You taught me so much, and exhibited for me how real professionals do their jobs and contribute to church and society.

# ***We've a Story to Tell***

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So, out of this context, I outlined several goals as I came into office:

- Increased professionalism: To train ourselves further to do the very best job possible.
- Stronger relationships with other bodies: To bring us into relationships with top professionals in public relations; to build ties with other professional societies and other religious bodies.
- More members: To seek out those who can contribute to and benefit from our organization.
- More membership benefits: To build an organization which can help us grow.
- A sharing network: To strengthen our network of communications with one another, and to help one another achieve excellence.

And I closed these goals (though not completely quantitative) with these words: “Let us pray for one another in these days of change . . . . No group has a greater opportunity to “tell the good news” than we. Let’s give it our best. At the end of the year of my presidency, our newsletter carried my reflections, which concluded:

“The job of ‘telling the story’ to Baptists and claiming meaningful values may become increasingly difficult. I am grateful for the integrity which motivates you and to the Lord who leads and keeps you in your tasks.”

## 1992–1993

Michael Duduit, President

### MEETINGS

Fellowship: June, 1993, Houston, Texas, at the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Workshop: April 15–19, 1993, St. Moritz On the Park Hotel, New York City, New York

### OFFICERS

President	Michael Duduit, Samford University
Program Vice President	Greg Hodnett, Palm Beach Atlantic College; changed during term of office to Robert J. O'Brien, Foreign Mission Board
Membership Vice President	Terry Barone, California Southern Baptist Convention
Award Chairman	Lloyd Householder, retired, Baptist Sunday School Board
Treasurer	Eddy Oliver, Home Mission Board
Newsletter Editor	Connie Davis, <i>Baptist and Reflector</i>
Historian	Carol Woodfin, Historical Commission of the SBC
Administrative Coordinator	Dot Milner, retired, Baptist Sunday School Board

### ACTIVITIES

- During the annual fellowship, the membership voted to move the annual workshop from West Palm Beach, Florida, to New York City, because of major administrative changes at host Palm Beach Atlantic College where no BPRA members remained on the staff. BPRA decided to meet at the same time and place as the Religious Public Relations Council (RPRC). Numerous joint activities were held between the groups. Robert O'Brien and Lloyd Householder were both members of the BPRA Executive Committee as well as the RPRC Board of Governors. BPRA's Linda Lawson and Pat Pattillo also served on the RPRC Board of Governors. Householder and Pattillo were past presidents of BPRA and RPRC.

#### WORKSHOP

The St. Moritz On the Park Hotel was located across the street from Central Park and near a number of communications venues. Among the highlights of the joint sessions:

- Keynote speakers including Pollster George Gallup, Richard Ostling, religion writer for *Time* magazine and MacNeil-Lehrer News Hour on PBS, and George Cornell, religion writer for the Associated Press.
- Numerous on-site visits were offered such as *The New York Times*, *Time* and *Newsweek*, CBS and NBC News, Time-Warner, VISN Network, the United Nations Building, Madison Avenue public relations firms, and the American Bible Society.
- Tickets to RPRC's DeRose-Hinkhouse Awards Luncheon as well as the Wilbur Awards Dinner were made available. Several Southern Baptists received recognitions in the RPRC competition.

# We've a Story to Tell

A number of BPRA-specific events and actions also took place, among them:

— The Home Mission Board provided a tour of mission sites in New York City (a tradition started two years earlier in San Francisco and continuing the next year in East St. Louis).

— Three BPRA members were honored, including Jim Cox who received a resolution of appreciation for 28 faithful years of service to BPRA, especially in the area of member recruitment. Roy Jennings and Bill Junker were given lifetime membership in the organization. Jennings had recently retired from the Baptist Memorial Health Care System in Memphis. Junker retired from the Materials Production Department of the Home Mission Board.

The Shackleford/Martin Scholarship winners for the year were announced:

Blynda Blythe, a speech and telecommunications major at Baylor University.

Heather Price Lawrence, a Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary student planning a foreign missions career.

Professional Scholarship winners were also recognized:

Eva Wilson, editorial assistant with the *Baptist Digest*, Kansas-Nebraska Convention of Southern Baptists, received the professional scholarship to attend the annual workshop.

Sandy DeVaney

Colleen Backus

## AWARDS

The Wilmer C. Fields Awards Competition presentations were made during a dinner cruise in New York Harbor. Among the unique happenings of this year's awards is that one member won the grand prize in three categories:

Arthur McClellan Award (Print Media and Design)

Bill Bangham, Home Mission Board.

Frank Burkhalter Award (Writing)

Bill Bangham, Home Mission Board.

Fon H. Scofield Award (Photography)

Bill Bangham, Home Mission Board.

Arthur S. Davenport Award (Public Relations and Development)

Barbara Denman, Florida Baptist Convention.

M.E. Dodd Award (Video Productions)

Trish Landers, Foreign Mission Board.

## OBSERVATIONS

Meeting in New York City was the highlight of my BPRA presidency. Meeting jointly with the Religious Public Relations Council, we were blessed to be able to draw on the depth of talent to be found in the nation's communications hub. The only negative of the meeting was waiting for the two elevators to move people to and from meetings in that tall hotel!

I will never forget the awards dinner held on a dinner cruise as we rounded the southern part of Manhattan. The scenery was so spectacular that it was hard to focus on the awards presentation.

I have always been grateful for the wonderful opportunities for fellowship and professional relations made



## 1992–1993

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possible through BPRA. Even though I am no longer engaged in communications work for a Baptist agency or institution, I continue to treasure the friends and colleagues I gained through this outstanding organization.

# We've a Story to Tell

## 1993–1994

Terry Barone, president

### MEETINGS

Fellowship: June 14, 1994, Four Seasons Hotel, Orlando, Florida. A dessert fellowship sponsored by Woman's Missionary Union, SBC, and Samford University, was held at the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Workshop: April 7–9, 1994, Wynfrey Hotel at Riverchase Galleria, Birmingham, Alabama

### OFFICERS

President	Terry Barone, California Southern Baptist Convention
Program Vice President	William A. Nunnolley, Samford University
Membership Vice President	Charles Willis, Baptist Sunday School Board
Awards Chairman	Michael Duduit, American Academy of Ministry
Treasurer	Eddy Oliver, Home Mission Board
Newsletter Editor	Barbara Denman, Florida Baptist Convention
Historian	Carol Woodfin, Palm Beach Atlantic College
Administrative Coordinator	Dot Milner, retired, Baptist Sunday School Board

### ACTIVITIES

- Membership Vice President Charles Willis and committee members Connie Davis and Polly House announced special rewards to members who enlisted the largest number of new members: First prize was a subscription to CompuServe and a kit for SBC Net (the SBC's data communications network); second prize was a kit for SBC Net.
- The Fall 1993 issue of the newsletter contained an historical feature on "25 Years Ago in Baptist Communications."
- BPRA celebrated our 40th anniversary which included historical pieces in the newsletter by Jim Cox and Leonard Holloway (charter member).
- Dot Milner, BPRA administrative coordinator, resigned to become music secretary at Dalewood Baptist Church in Nashville.
- Following an extensive search, Keith Beene was chosen as the new administrative coordinator. An experienced writer, work at the Baptist Sunday School Board was among his credentials.

- Two January/February 1994 newsletter features were:  
“All I Know About Television, I Learned the Hard Way” by Ty Wood.  
“Journalists Struggle to Walk Fine Line Between Respect and Calling” by Greg Warner.

## **WORKSHOP**

When BPRA'ers gathered at the Wynfrey Hotel in Birmingham, Alabama, for the annual workshop, they once again met jointly for a number of sessions with the Religious Public Relations Council (RPRC). “Faithing the Future” was the chosen theme and featured events included:

– A keynote address presented by Bill Airy, president of the Vision Group, home of the Faith and Values Channel (formerly VISN/ACTS). Airy presented the current state of cable television, made future predictions and affirmed the coming reality of the 500-channel cable television universe.

– Leonard Sweet, chancellor of United Seminary in Dayton, Ohio, also challenged attendees with a key address.

In addition to the 28 seminars offered, on-site learning experiences were available at Samford University, the Civil Rights Institute, *Southern Living* magazine and other area locations.

BPRA members choosing to attend RPRC's Wilbur Awards were treated to an evening atop Birmingham's Red Mountain.

## **AWARDS**

Wilmer C. Fields Awards Competition presentations were made during a banquet at Woman's Missionary Union, SBC, national headquarters. Tours of the new WMU facility were available to attendees.

# *We've a Story to Tell*

## **1994—1995**

Philip Poole, president

### **MEETINGS**

Fellowship: June 19, 1995, at Mick's in Underground Atlanta, a dessert social, held at the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Atlanta.

Workshop: April 6—9, 1995, Williamsburg, Virginia. The theme: "Town Criers In A Revolutionary Age."

### **OFFICERS**

President	Phillip Poole, Missouri Baptist Convention & Southwest Baptist University
Program Vice President	Mary Jane Welch, Foreign Mission Board
Membership Vice President	Diane Reasoner, Georgia Baptist Convention
Awards Chairman	Terry Barone, California Southern Baptist Convention
Treasurer	Eddy Oliver, Home Mission Board
Newsletter Editor	Tim Tune, SBC Annuity Board
Historian	Polly House, Baptist Press
Administrative Coordinator	Keith Beene

### **ACTIVITIES**

- A group of about 15 former BPRA presidents — spanning almost the entire history of BPRA — convened in Williamsburg the day prior to the annual workshop for an open dialog about the future of the organization. We began the process of changing the bylaws to allow for an awards chair that was not the immediate past president. This allowed more members to be involved in leadership roles.
- Keith Beene was hired as administrative coordinator, and the position was expanded to include more responsibilities.
- Alan Compton and Bob Stanley retired from the Foreign Mission Board. A scholarship fund for minorities and internationals pursuing SBC journalism careers was named in their honor.
- We discussed adding fellowship events at annual meetings of other denominational organizations but the idea met with resistance and it was dropped.
- Life membership was conferred upon Leonard Hill who retired from the SBC Executive Committee staff and Jay Durham who retired from the Home Mission Board staff.

- Members overwhelmingly approved a revised set of professional standards for BPR. The revisions were the result of a six-month study by BPR's professional development committee, chaired by Trennis Henderson, president-elect.

## AWARDS

Grand prize winners in the annual Wilmer C. Fields Awards Competition were:

Arthur S. Davenport Award (Public Relations and Development)

Robert L. Reeves, Kentucky Baptist Home for Children, for "Celebrating 125 Years of Love."

M.E. Dodd Award (Video Productions)

Randy Durham, Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, for "North Carolina Baptist Hospital: From Dawn to Dawn."

Frank Burkhalter Award (Writing)

Rachel Gill, Home Mission Board, for "I Don't Want To Die In the Street."

Fon H. Scofield Award (Photography)

Bill Bangham, Home Mission Board, for "An Oasis of Hope."

Albert H. McClellan Award (Print Media and Design)

Rebecca Woosley, Palm Beach Atlantic College, for "President's Report."

## OBSERVATIONS

My year as president was difficult and challenging but also affirming. I had been a member of BPR for 17 years (my first workshop was the 25th anniversary gathering), and I do not remember a more difficult year – personally or professionally. My ability to serve as effectively as desired was impacted by personal and professional challenges. I made a significant job change in the middle of the year, and my older sister died following a courageous battle with breast cancer. The support of my BPR colleagues was so meaningful during those life transitions. I received cards, emails and telephone calls from so many friends, and I always will be grateful for those expressions of congratulations and sympathy.

Changes in Southern Baptist life began to manifest in BPR during the year. Every effort was made to maintain the professional decorum and fellowship of BPR, but the differences within the larger denomination crept into the organization. Trying to balance the difficulties of colleagues facing challenges in the work place with our desire to be open to all Baptist communicators was not always easy. Some were losing jobs because of denominational politics. Others were simply "downsized" because of financial constraints. There were lots of suspicions and misperceptions among members and non-members about the role of BPR . . . however . . . potential formation of a rival organization to BPR never materialized.

We worked hard to make the workshop at Williamsburg a positive experience, and generally it was. We had a wonderful worship experience at Bruton Parish Church and enjoyed peanut soup at the Kings Arms. Many members took advantage of the location to bring their families and enjoy the history of the region. My most vivid memory of the trip is that the Poole and [Terry] Barone families spent several days enjoying Washington, D.C. together before the workshop!

It saddens me that many of those former presidents (who met the day before the formal workshop program) no longer are involved in Baptist life or Christian communications. The positive suggestions made by the group were met with strong resistance from some members. But, they remain valued friends and professional colleagues. To me, that's what BPR is about – friendships developed around the common mission of telling the Good News.

# We've a Story to Tell

## 1995—1996

Trennis Henderson, president

### MEETINGS

Fellowship: June 10, 1996, Hyatt Regency Hotel, in New Orleans, Louisiana. A 9:00 p.m. "Chocoholics Dessert Fellowship" was held at the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Workshop: March 7—10, 1996, Glorieta Baptist Conference Center, Glorieta, New Mexico.

### OFFICERS

President	Trennis Henderson, <i>Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine</i>
Program Vice President	Terri Lackey, Baptist Sunday School Board
Membership Vice President	Brenda Sanders, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
Awards Chairman	Phillip Poole, Southwest Baptist University
Treasurer	Bob Allen, Associated Baptist Press
Newsletter Editor	Sarah Zimmerman, Home Mission Board
Historian	Polly House, Baptist Press
Administrative Coordinator	Keith Beene

### ACTIVITIES

- Prior to the annual meeting and workshop at Glorieta Baptist Conference Center, several Southern Baptist photographers offered an early workshop on the basics of photojournalism (March 5—7).

### WORKSHOP

"Tek Trek" was the 1996 theme for the annual meeting and workshop. Among the happenings for that event:

— In the annual business meeting, the membership voted to re-name the organization from Baptist Public Relations Association to Baptist Communicators Association. The name-change proposal came from a special study committee chaired by Mike Duduit. Effective date of the change would be July 1, 1996.

— With a new name approved, solicitation for a new logo began. A logo contest kicked off at the workshop had a submissions deadline of August 23, 1996.

— Six professional development groups were established and met during the Glorieta workshop. All members were asked to join one of the six. Provisions were made for adding new groups once 10 or more members petitioned to join one and members approved the addition. Initial groups included:

- Editorial
- Institutional Public Relations
- Graphic Design
- Electronic Media
- Management
- Photography

# 1995–1996

— Keynote speaker was Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Valley Community Church in Orange County, California. Warren urged attendees to “use technology, but don’t worship it.” He cited many examples of how his church used technology in its ministries.

John Roberts, retired Editor of South Carolina’s Baptist Courier was awarded lifetime membership.

Student scholarship winners announced at the workshop were:

Thomas Martin, communications student at Louisiana College who was cited for his extensive volunteer work in communications and community service.

Niko Sudibjo, religious education student at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary who had been involved in television ministries in Indonesia.

Shackleford/Martin Professional Scholarships enabled two members to attend the workshop:

Lisa Smith, production assistant for the Home Mission Board

Randy Morrison, graphic designer for Oklahoma Baptist University

Given the limited receipts from endowment, members decided to fund the new Compton/Stanley Scholarships for Minority and Internationals from the budget.

## AWARDS

Grand prizes winners of the for the Wilmer C. Fields Awards Competition were:

Fon H. Scofield Award (Publication Photography)

Mark Sandlin, Home Mission Board.

M.E. Dodd Award (Video Productions)

Trish Landers Ragsdale, Foreign Mission Board.

Frank Burkhalter Award (Writing)

Rachel G. Gill, Home Mission Board.

Albert McClellan Award (Print Media and Design)

Rebecca Woosley, Palm Beach Atlantic University.

# We've a Story to Tell

## 1996—1997

Sarah Zimmerman, president

### MEETINGS

Board Meetings: Nashville, Tennessee

Fellowship: June 16, 1997, Dallas Convention Center, Dallas, Texas. A “Fondue Fellowship” was held at the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Workshop: April 10–13, 1997, Stone Mountain Park, Georgia

### OFFICERS

President	Sarah Zimmerman, Home Mission Board, (until November, 1996 when she resigned to pursue a Master's degree in Communications)
Program Vice President	William T. Neal III, <i>The Christian Index</i>
Program Vice President-Elect	Ken Camp, Baptist General Convention of Texas
Membership Vice President	Barbara Denman, Florida Baptist Convention
Awards Chairman	Trennis Henderson, Arkansas Baptist Convention
Treasurer	Bob Allen, Associated Baptist Press
Newsletter Editor	Tim Yarbrough, Missouri Baptist Convention
Historian	Polly House, Baptist Press
Administrative Coordinator	Keith Beene

### ACTIVITIES

- 1996—1997 was the year after the organization's name change from the Baptist Public Relations Association to Baptist Communicators Association. The officers were given the task of coming up with a new logo. While the organization's name change was meant to be inclusive of all types of Baptist communicators, coming up with a logo which represented everybody was a challenge. A logo contest was held among the members. Randy Shebek, art director for Buckner Baptist Benevolences in Dallas, won the logo contest as announced in the December 1966 issue of BCA News.

### WORKSHOP

“Image and Integrity: Anchors in Transition” was the annual workshop theme which was held at the Evergreen Conference Center, Stone Mountain Park, Georgia. Among the highlights:

— Keynote addresses delivered by Emmanuel L. McCall, Sr., pastor of Christian Fellowship Baptist Church in Atlanta, and Al Shackelford, editor of *Mature Living* magazine.

In addition to a variety of seminars, two time slots were also set aside for small peer group discussions. The



first of these was based on attendees' workplace: national agencies, state newspapers, state conventions public relations, children's homes, and colleges and seminaries. The second session centered on professional development areas: editorial, graphic, management, electronic, institutional public relations, and photography.

Lifetime membership was conferred upon three longtime members who were retired:

Lloyd Householder, Baptist Sunday School Board  
Don Rutledge, Foreign Mission Board  
Orville Scott, Baptist General Convention of Texas

Student Scholarship winners included:

Dena Dyer, master of theology studies, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary  
Amie Mann, communications major at the University of Alabama at Huntsville.

The first winner of the Compton/Stanley Scholarship for Minority and International Students was announced to be Shannon Lawrence, communications major at Henderson State University in Arkansas.

## AWARDS

More than 100 awards were presented at the annual Wilmer C. Fields Awards Competition. Top award winners were:

Albert McClellan Award (Print Media and Design)

Mary Jane Welch, managing editor of *The Commission* magazine, Foreign Mission Board.

Fon H. Scofield Award (Photography)

Mark Sandlin, Home Mission Board.

Frank Burkhalter Award (Feature Writing)

Lisa M. Smith, *MissionsUSA* magazine, Home Mission Board.

Frank Burkhalter Award (News Writing)

Laurie A. Lattimore, *The Alabama Baptist*.

Arthur S. Davenport Award (Public Relations and Development)

Douglas W. Rogers, South Carolina Baptist Convention.

M.E. Dodd Award (Electronic Media)

Alan W. Walker, Florida Baptist Convention.

# We've a Story to Tell

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## 1997–1998

Jim Veneman, president

### MEETINGS

Fall Board Meeting: September 24, 1997, Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville, Tennessee

Fellowship: June 8, 1998, Salt Palace Convention Center, Salt Lake City, Utah

Workshop: April 30–May 2, 1998, Radisson Hotel, San Antonio, Texas

### OFFICERS

President	Jim Veneman, Baptist Sunday School Board
Program Vice President	Ken Camp, Baptist General Convention of Texas
Program Vice President-Elect	Barbara Denman, Florida Baptist Convention
Membership Vice President	Jan Kelley, Arkansas Baptist State Convention
Newsletter Editor	Russell Dilday, <i>Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine</i>
Awards Chairman	Mark Wingfield, <i>Western Recorder</i>
Treasurer	Bob Allen, Associated Baptist Press
Historian	Polly House, Baptist Press
Administrative Coordinator	Keith Beene

### ACTIVITIES

- At the September 1997 meeting of the officers in Nashville, President Jim Veneman discussed how BCA might extend its reach to include a broader family of Baptist communicators. The idea was first expressed to him through member Wendy Ryan of the Baptist World Alliance. Veneman expressed that BCA might be able to reach Baptist communicators who might otherwise not have an established network in their own denominations. Ryan provided a list of about 50 non-Southern Baptists whose jobs focus on communications. A letter of invitation to visit the spring workshop was sent to the list of communicators.
- Also during the September meeting awards chairman Mark Wingfield suggested a new way to accomplish the judging of entries for the annual competition. The judging would be done using

professionals in the San Antonio area. Although this would involve some logistical maneuvering by the committee, it would have benefit to the membership. This would provide the opportunity to involve some of the judges in breakout sessions during the workshop itself. After seeing the entries and having first-hand knowledge of what SBC communicators are doing, the judges would be able to build more relevant presentations. The committee acted on this idea and a number of judges participated in breakouts at the San Antonio event.

- BCA was invited to join in the Religious Communication Congress 2000 (RCC2000) in Chicago. This once-a-decade event was to include religious public relations groups from throughout North America which would have their annual meetings in conjunction with RCC2000. BPRA/BCA had participated in earlier RCC events, including RCC90 in Nashville. BCA's Phillip Poole was serving on the RCC2000 steering committee. The projected theme was "Faith Stories In A Changing World."
- Following the business session during the spring workshop a new BCA officer was nominated. Diane Reasoner, assistant director of public relations for the Georgia Baptist Convention, was nominated as vice president for professional development. Members attending the Southern Baptist Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah, voted on the approval of her nomination.
- A pictorial directory of the membership was produced in the spring of 1998 by Keith Beene, administrative coordinator.

## AWARDS

The Wilmer C. Fields Awards Competition dinner had a Mexican fiesta theme. Grand prize winners were:

M.E. Dodd Award (Electronic Media)

Ray Furr, Communications Director for the Annuity Board, for "Recruiting Video."

Frank Burkhalter Award (News Writing)

Dan Martin, News writer for Baptist General Convention of Texas, for a series of stories on the tornado that struck Jarrell, Texas.

Frank Burkhalter Award (Feature Writing)

Craig Bird, administrator at Cornerstone Baptist Church in Arlington, Texas, and former communications director for Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, for "Lord, Make Us One" in *Southwestern News*.

Arthur S. Davenport Award (Public Relations and Development)

Barbara Denman and the public relations staff of the Florida Baptist Convention for the 1997 Maguire State Missions Offering promotion.

Fon H. Scofield Award (Photography)

Doug Rogers, audiovisual manager for the South Carolina Baptist Convention, for photo of Romanian shepherd.

# ***We've a Story to Tell***

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Albert McClellan Award (Print Media and Design)

Theresa Barnett and Dick Bodenhamer of Woman's Missionary Union, SBC, for "Image Ad Series."

## **OBSERVATIONS**

When I was a student at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Philip Poole, then director of public relations, invited me to go to my first Baptist Public Relations Association workshop. I knew nothing about this organization, but Philip said that some day this group would become an important part of my life. Never has anyone been more right.

Recently I spent some time looking over the BCA membership directory and made a discovery. There's a huge number of people in this organization I really don't know. Some are new to the organization, but bring with them fresh ideas that need to be shared. Some have been around for a good while and need to help keep the rest of us focused and on track.

In my column submission to the last 1997–1998 BCA newsletter I wrote, "In the past few years I've grown very dependent upon friends who are far more technologically aware than I. Together we've been able to tackle some pretty difficult questions. That's what BCA is all about." Continuing I said, "Our membership is a fabulous resource to help us make wise decisions. There will always be someone within our membership who has gone where you are about to go, or is about to head out in the same direction. At a time when we need to act, and not just react, it's much easier when we're together."

BCA provides incredibly unique opportunities. We are challenged, motivated and encouraged. To me at the top of the list is that we are given the chance to make lasting, life-changing relationships.

## 1998–1999

Polly House, president

### MEETINGS

Fellowship: June 8, 1998, Convention Center, Salt Lake City, Utah

Workshop: April 22–24, 1999, Hilton Riverfront Hotel, Jacksonville, Florida

### OFFICERS

President	Polly House, Baptist Press
Program Chairman	Barbara Denman, Florida Baptist Convention
Program Chairman-Elect	Eddy Oliver, Georgia Baptist Convention
Awards Chairman	Jim Veneman, LifeWay Christian Resources
Membership Chairman	Tommy Hughes, Alabama Baptist Convention
Treasurer	Tim Norton, <i>Christian Index</i>
Historian	Roy Jennings, retired, Baptist Memorial Health Care System
Administrative Coordinator	Keith Beene

### ACTIVITIES

#### WORKSHOP

Several outstanding persons were featured on the annual workshop program in Florida. Addressing the group were: Calvin Miller, professor of preaching and ministries studies, Beeson Divinity School, Samford University, Birmingham, Alabama; Hal Wingo, retired editor of *Life* and *People* magazines, Richmond, Virginia; Joseph Nolan, former public relations executive and communications professor, Jacksonville, Florida; and Mark Pinsky, senior religion reporter at the *Orlando Sentinel* and former religion writer for the *Los Angeles Times*.

The awards ceremony lacked its usual luster this year. Awards Chairman Jim Veneman had the awards presentation on his laptop computer. But on a trip out of town the weekend before the annual workshop, his computer was stolen from his hotel room. In spite of that, he carried off the event with his usual poise and good humor.

A sunset meal on the hotel patio, overlooking the St. John's River, set the stage for a beautiful meeting.

# We've a Story to Tell

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## AWARDS

Grand prize winners for the Wilmer C. Fields Awards Competition were:

Arthur S. Davenport Award (Public Relations)

LifeWay Communications Department for "Corporate Name Change."

M.E. Dodd Award (Electronic Media)

Jim Edminson of the Louisiana Baptist Children's Home for "100 Years."

M.E. Dodd Award (Emerging Technology)

Kim Burke, Gerald Stow, and Bryant Millsaps at the Tennessee Baptist Children's Home for "Tennessee Baptist Children's Home Web Site."

Frank Burkhalter Award (News Writing)

Ken Camp and Dan Martin from the Baptist General Convention of Texas for "Healing Communities."

Leonard Holloway Award (Feature Writing)

Russell Rankin from Buckner Foundation for "Romania: The Power of Touch."

Fon H. Scofield Award (Publication Photography)

Russell Rankin from Buckner Foundation for "Romania: The Power of Touch."

Albert McClellan Award (Print Media and Design)

Larry Thompson, Susan Word, and Wade Mealer from Bellevue Baptist Church of Memphis for "Light & Truth."

## OBSERVATIONS

Two memories stand out about the 1999 workshop in Jacksonville, Florida. The first was a day trip to St. Augustine with about 30 other BCA members. We had a tour guide who was full of mystery stories about the early days of St. Augustine. As we walked past the oldest parts of the town, he told stories of murders, ghosts and tragic women. We walked farther to the "newer" parts of St. Augustine and heard stories of the barons of industry who sent their families and staffs to "winter" in Florida in the late 1800's and early 1900's when St. Augustine was as far south as the railroad went into Florida.

My other wonderful memory of that workshop was at an after-session fellowship in one of the small reception rooms. At my table were seven people, two of whom were very much conservatives and two of whom were very much moderates. Now remember, this was when there was still a lot of in-fighting with the Southern Baptist Convention. But, that evening, there was none. We talked. We laughed. We told stories about our kids. We talked about teaching Sunday School in our respective churches. No one argued or debated. We just talked. I remember thinking how nice that was, how non-political.

## 1999–2000

Mark Wingfield, president

### MEETINGS

Fellowship: June 14, 1999, Underground Atlanta, Atlanta, Georgia

Workshop: March 30–February 1, 2000, Chicago, Illinois

### OFFICERS

President	Mark Wingfield, <i>Baptist Standard</i>
Program Vice President	Eddy Oliver, Georgia Baptist Convention
Program Vice President-Elect	Scott Vaughan, South Carolina Baptist Convention
Membership Vice President	Kim Burke, Tennessee Baptist Children's Home
Treasurer	Tim Norton, <i>Christian Index</i>
Historian	Roy Burroughs, retired
Professional Development Coordinator	Diane Reasoner, Georgia Baptist Convention
Awards Chairman	Stephanie Delgado, LifeWay Christian Resources
Newsletter Editor	Sean Taylor, North American Mission Board

### ACTIVITIES

- The year began with a detailed survey of all members. The results of this "Millennial Survey of Member Attitudes, Opinions and Needs" were presented to the membership in the fall of 1999. The study reported on employee compensation, perceived benefits of BCA membership, desired benefits of BCA membership and attitudes about web site usage. The goal of the officers in conducting the survey was to provide resources to shape the future of BCA in responding to member needs.
- BCA launched its first web site, with a basic structure and hopes of expanding services available online in the future.
- The BCA newsletter moved to an electronic distribution on a one-year trial basis.
- Initial plans were made for celebrating BCA's 50th anniversary in 2004, after research was done to determine whether the celebration should occur in 2003 or 2004. W.C. Fields reminded the president that although the initial meeting that birthed BCA was held in 1953, the first workshop was not held until 1954, and the 25th anniversary event was held in 1979.

# We've a Story to Tell

- The role of missions vice president was added, and a missions committee was created, both to create an awareness of opportunities for Baptist communicators to use their skills in volunteer missions.
- Four student scholarship winners were announced:  
Jamie Benning, communications arts student at Cumberland College, and Jonathan Cross, journalism student at Oklahoma State University, split the \$1,000 undergraduate scholarship.  
Mercy Kikuyu and Coy McIntosh of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary received the graduate student scholarships. Kikuyu of Kenya won the scholarship designated for minority and international students.

## WORKSHOP

The annual workshop was held in Chicago in conjunction with the Religious Communications Council's millennial congress. BCA members integrated with the larger group for plenary and breakout sessions, and several breakout meetings were held specifically for BCA members.

## AWARDS

Winners of the Wilmer C. Fields Awards Competition were announced at the Chicago workshop:

Arthur S. Davenport Award (Public Relations)

Florida Baptist Convention Public Relations Division for "Maguire State Mission Offering: Partners in the Harvest."

M.E. Dodd Award (Electronic Media)

FamilyNet TV/NAMB for "Valor," a documentary aired on ABC affiliates and later on FamilyNet.

Frank Burkhalter Award (News Writing)

Staff of the *Baptist Standard* for coverage of the shootings at Wedgwood Baptist Church; and Tamara Heitz-Peek of Southwest Baptist University for "Don't Cry, Jesus Loves You."

Leonard Holloway Award (Feature Writing)

Greg Warner of Associated Baptist Press for "The Power of Teams" and Bob Allen of ABP for "Second Georgia Baptist Church Faces Ouster Over Ministry to Gays."

Fon H. Scofield Award (Publication Photography)

Roy M. Burroughs of the International Mission Board for "Brazil: Heart of Darkness."

Albert McClellan Award (Print Media and Design)

Lisa Bratton of FamilyNet Radio/NAMB for "Life's Common Thread."

## OBSERVATIONS

This was a year of coming to grips with the electronic age and how it might change the way BCA operates. The attempt to move the newsletter to an e-mail distribution rather than mailing out printed copies proved popular, but it did not solve the struggle to actually get a newsletter out. Likewise, the web site was a welcome addition, but complete functionality of the site was not immediately possible.

Attendance was good for the BCA workshop held in conjunction with RCC2000. The most humorous moment came during the open plenary session of RCC2000, which featured an interfaith prayer celebration. Philip Poole coerced Scott Collins into representing Baptists in the experience, but Scott didn't realize it would require him to waltz through the banquet hall carrying a large artificial flower on a 6-foot-tall pole. (Incidentally, a replica of that flower pole is still floating around Texas and was last seen in the office of Larry Brumley.)



## 2000–2001

Scott Collins, president

### MEETINGS

Board Meetings: February 9, 2001, Atlanta, Georgia.

Workshop: March 28–30, 2001, Adam's Mark Hotel, Columbia, South Carolina

### OFFICERS

President	Scott Collins, Buckner Baptist Benevolences
Program Vice President	Scott Vaughan, South Carolina Baptist Convention
Program Vice President-Elect	Denise Withers, Kentucky Baptist Convention
Missions Vice President	Teresa Dickens, Woman's Missionary Union, SBC; then Mark Snowden, International Mission Board
Awards Chairman	Miller Murphy, Connie Maxwell Children's Home
Professional Development Coordinator	Marty Croll, International Mission Board
Treasurer	Tim Norton, Crux Communication
Historian	Roy Jennings, retired, Baptist Memorial Health Care Systems
Newsletter Editor	Stacey Hamby, <i>Word and Way</i>
Administrative Coordinator	Keith Beene

### ACTIVITIES

- Life membership was bestowed upon Farrell Blankenship, retired after 17 years as broadcast services director for the Mississippi Baptist Convention.
- Members approved a bylaw change to add the position of president-elect to the officers. The change was made to facilitate continuity in the organization from year to year.
- BCA Scholarships were awarded to four individuals:

Undergraduate scholarships were given to Jennifer Baird, a junior English/communication major at Missouri Baptist College, and Emily Dockrey, a junior journalism/mass communication major at Samford University. Rachel Zhang received the \$500 graduate scholarship.

# We've a Story to Tell

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Laura Giminez received the \$1,000 Compton/Stanley Minority and International Scholarship.

## **WORKSHOP**

More than 70 BCA members attended the annual workshop and awards ceremony in Columbia, South Carolina. Some annual workshop features:

- Four professional development tracks of study were offered, including market strategy, websites, crisis media relations and media buying. A fifth track offered field trips to three Columbia-area businesses.
- An early-bird writers forum took place on Wednesday afternoon, prior to the workshop kickoff with Comedian Dennis Swanberg at 6:00 p.m.
- Historic First Baptist Church of Columbia was the site for one of the sessions which included a presentation by the pastor, Dr. Wendell Estep.

Six affinity group meetings were held on the final day of the workshop: editorial, electronic media, graphic design, management, photography, and public relations.

Under the leadership of BCA's first missions vice president, Teresa Dickens, BCA members were invited to participate in a ministry collection project during the workshop. Items were to benefit the Columbia-Metro Baptist Association Multi-Housing Ministry and Christian Women's Job Corps of the Midlands. A total of \$300 and various items such as diapers and GED books were collected for the missions endeavors.

## **AWARDS**

A record 535 award entries from 146 members were submitted for the Wilmer C. Fields Awards Competition. Winners were recognized at closing awards banquet during the annual workshop. Grand prize recipients were:

Arthur S. Davenport Award (Public Relations)  
Kentucky Baptist Convention Communications Department.

M.E. Dodd Award (Electronic Media)  
Scott Collins and Russell Dilday, Buckner Baptist Benevolences in Texas.

Frank Burkhalter (News Writing)  
Mark Wingfield, Texas *Baptist Standard*.

Leonard Holloway Award (Feature Writing)  
Sherri Brown of Atlanta.

Fon H. Scofield Award (Publication Photography)  
Denise McGill, International Mission Board.

M.E. Award (Emerging Technology)  
Paul E. Huse, Missouri Baptist College.

## 2001–2002

Diane Reasoner, president

### MEETINGS

Board Meetings: September 14, 2001, Georgia Baptist Convention Center, Atlanta, Georgia  
February 8, 2002, LifeWay Christian Resources, Nashville, Tennessee  
April 4–6, 2002, Hyatt Regency Hotel, Louisville, Kentucky

Fellowship: June 10, 2002, Adam's Mark Hotel, St. Louis

Workshop: April 4–6, 2002, Louisville, Kentucky

### OFFICERS

President	Diane Reasoner, Georgia Baptist Convention
President-Elect	Tim Yarbrough, Missouri Baptist Convention
Program Vice President	Denise Withers, Kentucky Baptist Convention
Program Vice Presidents-Elect	Terry Barone, California Southern Baptist Convention Mark A. Wyatt, <i>The California Southern Baptist</i>
Membership Vice President	Scott Vaughan, South Carolina Baptist Convention
Missions Vice President	Teresa Dickens, Woman's Missionary Union, SBC
Award Chairman	Terri Lackey, LifeWay Christian Resources
Professional Development Coordinator	Jim Edminson, Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina
Treasurer	Ken Camp, Baptist General Convention of Texas
Newsletter Editor	Stacy Hamby, <i>Word and Way</i>
Historian	R. Chip Turner, FamilyNet/NAMB

### ACTIVITIES

- The April 4–6 workshop “Spring Training 2002—Batter Up!” had 130 in attendance. Participants chose from a variety of workshops covering news and editorial, graphic design, management, photography, public relations, and electronic media. The group toured the Louisville Slugger Museum, Churchill Downs, and Louisville Stoneware.
- Tim Yarbrough was asked to name and start a task force to study the need of regional chapters.

# We've a Story to Tell

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- Responsibility for the BCA web site was given to Teri Lackey, specialist for internal communications, LifeWay Christian Resources. Complete access to the awards categories, awards entry form, and an Adobe Acrobat file of the brochure were added to our web site for the first time.
- The scholarship committee received 23 applications for the undergraduate student recipient of \$1,000, a graduate student recipient of \$500, and a \$1,000 minority and international scholarship.
- Mark Snowden took the vacated office of mission vice president during the middle of this year. He completed the missions project for Jefferson City Baptist Mission. The money collected by BCA members was used for the Jefferson City Baptist Mission homeless outreach in Louisville, Kentucky.
- Chip Turner was requested to research the history of the BCA gavel. He gave an interesting “story” about the history of the gavel at our annual meeting. This year the tradition of passing the gravel to the incoming president was reinstated.

## OBSERVATIONS

The workshop was held in Louisville, Kentucky, at the Hyatt-Regency Hotel. Denise Withers and her team did an outstanding job with the program. We were privileged to have the opportunity to hear Harvey Thomas, international public relations consultant and former communications director for British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, and Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist Angelo Henderson, special projects reporter for the *Detroit News*.

It was truly an honor to serve as the BCA president. Baptist Communicators Association has been a blessing to me. The strength and knowledge I have received from its members in tough times in my ministry have been invaluable. Our networking is one of the strongest things about BCA. We are all working together for the cause of Christ, and our support for one another has been very impressive.

Some of the most powerful experiences I've had as a BCA member have begun simply by sitting down randomly with a member at a break during the annual meeting. These casual conversations, which might begin with “What's happening in your office?” can readily turn into a discussion of deeper matters.

My hope for the future of this organization is that it will become even stronger in its membership and networking. I was blessed to work with and become friends with so many fine professionals.

## 2002–2003

Tim Yarbrough, President

### MEETINGS

Board Meetings: August 20, 2002, North American Mission Board, Alpharetta, Georgia  
February 21, 2003, LifeWay Christian Resources, Nashville, Tennessee  
April 24, 2003, San Diego Marriott Mission Valley, San Diego

Workshop: April 24–26, 2003, San Diego Marriott Mission Valley, San Diego.

### OFFICERS

President	Tim Yarbrough, North American Mission Board
President Elect	Doug Rogers, Alabama Baptist Convention
Program Vice Presidents	Terry Barone, California Southern Baptist Convention Mark A. Wyatt, California Baptist University
Program Vice Presidents-Elect	Ruthie Critten, Hannibal-LaGrange College Paul Huse, Missouri Baptist University
Membership Vice President	Robert Reeves, Kentucky Baptist Convention
Missions Vice President	Mark Snowden, International Mission Board
Professional Development Coordinator	Ray Sanders, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma
Treasurer	Jerilynn Armstrong, SBC Annuity Board
Historian	R. Chip Turner, FamilyNet/NAMB
Newsletter Editor	Kristi Hodge, Florida Baptist Convention
Awards Chairman	Russell Dilday, Buckner Baptist Benevolences
Administrative Coordinator	Keith Beene

### ACTIVITIES

- Approved a change in bylaws, renaming newsletter editor to communications vice president. Re-defined responsibilities of the position to include the writing of web site and electronic promotion materials, in addition to a newsletter four times a year.
- Approved a change in bylaws, clarifying what constitutes “regular members” of the organization to include “.... the full completion of the membership application, confirmation by the BCA administrative coordinator that the applicant meets membership requirements, and upon the payment of dues.”

# We've a Story to Tell

- Named by Tim Yarbrough, a task force was asked “to investigate the feasibility of establishing regional chapters of BCA.” A report of the task force was scheduled to be presented at the 2004 BCA Annual Workshop in St. Louis, following a pilot of the idea. BCA Regional Strategy Task Force members were Eddy Oliver, Georgia, chair; Holly Smith, California; Erich Bridges, Virginia; Allen Spencer, Colorado; Jan Kelley, Arkansas; and Tim Yarbrough, Georgia, ex-officio.

## WORKSHOP

The San Diego workshop drew 75, including 65 members and 10 guests. A tour of Saddleback Community Church featuring Pastor and Author Rick Warren was a program highlight.

The workshop marked the first-ever on-site BCA-sponsored mission project, to be held across the border in Tijuana, Mexico. Seven BCA members and four family members brought food, clothing, and a message of hope in Christ to residents of Riverside Dump in Tijuana. Additionally, BCA collected \$500 in mission offering funds during the workshop which were used in the ongoing ministry through the Shalom Center.

## AWARDS

Grand prize winners in the Wilmer C. Fields Awards competition were recognized:

Arthur S. Davenport Award (Public Relations)

Denise Cook of FamilyNet/NAMB for “TruthQuest: California.”

M.E. Dodd Award (Audiovisual Communications)

R. Martin Coleman and Bernie Hargis of FamilyNet/NAMB for “Saints and Strangers.”

Frank Burkhalter Award (News Writing)

Sherri Brown of the Georgia Baptist Convention for “The Foster Parent Trap.”

Leonard Holloway Award (Feature Writing)

Chris Turner of the International Mission Board for “Gentle Perseverance.”

Fon H. Scofield Award (Publication Photography)

James Yates of the International Mission Board for “No Place for a Woman.”

Albert McClellan Award (Print Media and Design)

Baylor University's Office of Public Relations for “Baylor University Vision 2012.”

Award for Exceptional Achievement in Interactive Communications

Advertising-Promotion Department of LifeWay Christian Resources for “Fuge 2003.”

## OBSERVATIONS

The workshop in San Diego was an awesome event filled with many memorable highlights. At the time the workshop was held, Rick Warren's book, *The Purpose-Driven Life*, was No. 1 on the *New York Times* Best-seller list. He and his staff were so gracious to our group. They put together a wonderful presentation that kicked off the workshop on Friday, with Warren speaking on “How to Last in the Ministry.” At a Saturday afternoon field trip to Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, once again Warren and staff were warm and gracious hosts as workshop attendees were treated to dinner with the staff, and a facilities tour. The group then witnessed Saddleback's ministry up close and personal by attending a Saturday afternoon worship service on the campus.

## 2002–2003

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It was such an honor to serve as president during 2002–2003. The organization is made up of many wonderful people who love the Lord and who want to see our nation and world won for Jesus Christ. As president, I was privileged to work with many of these fine Christians during the year. I will cherish my memories as president throughout eternity!

# ***We've a Story to Tell***

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## **2003—2004**

Doug Rogers, president

### **MEETINGS**

Board Meetings:           September 26, 2003, LifeWay Christian Resources, Nashville, Tennessee  
February 23, 2004, LifeWay Christian Resources, Nashville, Tennessee

Workshop:                 April 15—17, 2003, San Diego Marriott Mission Valley, San Diego, California

### **OFFICERS**

President	Doug Rogers, Alabama State Board of Missions
President-Elect	Jan Kelley, Arkansas Baptist State Convention
Program Vice Presidents	Paul Huse, Missouri Baptist University, and Ruthie Critten, freelance writer
Program Vice President-Elect	Allen Spencer, Colorado General Baptist Convention
Membership Vice President	Randy Cowling, Kansas-Nebraska Convention of Southern Baptists
Missions Vice President	Joe Conway, North American Mission Board
Award Chairman	Cathy Humphrey, Georgia Baptist Developmental Disabilities Ministries
Professional Development Coordinator	Mark Snowden, International Mission Board
Communications Vice President	Sarah Horn, LifeWay Christian Resources
Treasurer	Jerilynn Armstrong, SBC Annuity Board
Historian	R. Chip Turner, FamilyNet/NAMB
Administrative Coordinator	Keith Beene

### **ACTIVITIES**

- Most of the year's activities centered around the celebration of BPRA/BCA's 50th anniversary. Fittingly, the annual workshop was scheduled for April 15—17, 2004, in St. Louis, Missouri, the same city where BPRA's first organizational meeting was held on June 3, 1954. Historian Chip Turner and an



anniversary committee were given the responsibility by president Doug Rogers to update BCA's history, building on James Cox's 1953–1987 history book, *We've a Story to Tell*. To minimize costs, it was decided that the history would be distributed on CD-ROM, rather than in book form — a sure sign of the times! A committed group of officers worked throughout the year in planning for the anniversary workshop. Past presidents and former members were invited to the celebration.

- An effort was made to reach out to new members, including communications professionals on church staffs and students — two mostly unreached groups. Also, the process of designing a brochure and new member's packet, something that had been needed for many years, was begun.
- Work also continued in the area of creating regional chapters. For the third year, an opportunity to participate in a missions project during the workshop was provided. Each year, participation in that event grows, as members take seriously the opportunity to use their communication skills and faith in Christ to impact local communities.
- BCA's web site, [www.baptistcommunicators.org](http://www.baptistcommunicators.org), continued to grow as more professional development resources and links were added.

### **OBSERVATIONS**

I considered it a true honor to serve as BCA's president during our 50th anniversary celebration. The occasion provided a focus for our work throughout the year, while also giving us a platform for dreaming about the future.

During the year, I had the privilege of hearing from several past presidents, who told me how much the organization has meant to them. I gained a much greater appreciation of our roots, as I considered the vision held by the 13 men and women who met 50 years ago to start BPR. The experiences of the year have provided vivid reminders to me of the foundation built by those who came before us, and our responsibility to be faithful in providing for those who will come after us. I was also reminded of the cooperation that exists within BCA.

From the officers, to those that serve on committees, to the members at large, the organization would not exist without the efforts of many committed people. I'm especially indebted to Administrative Assistant Keith Beene, without whom BCA would have difficulty functioning throughout the year. His consistent efforts behind the scenes are invaluable.

As we look ahead to BCA's next 50 years, it's hard to imagine what lies ahead. We have only to consider the changes that have taken place in the last 50 years (from teletype to fax to email!) to be reminded of the opportunities that lay before us. But I am convinced that God will continue to bless our efforts as we seek to use all of the tools of communication that He's given us to reach a lost world for Him.

Here's to another great 50 years!

## Appendix A

# Baptist Communicators Association Professional Standards

[During the 1995 annual business meeting of the Baptist Public Relations Association in Williamsburg, Virginia, members adopted a revised set of professional standards. The original professional standards had been adopted more than 40 years before and had not been significantly updated since that time. Shown below is the current version.]

- Each member of the Baptist Communicators Association shall first be a committed Christian, seeking to fulfill God's call through the ministry of Christian Communications.
- Each member shall place ministry and service above personal gain or recognition, striving to glorify Christ and extend the ministry of His Kingdom.
- Each member shall adhere to the highest standards of truth, accuracy and fairness in every area of communications regardless of personal or professional costs.
- Each member shall maintain personal and professional integrity as well as respect for free inquiry and the opinions of others.
- Each member shall seek to produce the highest quality work possible while maintaining appropriate stewardship of available time, resources, skills and personnel.
- Each member shall seek to strengthen his or her professional competence through ongoing professional development.
- Each member shall respect and affirm the rights and opportunities of others without regard to race, color, gender or age.
- Each member shall seek to affirm and advance the professional responsibilities and opportunities of fellow members through a spirit of partnership and cooperation.

## Appendix B

# BPRA Photo Memories



The dashing young man in the tux is none other than Floyd A. Craig who dressed up for BPRA's 25th anniversary workshop in 1979 at Fort Worth. Said Craig, in a prophetic discourse on the subject, "You've Come a Long Way, Baby! We've learned that no one's life liberty or position is safe when the convention or our boards are in session." In this day and age, you may say that again, brother!  
(Photo and caption from *We've a Story to Tell*, 1986)



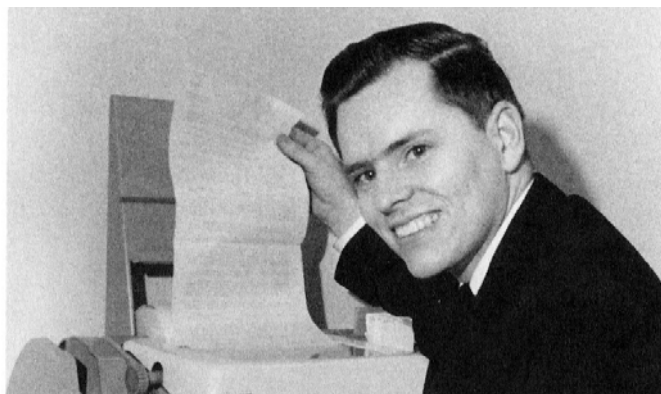
This somber spectacle, most unusual for a press room crowd during a Southern Baptist Convention, is loaded with BPRAs and spouses of BPRAs. We're not sure which year this assemblage gathered; a similar group shot of the volunteer staff providing coverage to the working media is recorded at every convention. The SBC press room is dominated every year by personnel with BPRA affiliation.  
(Photo and caption from *We've a Story to Tell*, 1986)



Perhaps this is a plaque presentation to Robert O'Brien from 1971–1972 awards chairman W.C. Fields, who would later be O'Brien's mentor at Baptist Press. Or, maybe it's a later photo (when they worked together) in which they may have shared in the honors, congratulating each other. No matter, BPRA has long been big on signifying excellence with certificates, plaques and a few checks along the way. (Photo and caption from *We've a Story to Tell*, 1986)

Our First Lady, Catherine B. Allen "broke the ice" in the women's movement among BPRAs, becoming the first of her kind to be elected to the high office of president (1971–1972). The picture suggests she may have broken her foot, too! Cowboy boots have been presented to esteemed honorees several times, and this may have been the shot when she "retired" at San Antonio. Or is it *cowgirl* boots?

(Photo and caption from *We've a Story to Tell*, 1986)



Southern Baptists' six-month trial teletype network service turned into an experiment which lasted more than five-and-a-half years (March 1, 1960–October 31, 1965). It eventually linked about 30 Baptist offices with simultaneous daily news service. James R. Newton, assistant director of Baptist Press, was an "operator" at home base. Many early BPRAs participated in the test every day.

(Photo and caption from *We've a Story to Tell*, 1986)





Any resemblance between these people and the cat that swallowed the canary is purely unintentional. They're beaming shortly after election as BPR officers for the ensuing year at Clarksville, Indiana in 1977. This photo is typical of a new officers' group shot taken each year. (l-r): James H. Cox, Rick Styles, Patsey P. Winfrey, Donald S. Hepburn, Leonard E. Hill, Stanton H. Nash.

(Photo and caption from *We've a Story to Tell*, 1986)



BPR members enjoy fun and fellowship after the 1993 Wilmer C. Fields Awards Competition banquet. The event setting was a dinner cruise in New York Harbor. Front row and left to right: Robert Duck and Joy Bowman. Back row, left to right: David Porter, David Winfrey and Cameron Crabtree.

(Photo and caption from BPR archives)

Newly-elected 1993–1994 BPR officers stand on New York City waterfront during the 1993 annual workshop. (left to right) Michael Duduit, awards chairman; Charles Willis, membership vice president; Eddy Oliver, treasurer; Terry Barone, president; Carol Woodfin, historian; Barbara Denman, newsletter editor. Not pictured is: William Nunnolley, program vice president. (Photo and caption from BPR archives)



**Published by BAPTIST COMMUNICATORS ASSOCIATION ©2004**  
**A national organization of Southern Baptist professional communicators**

**[www.baptistcommunicators.org](http://www.baptistcommunicators.org)**

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