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# The Network

A Monthly Publication from the Greater Kansas City Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America



**PRISM Awards Gala**  
Friday, Oct. 10  
@ The College Basketball Experience  
1401 Grand Blvd.

**5:30 p.m.**  
Private Sponsor/  
All-Star Reception

**6 p.m.**  
Interactive Exhibits/Cocktails  
(Open to all attendees)

**7 p.m.**  
Hors D'Oeuvres/  
Official Program

**November Luncheon**  
Bill Smullen  
Syracuse University



**Date:** Nov. 7

**Topic:** "Addressing the Delegation: Using Communications to Reach and Influence Stakeholders"

**Time:**  
11:45 a.m.- 1 p.m.

**Location:**  
K.C. Public Library  
(Central Branch)  
14 W 10th Street

## President's Message....



Our biggest event - and biggest fundraiser - of the year, the PRISM Awards Gala, is only a week away. You won't want to miss this fun-filled event at the College Basketball Experience featuring nationally known media relations expert, Margo Mateas, as well as recognition of our PR Pro of the Year and Service Award winners, and the Kansas City area's best 2007/2008 PR campaigns and tactics. If you haven't yet registered to attend, you still have a little time. Please contact one of the PRISM co-chairs, Erin Curtin or Gina Leo, today.

Thanks again to Erin, Gina and their committee for all the work they've done to make this year's PRISM event both memorable and successful!

As I mentioned last month, Debra Peterson, Barb Pruitt and I will be attending the 2008 PRSA Assembly Oct. 25 in Detroit. This year's Assembly will focus on the future of the public relations profession, so please let me know if there are any issues you'd like us to bring up at the national level.

Also, mark your calendars for two special events in November. First, we will be hosting Bill Smullen, director of Syracuse University's Maxwell School's National Security Studies program and former chief of staff to Secretary of State Colin Powell, for the launch of our "Cocktails and Conversation" speaker series for Senior Pros on Thursday, Nov. 6. Contact Matt Tidwell for more details.

College students from around the region will join us the following day, Nov. 7, for our annual PRSSA Day. They'll have great opportunities to discover what work life is all about and learn how to "Be the Winning Candidate" as they search for their first internship or job. Visit our Web site for more information.

We hope to see you at one - or all - of these upcoming events!

**Renee Robinson, APR**  
PR Account Supervisor

Nicholson Kovac, Inc.

Note: This is the luncheon portion of PRSSA Day.

**Register Today!**

Seating is limited!

## Member Profile

Kristi Widmar  
Weight Watchers Public Relations



*Kristi Widmar is the public relations manager for Weight Watchers in the Midwest Region. Her responsibilities include strategy development, writing, media relations and project management. She also media trains and manages a team of Weight Watchers spokespeople throughout the Midwest who participate in everything from TV segments to speaking engagements.*



*Before joining Weight Watchers, Kristi worked in television news for 12 years. She spent the majority of her time in broadcasting at Fox 4 in Kansas City where she was an anchor and reporter.*

**Education:**

University of Missouri-Kansas City; bachelor's degree in mass communication

**What was your first PR job?**

This is actually my first PR job. Ironically, Weight Watchers had a monthly TV segment at Fox 4 when I was there and we really enjoyed working with them. I had never applied for a job outside of TV, but when I heard there was an available PR position with the company, I thought this was the perfect opportunity for a new challenge.

**What do you like most about your job?**

What's most gratifying about my job is sharing such positive, life-changing stories of our members with the media. The self esteem gained through weight loss opens so many doors from new relationships to different careers.

**What is your advice to recent graduates who are entering the PR profession?**

I would encourage graduates to try a variety of environments from agency work to corporate communications to get a greater perspective of the PR world. I would also recommend reaching outside out of their comfort zone to present new ideas and strategies.

**Hobbies:**

I'm a bit of a HGTV addict, so I love home improvement and decorating projects. I also enjoy biking.

### PRSSA Day 2008

Friday, Nov. 7  
Kansas City Public Library  
(Central Branch)  
14 W 10th Street



**Register Today!**

**CANDIDATE**  
**Friday, November 7**

*(Agenda)*

**9:30 - 10 a.m.**  
Registration

**10:00 - 11:15 a.m.**  
Campaign kick-off  
Campaign Strategy: Nine Tips for Getting a Job in 2009

**11:15 - 11:45 a.m.**  
Break



**11:45 a.m. - 1 p.m.**  
"Addressing the Delegation: Using Communications to Reach and Influence Stakeholders"  
**Professor Bill Smullen**, Syracuse University,  
Maxwell School National Security Studies Program

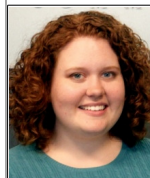
**1:30 - 2:30 p.m.**  
A Lunch Program with the Greater Kansas City PRSA chapter  
Swing State: A Day in the Life Panel

**2:30 - 2:45 p.m.**  
Closing Remarks

**2:45 - 3:30 p.m.**  
Perfect Your Platform: Résumé Review  
(must sign-up for this at registration)

**2:45 - 3:30 p.m.**  
Crossing Party Lines: Volunteer Activity

For more information about PRSSA Day, contact Lauren Erickson.



**Lauren Erickson**  
PRSSA Day co-chair  
(913) 660-9658  
lerickson@morningstarcomm.com

## **2009 Internship Directory**

Submission Deadline - Oct. 24

We are currently accepting submissions for the annual PRSSA Internship Directory. If you have internship positions available that you would like posted in the Directory, click **here** to download the form. If you have additional questions related to the Directory, contact Kristen Grinstead.



## **Considering the APR Process?**

The Accredited in Public Relations (APR) process is a great way to both increase your

knowledge about our profession as well as enhance your professional reputation. For more information on the APR process, contact Esther Grenz, APR, or (913) 660-9625.

### What They're Saying About Attaining an APR Designation....



"Obtaining national accreditation is an important validation of all I've learned and accomplished so far in my career. As public relations professionals, we are fortunate to have the opportunity to pursue this distinction."

**Ashlie Hand, APR**  
Director of Communications  
Kansas City Area Development Council



"The accreditation study process is valuable and important, and the designation of APR demonstrates a commitment to professional excellence and ethics. I would tell any public relations professional with at least five years of experience to go for it!"

**Janet Smith, APR**  
President, The Power of Goodwill LLC



"We're committed as a chapter to making the APR process as manageable as possible for candidates. I know many people have found that the APR designation helped them grow in their careers."

**Matt Tidwell, APR**  
Director, Public Affairs  
Kansas City Power & Light

## Solo Practitioner Profile

Michelle Manuel  
Manuel Communications, Inc.



*Michelle has served as president of Manuel Communications since March 2000, when she left her role as senior account executive with Barkley Public Relations. She has led successful campaigns for clients of all sizes and industries, from Fortune 500 companies to freelance consultants. In addition, Michelle has lent her expertise to various Kansas City not-for-profit organizations, such as the Midwest Ear Institute, Camp Fire Boys & Girls, Heartland Center and Smiles Change Lives.*

*A graduate of Rockhurst University and a member of the Greater Kansas City PRSA chapter, Michelle has received several communications awards, including numerous PRISMs and Silver awards, and the 1998 "Best of Show" award from GKC PRSA. Michelle also has received Bronze Quill awards from the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC).*

### Why did you decide to start your own PR practice?

I founded my company eight years ago at a time when I was starting a family and looking for good work-life balance. I thoroughly enjoyed the PR profession and was not ready to leave it. So when I was presented with an opportunity to take on the business of a small client, I used that as the cornerstone for going out and building an independent practice.

**What is your advice to others who are thinking about starting their own solo PR practice?**

The solo practitioner isn't bound by the rules of an office, so he/she must be self-motivated, organized and disciplined enough to be able to work effectively alone. Because the independent practitioner wears all hats - from president and new business director to account manager, writer, event planner, accountant and administrative assistant - it is important to be flexible and willing to handle all the roles. For me, that often means educating myself about areas with which I am not familiar, such as accounting. It also means attending networking luncheons and award shows as ways to obtain exposure, ultimately helping the phone to ring.

**What are the positives and negatives of starting your own practice?**

The terrific thing about being a solo practitioner is having the flexibility to determine your schedule and workload. Self-motivation is vital. You are in charge of the business, so if you work hard and are determined to succeed, you will. Likewise, if you choose to goof off, the buck stops here. I enjoy working on a variety of projects and gaining exposure to a variety of companies and organizations. One thing I lack is the support and team effort of a corporate/agency PR group, but I make up for that by sharpening my tools through PRSA educational events, networking with other solo practitioners, reading PR news and blogs, collaborating with peers and maintaining friendships with others in the industry.

**How important are blogs within your solo practice?**

Networking and keeping up with the industry are key issues for the solo practitioner, and blogs are great tools to help with that. Reading and contributing allows me to ask questions and learn as well as share experiences. Where an office provides an innate environment for people to interact, blogs help the solo practitioner do the same.

**PR Professionals Needed to Review Student Portfolios**

Students in their senior year at Northwest Missouri State University are required to prepare professional portfolios. We need at least 10 volunteers who can spend a half hour in an interview with one of the students. Students will show their portfolios and résumés and receive feedback. In addition, they will ask about the PR profession and the organization you work for. They will invite your feedback and suggestions and meet with you at your workplace.

If you are able to interview at least one student, contact John Fisher.



**John Fisher**  
Northwest Missouri State University  
(660) 562-1827  
jfisher@nwmissouri.edu

**Senior Pros**  
"Cocktails and Conversation"



**Thursday, Nov. 6**  
Bill Smullen  
Syracuse University

The Greater Kansas City PRSA chapter will host Bill Smullen, director of Syracuse University's Maxwell School's National Security Studies program and former chief of staff to Secretary of State Colin Powell, for the launch of its new speaker series for Senior Pros.

Contact Matt Tidwell at (816) 556-2069  
or [matthew.tidwell@kcpl.com](mailto:matthew.tidwell@kcpl.com) for more information.

## Welcome New Members!



**Paula Dunn** serves as director of communications and marketing for **The Harmon Diabetes Center** and the Greater Kansas City chapter of the **ThinkFirst Injury Prevention Program**. Previously, she served as marketing coordinator for Hunkeler Eye Institute and worked at Sprint for 10 years. She can be reached at (816) 276-4811 or [paula@trfk.org](mailto:paula@trfk.org).



**Michelle Key** serves as a public relations specialist at **Avila University**. Her responsibilities include writing, media relations, employee and alumni communication and event coordination. Previously, she served as unit public affairs representative for the Missouri Army National Guard. She can be reached at (816) 501-2434 or [michelle.key@avila.edu](mailto:michelle.key@avila.edu).



**Bob McEwen** serves as vice president and director of public relations at **Nicholson Kovac, Inc.** He is one of the public relations profession's most accomplished practitioners, having held senior management positions at Burson-Marsteller, Fleishman-Hillard, Hill & Knowlton and Shandwick. He can be reached at (816) 460-3490 or [bmcewen@nicholsonkovac.com](mailto:bmcewen@nicholsonkovac.com).



## Join our LinkedIn Group!

What is LinkedIn?

LinkedIn is an online network of more than 25 million experienced professionals from around the world, representing 150 industries. When you join, you create a profile that summarizes your professional accomplishments. Your profile helps you find and be found by former colleagues, clients, and partners. You can add more connections by inviting trusted contacts to join LinkedIn and connect to you. Your network consists of your connections, your connections' connections, and the people they know, linking you to thousands of qualified professionals. LinkedIn Groups can help you stay informed and keep in touch with people that share your interests.

[Click here to join the Greater Kansas City PRSA LinkedIn Group](#)

## Job Openings

Looking for a job? Have a job to post?



This email was sent to: [prsa@winglightproductions.com](mailto:prsa@winglightproductions.com)

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