

Presenting Robert K Berry, APR, Fellow PRSA

What is your public relations philosophy?

Existential Commercialism – We are foremost in business to be financially secure. But, we can achieve that end most effectively by focusing our minds on high standards of personal and professional ethics and then applying those principles to work for our companies and clients. The freedom to choose that path exists in all of us. We need but to act on it even though the world in which we work may seem irrational, indifferent and often absurd.



What is your current position?

Senior Counselor.

Did you always want to do this?

No, I started out at Penn-State to be a Veterinarian. After taking Inorganic Chemistry and Physics over so many times they were going to give me an assistantship, the university wrote me a very nice letter suggesting I change my major or leave. I changed to Journalism and was on both ends of the Deans list in two successive semesters.

How did you get started?

After my Army hitch was up I got a job as a staff writer for the IBM Magazine. Three years later I became Director of PR for Dictaphone.

What are your greatest personal and professional achievements?

Well, I've had a lot of fun with just living, so it's difficult to determine what an "achievement" is and what is just a natural result of being interested in things. Having my poetry published in the New York Times was pretty neat and earning my instrument rating for my pilot's license was not the easiest thing I've ever done. Being elected President of the New Jersey Drama Critics Association and winning juried photography shows in New York and Pennsylvania validated talents other than writing. Professional and personal achievements are linked to serving my country and building a PR firm successful enough for someone to want to buy. Being the first PR person in NJ to be elected to the College of Fellows, being recognized as the PR Person of the Year, and being nominated for PRSA's Golden Anvil would rate pretty high.

How do you spend your free time outside of work?

I teach motorcycle skills courses at Davis-Monthan Air Base for Pima College. Althea and I travel on the bike a lot. And then there is hiking, golf, learning to play the piano, shooting and lots of reading. There doesn't seem to be any lack of things to do.

Where do you see yourself 10 years from now?

Doing pretty much the same thing. Maybe working with younger professionals in a teaching or mentoring program.

Where have you traveled or lived outside of Tucson?

I've lived in Louisiana, South Carolina, Pennsylvania, New York (state and city), Virginia, California, Connecticut and New Jersey. I've traveled in all of the USA, and parts of Europe, Central and South America, Canada, Caribbean Islands, China, the Philippines and Vietnam.

How do you keep up with professional trends and development?

Not well. Change is so rapid and information so prolific that I find it hard to keep up. I took a speed reading course at the American Management Association a while ago. That helps. Mostly I ask questions of the younger professionals. They are the future, so I like to know what they are thinking.

What have you gained from being in PRSA?

There is no question that membership has made me a much better professional. Responsibilities at the Chapter, District and National level have been great lessons in leadership and the friends gained, and professional relationships forged over the years are a tremendous resource, both professionally and personally.

Any secrets you want to share with your fellow PRSA members?

If you are not having fun, you're in the wrong business.

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