



To: Chester Burger, APR, Fellow PRSA
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Subj: PRSA Historical Archive Project

INTRODUCTION

In 1948, the Public Relations Society of America, as we know it today, was formed when it was granted a corporate charter by the state of New York. Today, 56 years later, we are without a comprehensive document that celebrates the insight of those public relations pioneers, significant milestones reached by PRSA and the leaders that have paved the way for our standing as the largest organization for public relations professionals in the world.

It is my desire to change that!

BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

2004 PRSA President Del Galloway asked if I would spearhead an effort to obtain video taped recordings of PRSA's past presidents. When I began conducting a feasibility study for this assignment, I learned that many recordings had already been done, but few focused on their term as president. Also, I learned that no comprehensive history for the Society had been successfully completed.

In preparation for the organization's upcoming 60th anniversary, during PRSA's 2004 International Conference we launched the PRSA Historical Archive Project with the development of a 5 minute and 40 second video of the PRSA's history and taping of 17 of PRSA's past presidents. This effort was paid for by my employer, Home Box Office.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this task force are:

- to bring focus to this gargantuan-sized project,
- create a budget and possible funding sources,
- recommend passionate individuals to form a three-year committee, who will execute on the mission presented by the task force.
- Present the focus, budget and committee recommendations to the national board at its July meeting.

WHAT I KNOW...

I have learned that the history of PRSA and Public Relations can be found in many places:

- PRSA Headquarters, New York
- PRSA Storage Facility, New Jersey
- Founded in 1997, the Museum of Public Relations is located 65 Broadway, Suite 820, New York 10006 voice: 212.943.5858 / fax: 212.943.3211; www.prmuseum.com
- Institute for Public Relations, Gainesville, Florida has a collection of oral histories we can request.
- Tom Harris, formerly of Golin/Harris, interviewed approximately 10-12 PR pioneers in the late 1980s, early 1990s, including Harold Finn and George Hammond.
- Chester Burger's papers can be found at the University of Texas, Austin. More than 7,000 of his photographs are in the permanent collection of the New York Historical Society.
- According to Don Bates, deceased PRSA past president George Hammond, who died last year, had several file cabinets in his home basement filled with PRSA documents.
- The Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern (Chicago), has papers and other documents on Ted Sills, noted for starting Food PR.
- State Historical Society of Wisconsin (home of Scott Cutlip's papers)