

The Relay

A publication for PR students

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A tribute to Dr. Thornburgh

By Ellie Sternaman

After a lifetime of devotion to the journalism and public relations professions, Daniel E. Thornburgh died Thursday, Jan. 13, but those who knew him say his legacy will not be forgotten. He was 80 years old.

Thornburgh graduated in 1952 from Indiana State University with a language arts degree.

His passion for journalism was evident in his undergraduate career. He was an editor of the student newspaper, a writer for the Terre Haute Star newspaper and a part-time reporter and news writer for WTHI Radio.

After serving in the Army for two years, Thornburgh started work on his Master's degree in journalism at the University of Iowa.

He graduated in 1957 and began working as a publicity director for Simpson College in Indianola, Iowa.

In the years immediately following, Thornburgh served as the director of information at Marshall University in Huntington, W.Va. He also worked in Huntington as a reporter for the Harold Dispatch.

Thornburgh came to Eastern Illinois University in 1959 as director of information in what would be a 34-year-long career



Daniel E. Thornburgh and journalism graduate Jessica Youngs caught up at the Journalism Banquet that honored Dr. Thornburgh, founder of EIU's journalism department and PRSSA, died Thursday, Jan. 13.

Photo by Terri Johnson

and a lifelong commitment to the community.

From 1965 to 1979, Thornburgh served as director of journalism studies housed in the English Department.

During this time, he began building the journalism studies program, first creating a journalism major in 1974, then establishing a journalism department in 1978.

From 1979 to 1984, he served as chairman of the department, obtaining national accreditation of the program in 1982. During this time, Thorn-

burgh also received his doctoral degree in higher education from Indiana University.

In his time at Eastern Illinois University, Thornburgh founded multiple organizations including the Society of Collegiate Journalists and the Public Relations Student Society of America, which bears his name.

Thornburgh also led the expansion of the student-operated Eastern News into a daily newspaper.

Terri Johnson, faculty advis-

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PRSSA adopts a family for the holidays

By Tara Rosenbaum

The Daniel E. Thornburgh Chapter of PRSSA provided a Charleston family in need with a Christmas this holiday season.

Aeshia Gabriel, PRSSA service chair, said PRSSA adopted a family with help from the local Department of Children and Family Services office.

“We decided to provide presents for a local family because it was something that PRSSA had never done,” Gabriel said.

In order to raise money for the family, PRSSA sold hot chocolate and held a coin wars competition. Members sold hot chocolate to students outside in between Coleman and Lumpkin Halls.

The coin wars competition consisted of four communication studies professors who competed with each other for the opportunity to dress as either Santa Claus or Mrs. Claus.

Points were determined by

the coin that was put in the professor’s box.

“The coins all equaled different amounts of points,” Gabriel said. “A penny was one point, a nickel was negative five points, a dime was negative 10 points, a quarter was negative 25 points, a dollar was 100 points, a five dollar bill was 500 points and a twenty dollar bill was 2,000 points.”

Professor A.J. Walsh had the most points and won the coin wars. Walsh dressed up as Mrs. Claus for a day.

The chapter raised approximately \$170 between the hot chocolate and coin wars fundraisers.

With the total money raised, Gabriel and other PRSSA members went shopping for the family at Wal-Mart.

“We were able to buy the family food and clothes,” Gabriel said. “We also got some fun gifts like nail polish and shoes for the children.”

In addition to the gifts pur-



PRSSA members Crystal Alston and Jessica Leggin take their turn selling hot chocolate to raise money for a Charleston family in need.

Photo courtesy of Tara Rosenbaum

chased at Wal-Mart, PRSSA received a donation of toys from The First Baptist Church in Charleston.

“Adopting a family was a

great way to reach out to a local family in need during the holidays,” Gabriel said. “I know our efforts made a difference.”

PRSSA member plans Pantherpalooza

By Ellie Sternaman

University Board hosted the 2011 Spring Pantherpalooza RSO Fair as an opportunity to showcase more than 80 Registered Student Organizations to new and returning EIU students.

Senior journalism major and PRSSA member, Jessica Leggin, was the primary coordinator of the event.

“My responsibility as public relations coordinator was to make sure registered student organizations on campus knew about Pantherpalooza,” Leggin said. “Last semester, many organizations were not informed in a sufficient amount of time,

or were not informed at all.”

Leggin said she brought the event to PRSSA’s attention and asked if they would be interested in helping promote it.

PRSSA came up with the theme, “Are you panther approved?”

Joining an RSO on campus gets students involved and helps them embrace school spirit, which makes them become panther approved, said Tara Rosenbaum, PRSSA president.

PRSSA helped promote the event by sending out save-the-date e-mails.

“I thank PRSSA, because they got the ball rolling and stood behind me,” Leggin said.



Photo courtesy of UB

EIU grad Matt Kelly shares career advice

By Cara Fumagalli

Using technology to its full advantage, the Daniel E. Thornburgh chapter of PRSSA used a unique way to talk to a public relations professional without his traveling to Charleston.

PRSSA held its first Skype session with EIU graduate, and former PRSSA President, Matt Kelly on Feb. 6. Kelly works as a public affairs specialist for State Farm Insurance in Bloomington, Ill. He is responsible for social media, media measurement and public relations campaign efforts.

As a recent graduate, Kelly’s presentation tackled a pressing concern for students: how to get a job after college. In the words of Kelly, one way to get a job after college is to have a dad on the executive board at a large company.

Kelly used Edelman’s Digital Infrastructure to show the importance of creating your own brand.

“Establishing a brand is possible by establishing three components, brand grounds, common grounds and user grounds,” Kelly said. “Brand grounds refer to building an on-line reputation and publishing information for public view. Common grounds describe the



Matt Kelly, EIU graduate and former PRSSA president, gives PRSSA members tips on how to get a job during a Skype session.

Photo courtesy of Cara Fumagalli

interaction between the public and the brand. User grounds, explain brand perception and what others think about the brand information. These three components combined represent a personal brand that will help place students in front of employers’ eyes.”

Another important tip Kelly mentioned was the importance of hand written thank you notes. Kelly said a written thank you sets you a part from

competition and will help perspective employers remember who you are.

He also stressed the significance of internships, paid or unpaid. Gaining experience in the field is a way to meet professionals and show commitment, said Kelly.

Instead of searching for a job after graduation, Kelly decided to continue his education. He received his master’s degree in public relations from Ball State

University in 2010. Kelly said it is beneficial to go to graduate school because it puts you ahead of the pack at a higher salary and exposes you to more knowledge in your field.

Kelly had some very interesting and useful tips on how to get a job,” said Ben Percy, a senior communication studies major. “The Skype session gave me a better idea of what is expected of me in the public relations industry.”

Johnson and Kim paper accepted at IPRRC

By Tara Rosenbaum

Eastern Illinois University journalism professors Terri Johnson and Eunseong Kim had their third paper, “Making the grade: What constitutes a successful PR education,” accepted at the International Public Relations Research Conference March 9-12 in Miami, Fla.

This is the third paper they

have had accepted.

“We are both concerned with education and how well we are preparing students,” Johnson said. “As professors, I think that is a constant concern.”

Johnson and Kim will present their paper at the conference in a round table presentation.

“We have 15 minutes to present our paper and we do it four times during the session,”

said Johnson. “The other attendees move from table to table so a new group hears our paper every time. The sessions provide us with feedback on how to improve the paper.”

The IPRRC is one of the top places for new research to be presented, from both scholars and PR professionals.

“We learn so much and hear so many good ideas,” Johnson

said. “The process is just fascinating and very useful.”



Photo courtesy of IPR

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er to PRSSA and The Agency, said Thornburgh was a huge contributor to the PR education at EIU.

“Thornburgh experienced how important a PRSSA chapter was while he was a visiting professor at the University of Hawaii,” Johnson said. “When he returned to EIU in 1984 he started a PRSSA chapter.”

Before retiring in 1993, he served as director of university relations and a special assistant to the president.

Vicki Woodard, coordinator of public information, was a student of Thornburgh’s and worked with him in the department of university marketing and communications.

“Thornburgh proved to be a very effective leader,” Woodard said. “He took a great deal of personal interest in students.”

Woodard said she received

personal notes of encouragement from Thornburgh.

“It meant a lot that DT took the time to write a personal note,” Woodard said.

Woodard also recalls Thornburgh’s efforts in helping her receive a scholarship.

“I hold DT in the highest regard for getting me started,” Woodard said.

While working at Eastern, Thornburgh served as a visiting PR professor at the University of Hawaii for the ‘82–83 school year. After retiring from Eastern he taught PR at the University of Florida.

Thornburgh was the publisher of the Casey *Banner-Times*, a part-time night editor of the *Times-Courier* and a journalism consultant for *Neoga News*, Illinois Opinion Writers and the *Effingham Daily News*.

He also held the position

of public relations consultant for the American Dental Association, the Illinois Dental Association and the Illinois Press Association.

Thornburgh’s involvement in civic and professional organizations included the Council for Support and Advancement of Education, The Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Public Relations Society of America Central Illinois Chapter, Illinois Recreation Council, Charleston Rotary Club, Charleston City Council, Charleston Recreation Board, Free Masons, Elks, Charleston Area Chamber of Commerce, Coles County Historical Society, Five Mile House Foundation, Lincoln Sergeant House Foundation, Association for the Preservation of Historic Coles County Illinois, Society of Profes-

sional Journalists, The Eastern Illinois University Foundation and Wesley United Methodist Church.

Thornburgh was the recipient of several awards for his educational and community service.

In 1971, he was named Man of the Year by the Charleston Area Chamber of Commerce and received the Outstanding Adviser award by the Council of College Publications Advisers.

In 2003, Thornburgh also received the Merit Award from the Association for the Preservation of Historic Coles County Illinois and in 2004 was named to the Rotary District Hall of Fame.

Thornburgh’s legacy will live on through his many contributions to EIU and the Charleston community.

DePaul PRSSA hosts regional activity

By Anton Jefferson

Social media is drastically changing the face of the public relations industry as the Internet continues to evolve.

The shift from traditional to digital media requires PR practitioners to know and understand how to use social media tools to communicate.

DePaul University’s PRSSA

hosted a PRSSA regional activity, Transforming Traditional Into Digital: The New Ways of PR, Feb. 10–11 in Chicago.

The conference focused on the electronic media age, its advantages over traditional methods and how to use social media to interactively communicate.

Attendees learned the significance of using digital media to

deliver important and immediate messages.

The conference included informational seminars led by PR professionals, who discussed current trends.

There was also a young professionals panel on the transition between college and the professional world.

Students had the opportunity to take a glimpse of the Chicago

PR industry through agency visits and a career fair.



Photo courtesy of DePaul PRSSA

PRSSA implements recruitment activities

By Steven Martin

With 11 of the twelve 12 members graduating in May, the Daniel E. Thornburgh Chapter of PRSSA has implemented new activities to increase involvement and membership.

Chapter President Tara Rosenbaum was the driving force behind the creation of the new activities.

“I want to increase active involvement and advance our chapter as much as possible before I graduate,” said Rosenbaum. “Through upcoming campaigns, workshops and social events we can build a solid foundation for the new executive board.”

In January, PRSSA had a pizza and bowling social to increase membership.

“The social was a chance for potential members to find out more about our chapter,” said Rosenbaum. “We plan on having more of these events



PRSSA held a social event at the Union Bowling Lanes to recruit new members. Photo by Terri Johnson

throughout the semester.”

In addition to the social events, the board developed a point system in an attempt to get more members actively involved.

“Members will be evaluated by their attendance, campaign involvement and blog posts,” Rosenbaum said, “The point

system gives members the opportunity to receive both an active member certificate and a PRSSA cord to wear at graduation.”

Board members are also developing binders for the new board members with a description of their duties and examples of work.

“PRSSA has been in great hands and I am excited to see the creative ideas that the new executive board of fall 2011 will bring,” said Brian Sowa, communication studies professor and faculty adviser to PRSSA.

Real world experience benefits PR students

By Ben Pearcy

Journalism Prof. Terri Johnson’s PR writing class took application to the next level by organizing and implementing an entire campaign for the Camp Grant Museum in Rockford, Ill., last semester.

The museum is a site dedicated to preserving the memories of Camp Grant, which was operational during World Wars I and II.

Johnson said the museum’s owners are trying very hard to keep interest in the camp.

Students Abby Allgire, Beth Steele and Cara Fumagalli said they found the experience to be beneficial yet challenging.

“The most beneficial thing from this project was actually working with a client,” Steele said. “In other classes, work is based off hypothetical situations and this campaign was going to be used by a real business.”

Allgire said the campaign helped her hone her time management skills. “I learned how to stay on a deadline without someone constantly reminding me,” Allgire said.

Fumagalli said it was challenging to work with a client that wasn’t local.

“The distance made things a lot more difficult,” Fumagalli said. “We weren’t able to meet

the client or even see Camp Grant itself.”

Students created a media list, a backgrounder, a brochure, a menu and a sample press release for the client.

Johnson said the assignment was an opportunity for students to get real-world experience.

“Students who do work for clients are much more prepared for the real world,” Johnson said. “In addition to this, service learning helps the nonprofits that cannot afford to hire an agency or a PR counselor. In the end, both the client and the students benefit.”



Photo courtesy of Camp Grant

Johnson explains new role of PR through research paper

By Jessie Dwiggins

While students strive to provide the utmost work to instructors throughout their undergraduate years, the instructors themselves are working incredibly hard not only on influencing the lives of students, but also on their own research in their chosen professional field.

Recently, journalism professors Terri Johnson of Eastern Illinois University, Robert Pritchard of Oklahoma University, and Bey-Ling Sha of San Diego State University corresponded to write a paper on the new role of public relations titled, "Face Off: How Public Relations and Journalism have Exchanged Roles in Modern Democracy."

Johnson said PR and journalism are changing roles.

"With the changes in staffing and income, some newspapers are using news releases as they are received or with very little editing," Johnson said. "This puts a bigger responsibility on the public relations person to get it right and to write it well. What readers think is mediated communication may be news releases or public relations output."

Johnson, Pritchard, and Sha's paper began receiving recognition when the research was accepted at the International Public Relations Research Conference in March 2010.



Terri Johnson, EIU journalism professor, and faculty adviser to PRSSA and The Agency, worked with two other journalism professors to write a research paper on the new role of PR.

Photo courtesy of Terri Johnson

Then, the paper was among six that were chosen from the Miami conference to be included in the International PRSA conference in Washington, D.C. in October 2010.

Johnson and co-authors presented the paper four separate times at the PRSA Conference and were given the opportunity to present in front of other academic research professionals.

"We each gained supportive feedback from our peers that could be used for further research purposes," Johnson

said. "We plan on following up in some of the areas that were suggested to us and will eventually submitting the paper to a PR journal for publication.

Johnson said she enjoys collaborating with other professors.

"I am pleased to work with other professors in some of these areas because we can share ideas and create synergy so that our individual work, when joined together, becomes even more interesting and useful than it would be when we worked alone," she said.

General Information

This is the official publication for public relations students at Eastern Illinois University.

Printed in the Journalism Office of the Buzzard

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