



February 2016



## Message from the President

2016 has come in like a lion and the Southern Public Relations Federation (SPRF) is ready to help you achieve your professional goals for 2016. Whether it is improving your skills, growing your professional network, finding a new job, earning recognition for your work, or advancing your career by becoming Accredited in Public Relations, SPRF is here and ready to assist with a number of tools and initiatives just for you.

As a member of your local chapter in ECPRO, PRAL, PRAM or PRCA, you are automatically a member of this regional organization and have access to professionals and resources across four states. For more than 40 years, we've been partnering to advance our profession throughout the Gulf South, with professional development and networking opportunities.

I joined SPRF in 1996 as a member of the PRCA Mobile Chapter after graduating from The University of Alabama and relocating with my husband to the Mobile area. I knew my future career depended on developing connections locally and regionally, and that SPRF was the way for me to build a new network of colleagues. That decision has led to rewarding professional experiences and lasting friendships. I hope that you feel the same way.

I am honored to serve alongside the other members of the 2015 SPRF board (listed to the left). Together, we are focused on filling this year with in-person and online opportunities for your professional growth. We welcome your ideas and suggestions and invite you to take this quick survey to give us a few webinar-specific ideas.

Please mark your calendars for this year's SPRF conference, Sept. 18-21. We're returning to Destin, Florida, one of our most popular conference venues. President-elect and conference chair Leigh Perry Herndon, and her team are hard at work lining up great speakers to provide an amazing professional development experience for you. If you are interested in presenting at the conference or know someone who should, please download and complete the Call for Speakers form by Feb. 27 to be considered.

I would like to extend a special thanks and gratitude on behalf of all of SPRF to Kristie Aylett, APR, PRSA Fellow, for her leadership of the SPRF board in 2015. Among the many SPRF accomplishments over the past year, Kristie was instrumental in helping getting a new awards program system complete and implemented for the 2015 awards programs. She also helped make the conference a huge success by garnering numerous sponsorships for the professional development event.

Beyond our efforts throughout the Gulf South, SPRF partners with seven other public relations organizations on the Universal Accreditation Board. Caron Blanton, APR joins Adam Kelley, APR, as our representatives to this national body that oversees the APR credential. Caron succeeds joins Sherry Harlow, APR, from ECPRO, who has served on the UAB - thank you to Sherry for all of her work on behalf of SPRF. In addition, former SPRF representative to the

UAB (2007-2012), John Forde, APR, Fellow PRSA, chaired the eight-organization governing board as a representative from PRSA. 2015 was a banner year for SPRF with accreditation with 30 new professionals receiving their APR credentials across the four-state region, and bringing SPRF's total number of accredited members to 105 since 2003. If you want to join their ranks this year, contact VP Accreditation Kinnon Phillips, APR, or your local APR Chair

## UPDATE YOUR MEMBERSHIP PROFILE

As we begin 2016, please take a moment to update your profile in the SPRF membership directory.

Here are instructions for all members:

1. In the top right-hand corner of SPRF.org, click on "Login"
2. Your username is your email
3. To set your password, click on "Forgot Password?" and follow the instructions
4. When you first log-in,
5. Click on "Edit Profile" and update all fields with your current information and click Submit.

It is important for all members to log in and edit their profile with current information. This keeps all members' information up to date in the member directory.

\*If your username/email does not come up, please contact your chapter or state membership chair or email the SPRF VP Membership Kathy Newby. You will receive an email with your username and password once it is set-up. Once you log in, follow the above steps.

If you do not receive your verification code, first check your spam/junk folder. If it still does not come through, please email Kathy to have it be manually set-up.

## 2016 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### President

Jennifer Jenkins, APR, PRCA  
Mobile

### President-Elect/Conference Chair

Leigh Perry Herndon, PRCA  
Mobile

### VP Membership

Kathy Newby\*, ECPRO

### VP Professional Development

Ron Barnes, APR, PRAM MS  
Beach

### VP Accreditation

Kinnon Phillips, APR, PRCA  
Mobile

### VP Communication

Sarah Clancy, PRAL Central

### VP Student Services

Patti Wade, APR, PRAM Central

### Secretary

Gretchen Hirt, PRAL New Orleans

### Treasurer

Micah Walker, PRAL Central

### Past President

Kristie Aylett, APR, Fellow PRSA,  
PRAM MS Beach

### Members-At-Large

Josh Till\*, PRCA Birmingham  
Kathy Bowers, PRCA  
Birmingham  
Lorri Freeman, APR, PRAM Gulf  
Coast

for more information.

Thank you for your membership in SPRF. I look forward to serving as your president and to an amazing 2016.

Yours in service,  
Jennifer Jenkins, APR  
2016 SPRF President  
jennifer@jjpragency.com

## APR Process and Exam to Better Reflect Daily Practice Assessment

The APR process is consistently being reviewed for possible adaptations. This past year, an extensive effort was made reviewing exam questions, field testing new questions through a Beta exam, with analysis made by various Universal Accreditation Board (UAB) work groups.

Now is the time to take advantage of a more reflective and relevant exam. There are two steps to becoming an APR - a Readiness Review and a computer-based exam. The readiness review is an opportunity for candidates to present a comprehensive PR plan in a portfolio format to a panel of APRs. This is learning, mentoring experience and not a test of ability. It is a time to get feedback, receive encouragement and advice on preparation for the exam.

Beginning this process is simple. Reach out to your local accreditation board member in your local chapter. While many take the step of submitting an application and the \$385 fee, personally I chose to first speak with APRs in my chapter and begin to read and study. I joined a study group and we met for several months before I was comfortable with my learning and experience to initiate the process. Studying with peer and APRs is a must.

Achieving APR status is a career milestone to me. It provided further confidence to be a better practitioner, take more risk and represent the profession to the larger community. I am often asked what APR means appearing after my name and relish the opportunity to explain to others - it brings confidence to our profession.

The steps are small and the rewards great. Take the first one today.

Kinnon Phillips, APR  
SPRF VP Accreditation Chair

## PR News recognized NAPRCA'S Jessica Carlton as a Rising PR Star 30 & Under

Jessica is the Marketing Manager for the Huntsville/Madison County Convention & Visitors Bureau. She holds a Master of Arts in Communication from the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa.

Carlton has also received numerous industry awards including the 2015 "30 Under 30" Tourism Professional by the Destination Marketing Association International; the Alabama Rising Star Award by the Alabama Department of Tourism, and a National Grand Prize for the Arthur W. Page Society Case Study Competition.



Coast

Ken Hair, ECPRO

Erin Parsons Garrett, APR, PRAM

Central

Ginger Guttner\*, APR, PRAL

Baton Rouge

### Ex Officio Members

Kim Collins, APR, Association  
Assistant

Caron Blanton, APR, Universal  
Accreditation Board  
Representative

Adam Kelley, APR, Universal  
Accreditation Board  
Representative

\*State President

Jessica's work has been recognized with a PRCA Award of Excellence and an SPRF Award of Merit. She was honored at an award luncheon at the National Press Club in Washington D.C. on December 9th. Jessica's accomplishment is noteworthy; the publishers for PR News noted that this year had the highest number of entries in program history.

The entire list of honorees can be viewed here:

<http://www.prnewsonline.com/Rising-PR-Stars-Luncheon2015#rising>



## 2016 EVENTS

PRCA Conference  
April 20, 2016  
Auburn, Alabama  
[prcaonline](http://prcaonline)

PRAM Conference  
April 6-8, 2016  
Jackson, Mississippi  
[pramonline.org](http://pramonline.org)

SPRF Conference  
September 18-21, 2015  
Destin, Florida  
[sprf.org](http://sprf.org)

*Founded in 1972, Southern Public Relations Federation (SPRF) is a regional network of nearly 1,500 public relations professionals from Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana and north Florida who share a common interest in the public relations profession. SPRF exists to further the professional and networking interests of today's public relations and communication professionals in private, public and nonprofit businesses and organizations. Along with networking, SPRF serves to advocate on behalf of and assist its members through ongoing professional development and defining ethical behavior.*

*SPRF, along with eight other regional and national public relations organizations, is a participating member of the Universal Accreditation Board (UAB), the national body which administers the Accreditation in Public Relations (APR) mark. Members certified as APRs have successfully demonstrated competency in the knowledge, skills and abilities required to practice public relations effectively in today's business arena.*

SPRF wants your chapter news! No matter how big or small, please make it a habit to send your chapter news to SPRF for the monthly newsletter and posting region-wide. Make sure to check out the latest SPRF news on our website at [www.sprf.org](http://www.sprf.org).

Send us your job postings, new positions, chapter or member news at [sarah.clancy@hcahealthcare.com](mailto:sarah.clancy@hcahealthcare.com).

Sarah Clancy  
VP Communications  
Southern Public Relations Federation



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