
Public relations honors awarded to college and research libraries

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Ideas to stimulate your p.r. plans.

The Animal Welfare Information Center of the National Agricultural Library and the Friends of the LSU Library were two winners of special note to college and research librarians in this year's John Cotton Dana Library Public Relations Awards Contest.

The Animal Welfare Information Center of the National Agricultural Library/USDA won one of three 1991 John Cotton Dana Awards given for a year-long, comprehensive public relations program. This award is for a total, coordinated public relations effort including publicity, advertising, publications, exhibits, special events, promotions, and audiovisual presentations. The Animal Welfare Information Center's citation reads "for a multifaceted public relations program to increase awareness and use of the Animal Welfare Center through effective outreach activities."

The Friends of the LSU Library were winners of a Special Award that is given in recognition of a specific public relations program that supports a special project, goal, or activity. The Friends citation reads "for 'Paper Impressions: A Gala Auction of Fine Books, Art, and Miscellanea,' a successful public relations event, orchestrated by volunteers, that raised substantial funds, and increased interest in friends' activities."

A total of sixteen library public relations contest winners were honored at the 1991 American Library Association Annual Conference in Atlanta. This prestigious competition, open to all types of libraries, is co-sponsored by the H. W. Wilson

Company and ALA and is now in its 52nd year. Of the 103 total entries, 13 came from college/university or special library categories.

Animal Welfare Information Center

The Animal Welfare Information Center (AWIC) devoted fiscal year 1990 to a comprehensive public relations program. AWIC is a component of the Information Centers Branch of the National Agricultural Library, the United States Department of Agriculture. AWIC's mission fulfills a congressional mandate to provide information and information services to the regulated community under Public Law 99-198, the Animal Welfare Act. The regulated community includes biomedical researchers, educators, exhibitors,

and dealers who utilize animals as well as librarians, government personnel, administrators, students, and the public. In cooperation with the National Library of Medicine, AWIC's role is to provide information pertinent to employee train-



This simple logo was used on Animal Welfare Information Center publications.

ing, which could prevent unintended duplication and foster improved methodology to reduce or replace animal use, and minimize pain and distress with anesthetic and analgesic procedures.

AWIC's award-winning public relations program included a host of printed products, exhibits targeted to reach specific clientele at a variety of professional conferences, speeches and presentations given by staff, and cooperative and liaison activities with other government, non-profit, and private-sector organizations with common goals. Of special note was the promotional videotape, "The Animal Welfare Information Center: Resources Today for the Research of Tomorrow," which describes the services and products of AWIC and its value to researchers. More than 1,300 videocassette copies were distributed.

An important attribute of AWIC's John Cotton Dana entry was the well articulated goals and objectives section of the PR program. The three main goals were to increase the awareness and use of the AWIC, to initiate a comprehensive program of information dissemination, and to increase the center's visibility through the development of new information resources. Their success in meeting these goals was equally well documented. AWIC reference and publication requests increased by 187% and 253% respectively over the previous year.

The Center staff exhibited at ten professional conferences and distributed more than 10,000 information items to approximately 8,380 attendees. The AWIC newsletter circulation grew from 1,300 to 2,500 including subscribers in 11 foreign countries. In all, more than 29,000 center publications were distributed in 1990. Innovative public relations activities included the utilization of non-traditional formats, liaison and networking activities, and the AWIC's cooperative agreements/grants program.

Friends sponsor gala auction

The Friends of the Louisiana State University Library organized a year-long public relations program which culminated in the special event called "Paper Impressions: A Gala Auction of Fine Books, Art, and Miscellanea" on March 24, 1990. The Friends organization was founded in 1962 to spread interest in academic libraries to people in Louisiana and beyond and to obtain financial support and contributions of special collections for the University Libraries. The LSU Libraries on the Baton Rouge campus serve a student body of 26,000 and a faculty of 5,000. Since 1974 the Friends have raised more than one million dollars for the use of the LSU Libraries.

The Friends committee for the Fine Book Auction began to solicit donations from its membership

in early 1989. Requests for books, art, and objects unique to libraries generated a good response, producing a group of more than 50 items suitable for the auction. Solicitations for corporate support began in August 1989. The event was publicized in the local newspaper, on public radio, and on a local television station. Direct mailings concerning the auction were sent to members of the Friends, LSU departments, LSU Libraries personnel, book dealers in Louisiana and the surrounding states, art galleries, decorators, antique dealers, and research libraries. Flyers were distributed at several library and historical association meetings and advertisements were placed in the *Antiquarian Book Monthly Review* and in *AB Bookman's Weekly*. A special issue of the Friends of the LSU Library newsletter, *Lumieres*, was mailed to the membership and auction catalogs were sent to all those requesting a copy.

The Gala Auction took place in the LSU Hill Memorial Library. More than 200 people attended and were entertained with music and a champagne buffet before the auction. Paul S. L. Viney, director of the British firm of Phillips Fine Art Auctioneers and Valuers, auctioned 55 lots, and a separate silent

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auction also generated great enthusiasm and spirited bidding. The proceeds exceeded all expectations, with \$25,600 raised for the Goodrich-Taylor Endowment Fund, which supports a Graduate Assistant for Special Collections.

The other goals of the program were also met and surpassed and included increasing public awareness of the mission and role of the Friends and increasing corporate involvement in the Friends of the LSU Library. Of special note was the level and enthusiasm of volunteer participation for an activity not previously sponsored. Community awareness was enhanced by a mayoral proclamation making the week of March 24, 1990, "Friends of the Library Book Auction Week." The proclamation was presented during a City Council meeting, which was televised on local cable television. Publicity events were also planned involving the British auctioneer, and a special presentation named him an honorary mayor of Baton Rouge. News of the

auction's success was promptly relayed through newspaper articles and the Friends' newsletter.

The auction was made possible entirely by volunteer support and it was carried out by 13 committees appointed from the membership of the Friends of the LSU Library. The Friends incurred about \$2,000 in expenses for the event but no funds were expended by the LSU Libraries. Large in-kind and monetary donations from corporate sponsors were further evidence of the project's success.

Other good ideas

Other good public relations ideas from academic library John Cotton Dana entries reached the final round of judging but did not receive awards. These included: "Operation Tote'm" sponsored by the Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, which organized the community to relocate the book collection to a new facility without professional help; and the Bowling Green State University Library, which celebrated National Library Week with free computer searches, an "ALA Night of 1,000 Stars," and special displays including a "My Favorite Reference Book" exhibit.

The Colorado State University Libraries at Fort Collins sponsored a better reading campaign which

featured posters of faculty with favorite books in humorous settings. North Carolina State University entered an "Author of the Year Program" sponsored by the Friends of the NCSU Libraries, and the Preus Library of Luther College submitted its celebration of the introduction of the CARL online catalog.

The Friends of the Sterling C. Evans Library at Texas A & M University, in cooperation with the Bryan/College Station Public Library Friends, sponsored a promotional guest lecture by native journalist Linda Ellerbee. The University of Alabama Libraries merged its Science and Engineering Collection and capitalized on public relations activities related to the move and dedication ceremony. The University of Tennessee Libraries in Knoxville mounted an extensive Development Campaign, "The Tennessee Imperative," with outstanding success. These are but a few of the examples of public relations endeavors by college and research libraries.

Make plans now to share your public relations successes by entering the 1992 John Cotton Dana Library Public Relations Awards Contest. Entry packets and contest information are available from the Marketing Department, H. W. Wilson Co., 950 University Avenue, Bronx, NY 10452. ■ ■



Auctioneer Paul S. L. Viney, director of the European division of Philips, London, conducts the spirited bidding session at the Friends of the LSU Library fine books auction.