



Monday, June 23, 2003

UC&M work honored as 'Best of Show'

OU's Communications and Marketing Department earned Best of Show honors at Detroit's International Association of Business Communicators 2003 Renaissance Awards on June 17 for its work during **President Bush's visit to campus** in July 2002.

Assistant Director of Media Relations Ann Ruppenthal also earned an Award of Excellence for her feature writing, while **OU Magazine** earned an Award of Merit in the print communications category.

The Best of Show honor, however, recognized the entire department for its top quality, fast-paced work in preparation for the Official State Visit of President George W. Bush and Poland's President Aleksander Kwasniewski.

"As I reviewed all the entries, there was no entry that stood out until I came to Oakland University's work for the Bush visit," said an IABC judge. "Their team had almost no budget, just \$7,500, and only three days notice to prepare for a presidential visit. There was no question which team worked the hardest."

Geoff Upward, director of Communications and Marketing; Claudette Zolkowski, director of Web and Marketing Services, and Ruppenthal, assistant director of Media Relations, led OU's communications work on the event. It included everything from writing press releases and dealing with literally dozens of media calls to working with the Secret Service on event planning and security, developing signage and T-shirts and creating a working media room for the entire White House press corps.

"We worked with the White House to pull together a press office for the press secretary's staff and the White House Press Corps," Ruppenthal said. "We also had to coordinate setting up a transmission room for CNN, which had the live feed for all the television networks. The White House press advance team chose the main floor of the Recreation Center as the site for all national press activity.

"Our department helped organize volunteers to assist the press on the day of the event with credentialing and seating and such.... Everybody just pitched in to help. We really had a great staff. This kind of event consumes you from the moment it's brought in, and we couldn't have done it without the help of everyone on campus."

The team worked to find ways to showcase OU in conjunction with the visit.

"With the White House's approval," Upward said, "we were able to find appropriate opportunities to promote the university, although the university's charge and our core team's primary concern was doing the very best job we could as event hosts. We were very appreciative of the White House's willingness in this regard. We were able to prepare and distribute OU press kits, including a version in Polish. The White House invited President Russi and recent OU graduate Ania Matuszewska to greet the presidents and speak to the assembled crowd on behalf of OU. And they gave us the latitude to create a variety of welcome banners and signs inside the arena and around the campus, which Ania translated into Polish for us."

The IABC judges applauded OU's "amazing results in a short timeframe of three days...Excellent entry! You should be proud of what was obviously exceptional output by a good team — all driven by communication that was thoughtfully planned and flawlessly executed. It shows!"

Follow-up work included a special **presidential visit** Web site, an **OU Magazine cover story and photo collage** along with thank you photos for faculty and staff who worked overtime to help make the visit a success.

The IABC also recognized:

- Ruppenthal with an Award of Excellence for her *OU Magazine* feature story, "**A dream cut short.**" The story chronicled former Women's Basketball Coach Beckie Francis' decision to leave her dream job because of a debilitating illness. Judges called Ruppenthal's story "a highly engrossing profile...feature writing at its best."
- **OU Magazine**, led by Upward and Zolkowski with Mary Iorio as editor and Debra Lashbrook as art director, with an Award of Merit in the print communication category. Judges said: "Photography shows diversity. Sidebars and quick stories make interesting reading and encourage reading more of the magazine."

SUMMARY

OU's Communications and Marketing Department earned Best of Show honors at Detroit's International Association of Business Communicators 2003 Renaissance Awards on June 17 for its work during President Bush's whirlwind visit to campus in July 2002.

Created by CareTech Administrator (webservices@caretechsolutions.com) on Monday, June 23, 2003

Modified by CareTech Administrator (webservices@caretechsolutions.com) on Monday, June 23, 2003

Article Start Date: Thursday, October 9, 2003