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# O'Dwyer's Newsletter



The Inside News of  
PR and Marketing  
Communications

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## CHARLOTTESVILLE SEEKS IMAGE REBOUND

The Charlottesville Albemarle Convention & Visitor's Bureau is looking to hire a PR firm to bolster its image that was tarnished by the year-ago white supremacist rally.



The organization concedes the city "has been facing a serious PR challenge for over a year, starting on Aug. 12, 2017, with the takeover of our town by a white nationalist rally," according to its RFP. "We have failed to be proactive in combatting the

emerging negative story lines related to this event."

The CACVB wants a PR ally to create a strategic media plan and provide counsel "designed to address the negative tone of national and international media coverage of Charlottesville in the wake of these tragic events."

The PR firm will engage journalists to "frame a narrative that communicates that we are safe, open for business, and working on the challenges we face."

The RFP is for a one-year PR campaign with up to four additional one-year renewals.

Proposals are due Dec. 28.

They may be shipped/mailed or hand-delivered to: CACVB of Albemarle, Purchasing Office  
401 McIntire Road, Room 248  
Charlottesville, VA 22902

Proposal conference is slated for Dec. 11.

## PR VET FERNANDEZ IS NEW US CEO AT L&C

Mike Fernandez, most recently CEO of Burson-Marsteller prior to its merger with Cohn & Wolfe, has joined Llorente & Cuentas as CEO of its US operations.

Since exiting as press secretary for South Carolina Sen. Fritz Hollings in 1987, Fernandez has held top positions at Eastman Kodak (director-communications & PA), US West (VP-PR), CIGNA (senior VP-PA), State Farm Insurance (VP-PA) and Cargill (VP).



Mike Fernandez

At L&C, he will spearhead expansion in the US and provide communications support for American companies in Latin America. He will assume the CEO title from Erich de la Fuente, who will become US chair.

L&C has more than 600 staffers in Spanish and Portuguese-speaking countries.

Its US outposts are in Miami, New York and DC.

## SEN. WARREN SQUEEZES SAUDI PR FIRMS

Sen. Elizabeth Warren wrote letters to the heads of 23 PR/lobbying firms to determine the extent of their current and past business with Saudi Arabia in the aftermath of the Oct. 2 torture, murder and dismemberment of dissident and *Washington Post* contributor Jamal Khashoggi.

The Massachusetts Democrat noted that "lobbying for the Saudi government has been a profitable industry," and quoted a Bloomberg estimate that DC lobbyists "raked in \$76.9M" over the past decade for Saudi Arabia advocacy work.



Elizabeth Warren

Warren's letters went to Hill+Knowlton's Jack Martin, FleishmanHillard's John Saunders and MSLGroup Americas' Ron Guirguis, who stepped down from the helm in October.

They ask for full and unredacted contracts with the Saudis from Jan. 20, 2017 (Trump's inauguration day) to the present, list of specific issues, potential involvement with Trump administration officials and whether the firm expects to continue Saudi representation.

The Senator also penned missives to the heads of five firms (Gladstone Place Partners' Steve Lipin, BGR's Lanny Griffith, Glover Park Group's Michael Feldman, Harbour Group's Richard Mintz and Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher's Ken Doran) commending them for their decision to ax Saudi Arabia from their client roster.

Warren wants the requested information by Dec. 5.

## DUBAI ENLISTS EDELMAN FOR TOURISM PUSH

Dubai's Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing, the government authority in charge of marketing Dubai's tourism sector, has signed a year-long pact with Edelman to provide PR and marketing services to promote the United Arab Emirates' largest city as a tourism and investment destination among U.S. travelers.



According to Foreign Agents Registration Act documents filed in November, Edelman's work for the DTCM will include planning and developing a consumer, business and leisure communications strategy, generating content for use with an earned media strategy among press targets, planning and coordinating press trips, media monitoring and reporting, and representing DTCM at meetings, conferences and exhibitions.

The pact, which was signed in November, ends next year.

## **BRAND USA WANTS PR FIRM FOR KOREA**

Brand USA is looking for a PR firm to handle a nearly \$600K PR push in Korea to promote America as a premier travel destination with many unique experiences.

With budget set at \$583K, the destination marketing organization wants a firm “to create and implement approved annual strategic travel trade plan aimed at increasing visitation and visitor spend to the USA,” according to its RFP.

The agency will be expected to make direct outreach to tour operators, wholesalers, travel agents, corporate/incentive buyers and airlines. Brand USA also wants the PR firm staffers to represent it at trade shows and other travel-related events.

The contract will begin Feb. 1 and run for a year with options to renew the agreement.

Responses are due Jan. 3 and go to [rfpadmin@the-brandusa.com](mailto:rfpadmin@the-brandusa.com) and copied to [rfpadmin@bmg.travel](mailto:rfpadmin@bmg.travel).

Proposers are also required to send eight hard copies via FedEx or UPS to:

Brand USA Headquarters, C/O RFP Administrator  
1725 Eye St. NW, Suite 600

Washington, DC 20006

ATTN: RFP—Travel Marketing & Public Relations Services in Korea

## **SYMANTEC SNATCHES SAIA**

Symantec, the \$5B cybersecurity company, has hired Justin Saia as VP- corporate communications. He joins Symantec from strategic consulting and communications firm Matrix, where he was chief operating officer. Before joining Matrix, he was senior director, strategic communications at FTI Consulting.

Previously he was manager, corporate communications at Nissan North America and director, communications and media relations for BP America, where was corporate spokesman for BP’s response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

At Symantec, Saia is responsible for corporate and enterprise PR and social media.



**Justin Saia**

## **JUUL LABS HIRES EMPIRE CONSULTING**

Juul Labs, which has more than 70 percent of the US e-cigarette market, has hired Capitol Hill veteran Chaka Burgess’ Empire Consulting Group to handle legislative and Food and Drug Administration regulatory efforts regarding e-cigarettes and vaping products.

The San Francisco-based company, which has been the main target over the public backlash against teenage vaping, announced plans to suspend selling flavored e-cigarette pods in retail outlets and end social media promotions, just ahead of the FDA announcement on Nov. 15 to impose sales restrictions of flavored e-cigarettes.

Burgess is co-managing partner of Empire.

Previously, he was VP-government relations at the American Gaming Assn., director of global government affairs at Amgen, federal lobbyist at Eli Lilly, and consultant at APCO Worldwide.

## **SAUERBERG SAUNTERS OUT OF CONDE NAST**

Conde Nast, which is hemorrhaging red ink, is parting ways with CEO Bob Sauerberg as part of a corporate overhaul.



**Bob Sauerberg**

Before becoming president in 2010, Sauerberg was group VP/executive VP in the consumer marketing group and COO/CFO at Fairchild Publications. Earlier, he did a 18-year stint in finance/administrative posts at the New York Times Co.

Conde Nast, which publishes *Vanity Fair*, *The New Yorker*, *Vogue*, *Bon Appetit*, *Wired* and *GQ*, is expected to lose more than \$120M in the US this year, according to the *Financial Times*. It is selling *Brides*, *W* and *Golf Digest*.

Sauerberg unveiled a turnaround plan in August that is geared to reducing Conde Nast’s reliance on ads and stepping up revenues from video and consulting. It is designed to return the publisher to the black ink column by 2020. As part of the reorg, Conde Nast will combine the US and international business units under a single CEO.

Jonathan Newhouse, who was chief of the international business, will now be corporate chairman.

The company has launched a search for a new leader with global experience.

## **MEDIA MANEUVERS**

Producers at “**Fox & Friends**” allowed an aide to former EPA administrator Scott Pruitt to pre-approve a script for an interview with Pruitt on the program, according to email messages uncovered through a Freedom of Information Act request by The Sierra Club. The emails show that Fox contacted Pruitt’s staffers about his appearing on the show, and that those staff members had a say in determining what topics would be addressed in the interview. Fox says they are planning to discipline the employees behind the exchange.

**Emerson Collective**, the social-change focused organization run by Laurene Powell Jobs, has purchased Pop-Up Magazine Productions. The company operates Pop-Up Magazine, a “live magazine” that consists of events held in more than a dozen cities around the country, and *California Sunday*, whose print edition runs in the *Los Angeles Times* and *San Francisco Chronicle*. Emerson, which assumed majority ownership of the *Atlantic* last year, also supports such nonprofit journalism organizations as ProPublica, *Mother Jones* and the *Texas Observer*.



**Laurene Powell Jobs**

**Bustle Digital Group** has purchased digital news site **Mic**. The company laid off 60 to 70 employees last week, allegedly in preparation for the transaction. The move follows a decision by Facebook to call off a \$5 million agreement with Mic to publish a news video series. Bustle owns several women’s lifestyle sites and purchased gossip site Gawker for \$1.35 million in a U.S. Bankruptcy auction last year.

## **THE IMPACT OF AN INTERNET BILL OF RIGHTS**

It was over two decades ago that the Internet was in its infancy. Since then, it has had a significant impact on the way we live. It's brought sweeping changes to how we communicate, work, shop, date, and travel. In those early days, especially after the first dot-com bust, no one could truly envision what was to come. And as such, tech companies had a fairly open playing field. Relatively little regulation actually paved the way for innovation, and tech companies thrived. Amazon, Apple, Facebook, Google and Microsoft aren't called the "Big Five" for nothing. However, many of these technological and lifestyle shifts have come at a cost.



**Bo Park**

### **Significant innovation at a price?**

Fast forward to today, where millions of us have willingly traded our privacy for free access to social networking platforms and other content. We carry around smartphones that we rely on for much more than phone calls. Data breaches and wide scale hacking are everyday occupational hazards for banks, social networks, entertainment companies and governments, to name a few. More than ever, it's important for us to speak the same language in order to formulate solutions that enable investment and innovation that benefit the individual.

We're now witnessing a reckoning among elected officials, Wall Street bankers and Silicon Valley entrepreneurs to better understand each other. One example is the recent testimony given by Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg on Capitol Hill. Utah Senator Orrin Hatch asked Zuckerberg, "How do you sustain a business model in which users don't pay for your service?" To which Zuckerberg replied. "Senator, we run ads." Tempting as it may be to look down at lawmakers' confusion about Facebook's business model, it's also not entirely off the mark. Plenty of consumers have a limited idea of how Facebook's business works, what happens to their personal data, and what they can do to tighten control over their privacy. Not just on Facebook, but across the various touchpoints we all make daily with the Internet.

Clearly there is still a disconnect. But increasing regulations means grappling with complicated questions. Namely, how do you balance the free thinking that has fueled the internet's success with laws that also rein it in? As PR professionals, we know the importance of communication and this situation is no different. There needs to be constant, open dialogue between all parties to agree on a set of regulations that will protect us but also continue to encourage the innovation which spurred the Internet in the first place.

The Internet Bill of Rights is proposing exactly that. It's a set of principles that gives users more control of their online lives while creating a better Internet economy. Representative Ro Khanna from California recently unveiled a list of 10 points he hopes will guide data privacy laws to protect U.S. citizens in today's digital age. It calls for, among other things, consumers' right to Internet service without the unnecessary data collection, notification in a timely manner if a company holding personal

data has a security breach, opt-in permission for data collection and greater transparency in the collection of data and what it's used for by companies.

This is even more important because of what's at stake today. The Internet and data usage goes far beyond fake accounts on Twitter or cloned accounts on Facebook. There's more real-life implications we face. In the not too distant future, technological advances such as autonomous vehicles, remote surgery and augmented reality will demand even greater performance from the internet. With no predictable rules for how the Internet works, it would be very challenging to meet the requirements of these new technology advancements.

Bearing all this in mind, what does this mean for us as communications professionals? After the Facebook/Cambridge Analytica data breach in March, Facebook rolled out an ad campaign that harkens back to its roots and promises to do more to keep consumers safe and protect our privacy. Uber also released a campaign showcasing its new CEO, Dara Khosrowshahi, and his renewed commitment to Uber customers in an attempt to salvage its reputation after the former CEO was ousted.

The backlash these companies faced brought to light not only how influential big tech has become — the Big Five in particular — but how much sway they've gained with the public. Does this decline in brand reputation signify a shift in consumer confidence? Because customer privacy data is a major competitive edge of these companies, it means risk and uncertainty have increased. And in the wake of this decline, transparent communications remains crucial. Companies regardless of size need to do the right thing by their users and develop and maintain a strong and consistent accompanying message.

Consumer consensus is that it's long past time to see something like the Internet Bill of Rights put in place. And while historically, tech companies had opposed any sort of regulation, experts say that some kind of federal data privacy law is inevitable and more recently the tech industry seems to be on board. In September, executives from Amazon, Apple and others testified before the Senate Commerce Committee about concerns that lawmakers had over privacy and publicly declared support for a new federal privacy law. So, progress is being made. But lawmakers and tech companies will need to come together to answer the very important question of how we protect consumer privacy without stunting Internet innovation.

This Internet Bill of Rights is coming at a critical time. It's sparking much needed conversation between lawmakers, tech companies and consumers. We have a responsibility to protect the Internet and should want to uphold a just Internet because it's in our best interests to do so — not just to avoid a fine or persecution. As I mentioned, no one could have ever predicted what the Internet would become, and it's hard to imagine now where it will be in another 20 years. But one thing everyone can agree on from Capitol Hill to Wall Street to Silicon Valley: we all have a responsibility to communicate openly amongst each other to protect and uphold one of the most impactful creations ever made.

*Bo Park is partner and head of technology PR at ICR, Inc.*

## **IPR HONORS BOLTON, WEINER**

The Institute for Public Relations hosted its 57th Annual Distinguished Lecture & Awards Dinner Nov. 28 in New York City with more than 300 people in attendance.

Page president Roger Bolton was presented with the Alexander Hamilton Medal, given for major contributions to the practice of public relations including the use of research. “All of us in this noble profession have a responsibility to advocate for justice, to support reason and compromise, and to oppose tribalism, bias, racism and violence,” Bolton told the crowd.



**Roger Bolton**

Cision chief insights officer Mark Weiner was awarded the Jack Felton Medal for Lifetime Achievement for Advancement of Research, Measurement & Evaluation. In his remarks, he stressed the importance of keeping track of the story your data is supposed to tell and of not being afraid of failure.

Dr. Bey-Ling Sha, Ph.D., APR, professor of public relations and acting associate dean of the College of Professional Studies and Fine Arts at San Diego State University, received the IPR Pathfinder Award. She encouraged attendees to “speak your truth. Give voice to your true values of ethics, transparency and authenticity.”

Cheryl Boone Isaacs, the immediate past president of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Science and president and CEO of CBI Enterprises, Inc., was the 2018 Distinguished Lecturer. She was interviewed by Leslie Gaines-Ross of Weber Shandwick.

She talked about the diversity problems the Academy faced during the “Oscars So White” controversy. “I felt that too many members of the press, especially in the entertainment press, were trying to label me and pull me in. To be the person that is leading the diversity efforts of all of Hollywood.”

## **FORMER ENERGY DEPT. PA CHIEF TO KGLOBAL**

Andy Beck, a former PA director for the U.S. Department of Energy who most recently held an exec. VP title at Makovsky, has joined Washington, D.C.-based kglobal, where he’s been named managing director.

Beck served as public affairs director to the Energy Department from 2007 to 2009. He later managed Makovsky Integrated Communications’ Washington office, and was tasked with leading the New York-based shop’s energy and sustainability practice.

Prior to joining Makovsky, Beck served as chief communications officer for LED lamp and fixtures maker the Lighting Science Group. He was previously a senior VP of corporate communications and public affairs at MWW, where he led that agency’s energy and environmental practice in D.C.

kglobal, which is owned by government contractor Zenetex, was founded in 2010. It maintains additional offices in Seattle and San Diego.



**Andy Beck**

## **PEOPLE ON THE MOVE**

**Hill+Knowlton Strategies** has promoted Simon Whitehead to UK Chief Executive Officer. Whitehead succeeds Richard Millar, who will now be global president, serving alongside Lars Erik Grønntun. Whitehead has been with H+K since 2011, serving as managing director of its UK Energy + Industrials team. During his tenure, the team became the largest of H+K UK’s eight industry sectors with a 35-person dedicated staff and clients including Shell, Hitachi, ICMM, OGCI and E.ON.



**Simon Whitehead**

**APCO Worldwide** has named senior directors Alexandra Lazorchak, Kelly Stepno and Matthew Gallagher to lead the firm’s North America Health, Crisis and Energy practices respectively. Lazorchak rejoined APCO in June after holding senior positions at Weber Shandwick and Biosector 2. Stepno joined APCO in 2016 from Booz Allen Hamilton, where she advised both government and commercial clients. Gallagher, a seven-year APCO veteran, has extensive experience developing and implementing public affairs, media and community relations strategies on behalf of clients in the energy space.

**Rasky Partners** has promoted Doug Bailey and Eric Weber to senior VP. Bailey, who was also a senior VP at Rasky from 2001-2007, has most recently been serving in a senior advisory role at the firm. In 2007, Bailey founded DBMediaStrategies, which he ran until this year. He also spent 15 years as a journalist with the *Boston Globe*, serving in such positions as business reporter, deputy business editor, political editor and senior assistant metro editor. Weber has been Rasky’s controller for the past three years. He will continue to head the accounting department by overseeing the firm’s financial reporting and staff management.

**The Berman Group** has promoted Kate Harrington to managing director. Harrington joined the agency as a senior account executive in 2012. Before coming to The Berman Group, she worked at The American Wind Energy Association in Washington, D.C. In her new role, Harrington will use her experience working with each of the firm’s departments to help oversee internal and external strategies.

**Lagrange Communications** taps Keisha Brown as president. Brown will continue as the chair of the agency’s health and wellness practice. At Lagrange, she has worked as account manager, vice president/media & promotions director and senior vice president/chief creative & innovative officer. In her new post, Brown will be responsible for identifying and securing new business as well as overseeing client services. She will also lead teams in developing and executing communications programs for the firm’s advertising, marketing and public relations accounts and supervise the firm’s creative and media planning and buying teams.



**Keisha Brown**

## **HUNGARY TABS B&T FOR HUMAN RIGHTS PR**

Barnes & Thornburg has picked up government relations work for Hungary's Washington embassy, primarily in the areas of religious freedom and immigration.

Human rights activists and politicians have accused Hungary's right-wing leader Viktor Orban of cracking down on religious rights.



**Viktor Orban**

Pew Research Center has cited Hungary as one of seven countries to pass emergency laws in 2016 to restrict religion within its borders. Those measures target Muslims.

Orban met with US Ambassador Sam Brownback, ex-Kansas Republican Governor and Senator, on Nov. 15 in Budapest to discuss efforts to curb anti-Semitism in Europe and return

Christian migrants to their homes in the Middle East.

B&T's contract with Hungarian ambassador Laszlo Szabo calls for a flat \$50K fee for work from Nov. 7 through Jan. 21. Craig Burkhardt heads the effort for Hungary's embassy.

## **MORE CEOS TO STAR IN LIVE SOCIAL VIDEOS**

CEOs are expected to play bigger roles in live social videos in 2019, according to a survey of 125 communicators conducted by D S Simon Media.

While 40 percent of respondents have featured CEOs in videos, 57 percent expect to do so next year.

Doug Simon, CEO of D S Simon Media, believes the use of a CEO in a video makes a brand more authentic. Live video, he added, offers greater content control.

The survey found that more than eight-in-ten (81 percent) of respondents plan to increase their use of live streaming in 2019. Fifty-seven percent communicators currently use live social videos.

At 63 percent, Facebook is the most popular site for social streaming. YouTube (46 percent) and Instagram (45 percent) ranked next.

The survey is available via email to [survey@dssimonmedia.com](mailto:survey@dssimonmedia.com) or [here](#).

## **CLIA BOOKS CRAIGHEAD**

The Cruise Lines International Assn. has recruited Kelly Craighead, who was deputy assistant secretary for travel/tourism in the Commerce Dept., as president effective Jan. 1. She takes over for Cindy D'Aoust.



**Kelli Craighead**

Craighead was responsible for coordination of federal travel and tourism policies, advocacy and outreach to the private sector.

Prior to working in the Commerce Dept., Craighead served as deputy assistant to president Clinton and was active in the "Save America's Treasures" program geared to preserv-

ing historic building, arts and published works.

CLIA represents more than 50 cruise lines that account for 95 percent of global capacity.

## **STUDY RANKS EFFECTS OF CRISES**

CEOs who take a controversial political stance are practically guaranteed to wind up in the news cycle, but as it turns out, these actions rank far lower on the outrage hierarchy for the average consumer when compared to faulty products, lying to shareholders or deliberately misleading the public, according to a report released by digital politics and policy outlet The Morning Consult.

The report, which sought to gauge the types of brand controversies that offend consumers most, presented respondents with a list of 16 hypothetical brand controversies, and asked them to rank which would result in the most damning view of a company. Companies that deliberately mislead the public and companies caught falsifying accounting records to boost profits were seen in the worst light. This was followed by companies that lie about how their products work, companies whose products could potentially harm consumers and companies caught lying to shareholders.

Even though it's the kind of the material that drives today's news cycle, the controversy least likely to upset consumers involved a CEO taking a political stance with which the respondent personally disagrees.

The Morning Consult report broke down corporate crises into eight different categories, and asked respondents to rank which would most negatively impact their perception of a company. When it comes to the scandal most likely to polarize consumers, covering up wrongdoing took the number-one spot. This was followed by employee mistreatment, customer mistreatment, major issues with products/services and fraud. Making offensive statements or taking a political stance a consumer happens to disagree with were at the bottom of the list.

### **Internal review best crisis response strategy**

As it turns out, actions speak a lot louder than words when it comes to regaining consumer trust in the wake of a crisis. When asked to list the responses most likely to win back their trust, launching an internal investigation and making a public pledge to ensure the same mistake won't happen again topped the list of strategies consumers prefer crisis-stricken companies take. Donating money to a relevant charity and firing the CEO were seen as the least effective strategies for handling a crisis.

Most respondents — 78 percent — also said they're more inclined to view a company in a favorable light when a crisis is followed with the appropriate response.

The report also found that respondents identifying as Democrat were far more likely to abstain from a scandalized company's products or services than those identifying as Republican (55 percent vs. 39 percent). Baby Boomer respondents were the generation most likely to pay attention to company scandals of a political nature (70 percent), compared to 59 percent of Gen Xers, 58 percent of Millennials and 38 percent Gen Zers.

The Morning Consult's report, "How to Identify and Survive a Brand Crisis," relied on data culled from responses to online interviews with more than 2,200 U.S. adults in October.



## COMMENTARY

### A KINDER, GENTLER PRESIDENT

In the summer of 1992, George H.W. Bush was looking at a difficult re-election campaign. He and Ronald Reagan had accomplished a rare feat: capping off a two-term presidency by winning the White House for a candidate of the same party. Bush was riding high from his resounding victory against Saddam Hussein in Operation Desert Shield, but the economy was pulling out of a recession, and the Democrats had an array of impressive challengers. The President couldn't afford to take any votes for granted.



**Adam Dickter**

And so, in August of that year, the Bush Administration, as part of a multifaceted outreach effort, invited a dozen or so journalists from Jewish community newspapers, magazines and newswires for a White House press briefing. I was one of them.

In the interest of full disclosure, I wasn't a typical member of the pack. Only a few years out of college, I had a few bylines under my belt, and had covered the New York City mayoral race of 1989, but I was by no means a national political correspondent. I was there because Alan Tigay, the very kind editor of *Hadassah Magazine*, the publication where I worked at the time, wanted to give a budding journalist a big break.

It felt surreal to step out of the train station and say to the cab driver, "The White House, please." Arriving after a sleepless night, I was shown to the Roosevelt Room. I had envisioned the event as I'd seen press briefings on TV — sitting in the audience, facing the president at the lectern. Instead, we all sat around a table, and as luck would have it I ended up directly across from the 41st President — about as close as I'd sit with family members at the dinner table.

I listened for about 45 minutes as senior journalists grilled the President about his policies on American spy Jonathan Pollard, the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, Soviet Jewish emigration and more. Toward the end I was able to get one question in, asking if he'd changed his view on a major Israel policy issue. I got a one-word answer: "No."

What I remember most about the meeting is how the President and his staff went out of their way to make everyone feel comfortable. He was in no rush and always polite to the questioners, even as they pressed him for answers. It was a far cry from the adversarial exchanges President Trump has with mainstream media. Yes, it was good politics, but I also got a strong sense that this was just the way George Herbert Walker Bush spoke to people. On his way out, he stopped to speak to

each of us individually.

When it was my turn, I was at a loss to make small talk with the leader of the Free World. He asked where

I'm from, and I told him (Brooklyn, at the time.) That was about it. Later on, it occurred to me that I could've told him how my mother suffered from Parkinson's disease, and suggested he reconsider his opposition to stem cell research that could help people like her. It was my one and only chance to lobby a President. But that would have crossed a line. I was there as a reporter.

In the course of the long journalism career that followed, I met many other political figures, but never another sitting U.S. President. In the 1992 campaign, Bush went in strong but quickly lost ground to the young, dynamic duo of Bill Clinton and Al Gore, whose expert political team managed to paint Bush as tired and out-of-touch, an image he bolstered with visuals such as looking at his watch during a debate and appearing stunned by a supermarket price scanner.

Perhaps it's no coincidence that this took place at the dawn of the cable news age, when politicians were still grappling with how to burnish their image in a 24/7 news cycle.

When he talked about a "kinder, gentler nation" guided by "1,000 points of light," it wasn't hyperbole, but maybe George H.W. Bush just didn't have the fire in his belly to face the onset of the 21st century and the dawn of the technology age.

During the many testimonials in the week of mourning ahead, George H.W. Bush will be remembered as a World War II combat vet and former CIA director who helped usher in the defeat of the Soviet Union and took quick decisive action with his line in the sand against Saddam. But many who had the chance to meet him, even briefly, will likely just remember a gentleman who treated people with kindness and made them feel at home.

*Adam Dickter is director at Dukas Linden Public Relations.*

**Maybe George H.W. Bush just didn't have the fire in his belly to face the onset of the 21st century and the dawn of the technology age.**

