***Devra Ashby, APR, Director of Communications and Public Information Officer, District 11***

Devra Ashby, APR, is a Colorado native and serves as director of communications and public information officer for Colorado Springs School District 11, the same district of which she is a graduate.  She has served in this role for the past seven years, and has been with D11 for nine years.  She holds a Bachelors of Arts in communications from the University of Colorado and is accredited in public relations.

Ashby has worked in several communications and public relations fields for nearly 20 years.  Beginning her career as a TV reporter and anchor, Ashby sharpened her skills as a journalist and learned quickly about media relations.  She has served as a public relations and communications specialist in the health care and local government industries, but, coming from a family of educators, says she “feels right at home” in School District 11.

Ashby has received several awards and recognitions, including three National School Public Relations Association awards, several Colorado School Public Relations Association awards of excellence, two national City-County Communications and Marketing (3CMA) Savvy awards, and the Best Of TV News Reporter Award from the Independent Newspaper.

***Paul Batura, Vice President of Ministry Communications, Focus on the Family***

Paul Batura is vice president of communications for Focus on the Family. In his role, Batura is responsible for media relations, internal communications, guest relations and community relations to the ministry’s Colorado Springs neighbors.

With more than two decades of diverse experience in the news media, broadcast journalism, publishing and non-profit administration, Batura has been with Focus on the Family since 1998. Prior to serving in his current capacity, Batura served as a top writer and adviser to both Focus’ founder, Dr. James C. Dobson, and its current president, Jim Daly.

The author of several books and contributor to others, Batura says that his writings are “motivated and inspired by a desire to encourage and lift the hearts of others.” He says he believes that the right word offered at the right time can transform circumstance.

Batura has authored books, including “Chosen for Greatness: How Adoption Changes the World,”“Good Day! The Paul Harvey Story” and “Mentored by the King: Arnold Palmer's Success Lessons for Golf, Business, and Life.” Batura has also collaborated with Jim Daly on “ReFocus: Living a Life that Reflects God’s Heart” and “Marriage Done Right.”

Batura, his wife and his three sons reside in Colorado Springs, Colorado. They are active members of their church, where Batura serves as an elder and Sunday School teacher.

***Jeffery Ferguson, Ph.D., Professor of Service Management and Marketing, University of Colorado at Colorado Springs***

Jeffery M. Ferguson, Ph.D, is a professor of service management and marketing at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs. He has more than 40 years of teaching and research experience in the areas of service management, marketing strategy, marketing research, work place spirituality and service quality. For 20 years, he was a marketing research consultant conducting focus groups and survey research for a variety of regional and national clients on topics such as new product design, program evaluation, target market identification and customer satisfaction. He holds a Bachelor of Science in physics from Denison University, an MBA from the University of Montana and a Ph.D. in business with an emphasis in marketing from Arizona State University.

***Jane Dvorak, Chair, APR, Fellow PRSA, President JKD & Company, Inc.***

Jane Dvorak, APR, Fellow PRSA, has driven communications programs for some of the largest nonprofits. She has used her “thematic planning” concept to boost client programs, resulting in media coverage in national publications including National Geographic Magazine and in multiple local and national awards. She brings together 30 years of experience to help organizations “gain new focus and direction through integrated communications with energy, creativity and impact.” She coins herself a “consultalancer.”©

Through both ongoing counsel or project assignments, Dvorak uses a strategic approach to give her clients “greater depth and higher return on their communications efforts.” Her skills span publication development to special events planning and crisis communications to organizational imaging. Her high energy, creativity and sound strategic planning have produced outstanding success in assessing, implementing and evaluating results-oriented public relations programs.

Dvorak has broad experience in industries ranging from health care and the environment to publishing and the arts, including strategic planning and counsel with Applewood Plumbing Heating & Electric, Rocky Mountain Agribusiness Association, Schoolbook Technologies, Speed of Love Healing Center and University of Phoenix.

She has also aligned with several of the largest nonprofits including: CASA of Jefferson/Gilpin Counties, Tennyson Center for Children, Boys & Girls Clubs, American Heart Association and the American Cancer Society.

As a professional speaker, Dvorak has provided keynote addresses, conference sessions, various staff retreats and trainings for National Hearing Conservation Association, Allstate, State Library of Colorado, Colorado Dental Hygienists Association and PRSA.

Dvorak holds a bachelor's degree in journalism/public pelations from Colorado State University and is an Accredited Member (APR) of the Public Relations Society of America. She was inducted into the PRSA College of Fellows in 2010. As a leader in her industry, she has served as director on the PRSA National and Foundation Boards, has served as the 2007 National PRSA delegate at-large; 2006 Western District chair and 2003 president of the Colorado Chapter. She has received a number of awards for collateral materials, event planning and corporate imaging pieces. Dvorak is a 2011 PRSA Silver Anvil winner, received the PRSA 2010 Small Business Award, was named the 2012 Swede Johnson Lifetime Achievement Award recipient and is the Colorado Chapter 2013 Mentor of the Year.

***Diane Mulligan, APR, President of M&C Communications***

Diane Mulligan, APR, is president of M&C Communications (M&C), which she started in 2009 after more than three decades of experience in public relations and journalism. Diane earned a solid understanding of integrated PR strategies through her experience as NBC News senior editor and National Stroke Association vice president of national communications. According to Mulligan, insider media experience gives her unique insight, but creating award-winning national, local and internal campaign design and management is where she excels. She prides herself on developing PR plans with measurable objectives that positively impact the client’s bottom line.

Along with delivering high value results to clients, Mulligan is also dedicated to supporting and enhancing the PR profession. As Western District representative for PRSA Colorado, Mulligan’s involvement with Public Relations Society of America keeps M&C aligned with best practices in the field.

Mulligan began her career in a small Arizona newsroom. In 1996, she worked for NBC News in New York City. She then took the helm as News Director at Denver’s KMGH, where she coordinated the coverage during the Columbine High School attacks. In 2001, Mulligan became VP of communications for the National Stroke Association where she developed innovative PR health strategies to educate the public about the signs and symptoms of stroke. She brings all her experience and skills into focus as the principal of M&C Communications.

***Natalie Eckhart, APR***

Accredited since 2002, Natalie Eckhart, APR, has practiced public relations for nearly 25 years during which she has proven ability to provide guidance on public relations strategies, tactics and organizational culture. She worked at three agencies and two non-profits prior to joining Colorado Springs Utilities in 1999.  She strongly believes in the importance of research and on-going evaluation to refine messages and tactics to make programs successful. At Colorado Springs Utilities, quantitative, qualitative, primary and secondary research is used to maximize effectiveness.