Hosemann Roast Raises Over $26K for Foundation Scholarships

Son Mark Hosemann: “My Dad is the Original Clark Griswold”

Mississippi’s Secretary of State endured barbs from journalists, a close friend and even his own son during the annual MPA Education Foundation Celebrity Roast, which raised money for scholarships, grants and internships administered by the foundation. 

MPA, Agency Partner to Tell the Truth About Newspapers

MPA took the wraps off of a new industry promotional video during a special luncheon at the Mid-Winter Conference.

“The Truth About Newspapers” premiered to about 100 newspaper publishers, ad managers and sales representatives and seeks to dispel myths about the popularity of the industry.

It was produced in cooperation with the Jackson-based GodwinGroup agency. Godwin Managing Partner John McKie and Creative Director Tal McNeill told attendees about the creative process and production of the video. A St. Louis-based firm was engaged to create the visual for the project.

The new video is available to members for download and MPA representatives will use it to promote the industry to current clients and prospects. Publishers and MPA board members will join MPA staff on calls this winter and spring to major clients in the corporate, financial and government sectors, among others.

“Over 1.5 million Mississippians read their local newspaper at least once a week,” said MPA President James E. Prince, III, president of Prince Newspaper Holdings. “And your board has invested a lot of time and resources to create a presentation that highlights newspapers and print as the number one source for news and advertising information in our state.”

The video can be viewed and other material accessed at powerinprint.ms.

McDAVID Conference

Overby will be guest speaker at student symposium

BNC Awards

Who took first? 

powerinprint.ms

Did you know 7-in-10 Mississippi adults are regular newspaper readers?
Seventy percent of Mississippi adults are active newspaper readers. Seventy percent! That's huge! That's 1.5 million readers. What other medium offers such a broad reach in this fractured age of 900 cable channels to flip through and 2.15 billion web pages?

But, you've heard the news. Print is dead. It's a digital world. Our condolences.

Nothing could be further from the truth! A new video professionally produced for MPA by the Godwin Group illustrates just that in a stunning display that's quickly changing perceptions about the newspaper industry.

Godwin confessed after digesting our Readership Survey and spending about three hours questioning the Board that prior to their engagement with us they'd "written print off."

Wow! Newspapers had simply gone off of the agency radar, although they all confessed personally to a love for newspapers.

The truth is, Mississippi newspapers are not only surviving, they're thriving!

We asked Godwin to take their newspaper conversion experience and bring it to life in the video animation. They did!

As an industry, we're horrible marketers, although we think we know advertising. After all, we sell a lot of it. Our idea of marketing is asking Bill down at the car dealership what he wants in his ad this week.

In order to thrive, we must become more aggressive and, as an industry, learn to think more like a General Motors, Procter & Gamble or Walmart. We have to be more sophisticated. Our aim should be to serve our customers as trusted advertising consultants, not monotone salespeople. MPA, through the video and Readership Survey, is giving you basic tools to develop your own smart marketing strategy.

Not a single publisher at Mid-Winter could tell me his or her market penetration, although most Mississippi newspapers reach close to 70 percent of the households in their county. Market penetration is a basic statistic you must know to compete effectively. It's the language ad agencies and other more sophisticated advertisers know.

Even for the unsophisticated advertiser, 70 percent of anything is big. Digital numbers dazzle because of the specificity of who clicked on what. The immediacy is exciting, but it doesn't necessarily translate into a return on investment locally. Print has a proven return on investment. The survey proves it and the video illustrates so.

How we market our newspapers matters, but the most important thing is that content still matters most. Bad newspapers may survive, but they won't thrive. Nobody does what we do. Strive to do what you do better. We have a connection to our communities no one else has. We are where readers turn to see who's getting married, who had a baby, who won the football game.

Mainly, readers trust their local newspaper. In an era where everybody has an opinion, the local newspaper is more relevant than ever in sorting out the truth and making sense of the information overload.

Similarly, we're going to have to step up our subscription marketing and NIE programs. Waiting for readers to come to us is a death sentence. If you haven't engaged in telemarketing, start. Sharper design has even translated into dollars for us.

Your MPA Board took the marketing challenge seriously as we embarked on a top-to-bottom examination of how we do business. Much soul-searching occurred last fall at our Board retreat in Biloxi. But what emerged was a clear vision and a plan of action that led us to Godwin.

The key component has been the 60-page Readership Survey which clearly demonstrates the superiority of print. An outside national firm conducted the telephone polling. The report we're presenting to customers is, objectively, exactly what the polster gave us. The numbers are powerful.

For publishers, a simple marketing plan utilizing the video is to: 1.) Present the video to key customers prefaced with "I'm not here to sell you a thing." 2.) Leave the color print piece that goes with the video. Follow with an e-mail to the digital link powerinprint.ms. 3.) Leave a copy of the MPA Readership Survey.

In conversation, ask your key advertisers what they think, thank them for their business and be on your way. Plan a follow-up visit after they've digested the survey to obtain feedback. This strategy has already turned into dollars for us. Among other things, the survey debunks radio. One of our top advertisers was convinced.

Along with the key advertiser visits, run the MPA house ads and share the video and survey links on social media. How we market ourselves matters. Again, we must become more aggressive in an ever-crowded marketplace. Don't hesitate to call on me if I can help you in any way. Layne and the MPA/MPM staff stand ready as well.

Our numbers are outstanding, but we're simply not telling the story as an industry. We have to change fundamentally the way we market ourselves.

The truth is, Mississippi newspaper numbers are strong. The statistics prove print's superiority. Use the video, the printed video "leave behind" piece and the printed survey. Together, they illustrate powerfully print's overwhelming advantage in reaching today's consumers.

View to the video
http://www.powerinprint.ms.
Download the video
http://bit.ly/7QJ4jQ
Download the Readership Survey
http://bit.ly/74bNkB
Boone group buys Picayune, Poplarville papers


The sale ends more than a decade of operation of the newspapers by CNHI. Linda Gilmore will continue at The Item and The Democrat as publisher. Todd Carpenter of Boone Newspaper Holdings, Inc. [CNHI] of Tuscaloosa, Ala. and related publications from Community Newsmedia, LLC [CNI] purchased Mississippi entity wholly owned by Carpenter group buys Picayune, Poplarville papers

The sale ends more than a decade of operation of the newspapers by CNHI. Linda Gilmore will continue at The Item and The Democrat as publisher. Todd Carpenter of Boone

Roast brings in over $26K for grant, intern programs

Mississippi’s Secretary of State Delbert Hosemann (second from right) is presented the S. Gale Denley Memorial Journalism Education Award by MPA Education Foundation Chairman James E. Prince, Ill. as the honoree’s sons (from left) Mark and Chad Hosemann, and wife, Lynne, join them on stage.

Secretary of State Delbert Hosemann (second from right) is presented the S. Gale Denley Memorial Journalism Education Award by MPA Education Foundation Chairman James E. Prince, Ill. as the honoree’s sons (from left) Mark and Chad Hosemann, and wife, Lynne, join them on stage.
Saying goodbye to Orley, hello to Delta delegation in Congress

The office of the Quitman County Democrat in Marks sits across the street from the courthouse, and just a half-block down and across the street where it was housed for years when owned by John and Josie Fleming. It’s an older building – characteristic of much of the small town.

These days, the weekly paper is owned and operated by Bill and Carol Knight. They bought the Democrat from Mrs. Fleming in 2011, a couple of years after her husband’s death.

Ole Miss Dean of Journalism Will Norton and MPA Vice President Joel McNeece, publisher of the Calhoun County Journal, joined me for a tour of Delta papers on a very cold March day recently. We found Bill Knight hard at work in his new office. There was a warm fire in the hearth when we arrived.

“You know, I would never have thought that this would be something I’d want to do at this point in my life,” said Bill, an accountant by training and now a newspaperman by trade.

“But I really enjoy working for this community and I am constantly impressed by the work and how we are appreciated.”

The phone rang several times while we were there. Bill juggled the visits with the whims and wishes of readers who were calling to invite him to cover their events. He also was planning a trip to Brandon to visit the couple’s newest grandchild.

Carol was attending classes at Northwest Community College in Senatobia during our visit. Sorry we didn’t get to see her, but it was hard to leave Marks behind without being happy with the enthusiasm the couple obviously has for their (relatively) new role in the community.

While Carol had previously worked for the papers in Batesville and Hernando, Bill has never been in the news business before. Interesting to find he has ink in his blood at this point in his life and career.

Better late than never.

AT LEAST 400 people attend a late February memorial service for Orley Hood, the longtime columnist for the Jackson Daily News and The Clarion-Ledger who died Feb. 21.

There were scads of newspaper folks – past and present – and an impressive group of community leaders from Jackson and beyond. Speakers included former Clarion-Ledger editor Charles Overby, columnist Sid Salter and even Hood’s own son, Hunter. But my favorite had to be former Gov. William Winter, who, at 90 years of age, can still run circles around most of us with his vim, vigor and wit.

“I wanted to be like Orley Hood when I grew up,” Winter said in his five minutes of eloquent praise and humor. “And, although I didn’t know him when I was young, Orley was the type of man I aspired to be.”

We should all be so lucky to have something like that said of us when our time comes.

MPA PRESIDENT Jim Prince, Past President Randy Ponder and I recently paid visits to several members of the Mississippi Congressional delegation on a trip to Washington, DC.

It was a good visit with Sens. Thad Cochran and Roger Wicker, as well as Reps. Gregg Harper and Steven Palazzo in their Capitol offices.

Washington was very cold but serene during the trip. It’s always a stark contrast to the hot air and turmoil that plays out in headlines and on televisions day in and-out.

The four men, all up for re-election this year, were gracious hosts. It was a bit of a reminder why most Americans disapprove of Congress but tend to like their own representatives there.

Layne Bruce is executive director of MPA-MPS. His email address is lbruce@mspress.org.

---

Brown wins annual ‘Ad of the Year’ award

The advertising manager of the Magee Courier took home the trophy and $500 for the Advertisement of the Year, presented Feb. 1 during the MPA Better Newspaper Contest Awards in Jackson.

Five Mississippi newspapers were singled out for being “Best in Show” among their circulation classes during the event, held at the conclusion of the MPA Mid-Winter Conference.

Honored for Advertising Excellence were The Natchez Democrat, The Greenwood Commonwealth, The Lamar Times in Hattiesburg, The Magee Courier and The Clarksdale Press Register. Awards were handed out Saturday at the Jackson Hilton.

Nancy Brown, advertising manager of The Magee Courier, was singled out for the Advertisement of the Year. She won a $500 cash prize with the award.

Over 40 papers submitted 1,800 entries for the 2013 contest, which was judged this past fall by members of the Hoosier State Press Association in Indiana.

A complete list of winners can be read on the MPA website at mpress.org.

Entries for the Editorial Division were received by MPA the week of March 1. The contest will be judged by volunteers with the Louisiana Press Association this spring.

Winners will be announced in Biloxi during the Joint Convention with LPA June 19-21 at the IP Casino Resort.
Newspaper wins long-fought battle to have DMR records made public

GULFPORT > A federal judge in December ordered the release of documents sought by the Sun Herald for more than a year in its investigation of the Department of Marine Resources. District Judge Keith Starrett gave the U.S. Attorney’s Office 10 days to turn over the records.

“I’m very happy with the decision and Judge Starrett’s basis for the decision,” said Sun Herald attorney Henry Laird. “It now returns the case where it should be, which is the Chancery Court in Harrison County. It’s a great decision in favor of freedom of expression and freedom of speech because the people of Mississippi are going to be able to look at their records.”

A grand jury in November indicted Bill Walker, the former executive director of the agency; Walker’s son Scott; Joe Zeigler, the former DMR chief of staff; Tina Shumate, the former DMR coastal resource management and planning director; and Michael Janus, former city manager of D’Iberville.

Just days before the indictments, state Chancery Judge Jennifer Schloegel ordered the State Auditor’s Office to return the records to DMR and ordered the DMR to comply with the records request by the paper. Sun Herald reporters first asked for the records in the fall of 2012 with a formal request to the agency. That request was denied, citing the ongoing investigation of the agency by state and federal officials.

In January 2013, the Sun Herald sued the DMR seeking the records. It later added State Auditor Stacey Pickering to the suit after DMR attorneys said the records were in the custody of the Auditor’s Office. After Schloegel ruled that the records were public and should be given to the Sun Herald, the federal prosecutor’s office subpoenaed the truckload of documents and they were sent to Jackson in the middle of the night, a move that did not sit well with the chancery judge.

Federal prosecutors then argued the records couldn’t be disclosed because they were part of the grand jury proceedings.

Starrett saw the matter differently. “The United States represents that these documents are part of an ongoing grand jury investigation,” Starrett wrote in his order. “But the record contains no indication that they were presented to the grand jury before the indictments were issued Nov. 5, 2013.

“Furthermore, the United States conspicuously failed to represent that the documents would be presented to the grand jury at some point in the future. The government’s position appears to be that the DMR records are part of a grand jury proceeding because they were obtained by a grand jury subpoena, without regard for their actual role, if any, in the grand jury proceeding.”

He also said the government admitted in its brief that the rule against disclosing “a matter occurring before the grand jury” does not apply to “material obtained or created independently of the grand jury as long as the disclosure of such material does not reveal what transpired before or at the direction of the grand jury.”

He found the records could not reveal what transpired before the grand jury because there was no evidence they had been presented to the grand jury. The records, he wrote, “are public records created by the DMR and obtained by the state auditor independent of the grand jury proceedings.”

Starrett found that if he didn’t permit Pickering to disclose the DMR records, he could be held in contempt of court by Schloegel. And, he said, keeping the records secret would essentially nullify the authority of the Chancery Court and the Legislature, which passed the Public Records Act.

“IT’S A GREAT DECISION IN FAVOR OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND FREEDOM OF SPEECH BECAUSE THE PEOPLE OF MISSISSIPPI ARE GOING TO BE ABLE TO LOOK AT THEIR RECORDS.”

HENRY LAIRD
ATTORNEY FOR THE SUN HERALD
Good writing is hard work; Orley made it look easy

Orley Hood
Orley Hood, a longtime columnist and writer at Jackson newspapers, died Feb. 21 at the University of Mississippi Medical Center from complications from leukemia. He was 65.

Hood was originally from Vicksburg. His long career in journalism included work at the Meridian Star, The Commercial Appeal, The Jackson Daily News, and The Clarion-Ledger, concentrating in sports, features and general interest column writing. He held positions as sportswriter, columnist, sports editor, Southern Style editor, senior editor and features editor at the Jackson newspapers.

“His was a great friend and he may well have been the best Mississippi newspaper writer I ever read,” said Rick Cleveland, who worked alongside Hood in Jackson 1979-2008, and covered games with him dating back to 1972.

Hood is survived by his wife, Mary Ann, and two grown sons, Hunter and Tucker.

A public memorial service was held Feb. 26 at the Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame and Museum.

Read Rick Cleveland’s tribute to Hood on page 6.

Betty Carol Simmons Jolly
Betty Carol Simmons Jolly, a former journalist and once the “Epicurious” columnist for The Clarion-Ledger, died Feb. 18. She was 70.

“She probably was the most popular feature in our Sunday newspaper,” said Charles Overby, the Pulitzer Prize-winning editor who hired Jolly.

Jolly studied journalism at Ole Miss and worked in the press office of the late Mississippi Sen. John Stennis. She later was press secretary for longtime Rep. Sonny Montgomery.

“Epicurious wrote cleverly and with just the right touch. She knew she was writing for Mississippians, not Parisians. But she also knew Mississippians deserved crisp salad greens, hot soup, fresh fish, cooked-to-order meat, decent wine, efficient service and fair prices,” wrote Rick Cleveland in a column for Mississippi newspapers the week following Jolly’s death.

A Jackson native, she served as a bureau chief for The Commercial Appeal of Memphis and as editor of The Oxford Eagle.

She is survived by her husband, Grady Jolly, and two brothers.

A reception for family and friends was held at the Fairview Inn in Jackson Feb. 22.

Ray Roberson
Ray L. Roberson, longtime photographer for The Commercial Dispatch in Columbus, died Feb. 9 at Community Hospice in Verona, Ala. He was 71.

Roberson had suffered from Parkinson’s disease for several years.

Roberson began as a photographer at The Dispatch not long after graduating from S.D. Lee High School, where he ran track. In order to compete in as many events as possible, he entered some under the name “Joe” Roberson and others as “Ray” Roberson. Because of that, his coach, Billy Brewer, took to calling him “Joe Ray.” The name stuck.

After several years working at the paper, Roberson moved to Jasper, Ala., to be a photographer with The Daily Mountain Eagle. He would become sports editor at that newspaper.

Then he opened Roberson Studio, which specialized in high school annual and wedding photography. He had a passion for helping children, especially those with special needs, Cash said. His rapport with children was strong. An Alabama high school once dedicated its annual to Roberson.

In the late 1980s, he moved back to Columbus and again became a photographer at The Dispatch.

“Joe Ray was a character, a holdover from a time when newsrooms were full of characters,” Dispatch publisher Birney Imes said. “Joe Ray was always full of enthusiasm, for people, for his next assignment...He was very much a part of this place.”

He remained with The Dispatch through the late 2000s, when he began showing signs of Parkinson’s disease and made the decision to retire.

He is survived by his wife, Regina Cash, and a daughter, Ashley.
GAME FACES ABOUND AT MID-WINTER EVENT

Clockwise from left: Daily Leader publisher Otis Raybon puts on a smile at the keynote presentation; Silver Dollar Breakfast moderator Pat Brown (left) presents a cash prize to Jason Patterson of The Yazoo Herald; speaker John Lindsey directs traffic during his advertising boot camp; Linda Bassie (from left) of The Greenwood Commonwealth, Wanda Roché of The Winona Times and Anita Turner of the GrenadaStar celebrate their BNC wins; MPA Board Member Paul Keane of The Wayne County News pitches a few beads during the Silver Dollar Breakfast Idea Exchange.
Overby is keynote at student event

The former chief of the Newseum and Freedom Forum will be the keynote speaker March 27 during the annual O.C. McDavid Student Journalism Conference.

Charles Overby will headline the event at the Mississippi Craftsmans Guild in Ridgeland. A career journalist, Overby was editor of The Clarion-Ledger in 1982 when it was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for its coverage of the Education Reform Act.

The event memorializes the journalism and artistic career of the late O.C. McDavid, former editor of The Clarion-Ledger. About 75 journalism and communications students and educators are expected to attend. Admission is free through a grant from the MPA Education Foundation.

Also featured during the event is a special presentation on multimedia journalism by Dr. Gina Chen, a former editor of the Syracuse Post Standard who is now an assistant professor in the School of Journalism and Mass Communications at the University of Southern Mississippi.

Overby was for 22 years CEO of the Freedom Forum, a non-partisan foundation that educates people about the press and the First Amendment.

He was CEO of the Newseum from 1997 to 2011 and supervised the building of the Newseum on Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C. He also was CEO of the Diversity Institute from its beginning in 2001. The Diversity Institute is a school that teaches journalists and aspiring journalists, with the goal of increasing diversity in newsrooms.

Lunch will be served at the event, which culminates with the presentation of the 2013 Better Newspaper Contest Student Division Awards.

Charles Overby is the retired chief executive of The Freedom Forum and the Newseum.
It’s no secret that the more sales people know about their prospects before they begin a sales presentation – the better their chances for successful outcomes. In advertising, this means learning prospects’ business and marketing histories, identifying major competitors and analyzing what they want to accomplish in their advertising.

Since pre-presentation homework is such a crucial step in the sales process, why don’t more sales people make it a top priority? There are several possible reasons:

1. Impatience. High-energy sales people thrive on the adrenaline of the pitch and are eager to get to the main event. After all, isn’t that where their powers of persuasion come into play? And isn’t that where decisions are made?

   Impatience has a big downside. It sends a signal that sales people are (1) unprepared and (2) concerned only about themselves. That’s a negative first impression that is difficult to overcome in a presentation.

2. Overconfidence. This is particularly common with experienced account executives; they feel like they can wing it, instead of spending time gathering information. They have dealt with so many widget dealers that they think they can skip the discovery step.

3. Lack of knowledge and skills. Sales people may skip this step because they don’t know the techniques to gather information. They may not have learned how to ask open-ended questions to encourage prospects to talk. They may be poor listeners. They may not know where to find information (online research, networking, etc.).

4. Research paralysis. Some people are more comfortable with technology than they are with people. Rather than avoid gathering information, they overdo it. You’ll find them at their desks, basking in the glow of their computer monitors, poring over online and database research, surrounded by charts and graphs.

   Their mantra is not “Ready, aim, fire.” It’s “Ready, aim, aim.” This approach creates the risk of losing relevant, usable information in a mountain of details.

5. Poor time management. You may be familiar with the time management grid which illustrates four categories: (1) Urgent and Important, (2) Urgent but not Important, (3) Important but not Urgent and (4) not Urgent and not Important. It’s human nature to concentrate on the tasks which are in the urgent category, regardless of their importance. Something shouts “do this now,” and we do it – often without asking ourselves if it can wait.

   Good time managers discipline themselves to focus on tasks which are important but not urgent.

6. Lack of desire. Every job has its most favorite and least favorite parts. Strong sales people persevere through the parts they don’t like, because they see how those duties fit into the big picture. Weak sales people simply avoid the things they don’t like.

7. Lack of perspective. Too many sales people – veterans as well as rookies – simply don’t realize the importance of research. The message here for them is: knowledge is power. That goes for knowledge of the sales process, as well as knowledge of their prospective advertisers.

John Foust has conducted training programs for thousands of newspaper advertising professionals. Many ad departments are using his training videos to save time and get quick results from in-house training. Email for information: john@johnfoust.com
Tragedies are widely read but difficult to report

A family’s farm is devastated by a tornado. A reporter is on the scene moments afterward to record the events, including talking with family members.

A student commits suicide and, understandably, it’s a shock to many people. A story documents the community’s response; the family relives the episode, blow by blow.

A child is murdered. Within days, an interview with the grieving parent is published.

All three stories were handled during my tenure as editor of the Red Wing Republican Eagle. All three dealt with tragedies and involved interviews with family, friends or others close to the situation. All three probably put people in an unfamiliar – and uncomfortable – spotlight.

Tragedies are some of the most readable stories but also the most difficult to write. It’s probably the toughest assignment for any reporter – rookie or veteran.

It’s difficult to predict how the people will respond – when approached for the story, during the interview and after it’s published for all to read. Anger, bitterness, remorse, guilt – people may react with any of these emotions.

A reporter from another newspaper, who was involved in such an incident, wrote about a letter to the editor his newspaper received describing the reaction of the family of a man killed in a car-truck collision. It was written by a member of the man’s family.

“To be honest,” the family member wrote, “our first reaction was anger and dismay that a reporter would violate our family’s privacy during a time of grief. The reporter, however, handled the contact with tact and concern that was not upsetting to our mother.

“The result was an article that provided your readers with some small comprehension of this man who died in the crash. For many readers who wondered why they were late to work, your paper let them know it was because a decent, hardworking man lost his life that day, and this man had a family that is now grieving its loss.

“A reporter’s job can be very difficult. Reporters are forced to confront the most unhappy circumstances on a daily basis. Our purpose in writing this letter is not to criticize, but perhaps to enlighten journalists to the immense impact that a seemingly insignificant article can have on the parties involved.

“On behalf of families everywhere who find themselves facing similar circumstances, we would like to let the press know that a small investment of empathy and time is what distinguishes someone who is a professional from someone who is just doing his job.”

The advice is well taken when pursuing any story, but especially when reporters are in the midst of a sensitive or tragic situation. Often how a story is pursued is equally important to how it is presented.

In this case, the reporter’s approach was professional and much appreciated by the individuals directly involved, and it resulted in a better story. That will reap benefits for himself, his newspaper and the readers.


**Rick**

From Page 6

his own ball with an hour’s sleep the night before, a story for another day.

We were both reformed smokers. One year, on the way to The Masters, just before Orley left sports for news, he said, “Rickey, I’ve got a proposition, let’s smoke on this trip. Just this trip. This might be my last Masters. I don’t want to do it without cigarettes.”

I was a pushover. We pulled over for a carton of Winston, Reds, mind you. Long story short: I quit again, a year later. I think it was three years for Orley.

Good writing is hard work. Orley made it look easy. He always seemed to have the right touch, the perfect word. He edited me once when I was describing a dark and threatening sky. Try “evil” Orley said of the sky. I did. It was shorter, simpler, much more telling. Perfect.

Much of Orley’s writing was perfect or nearly so. He was not above dashing off a column in 20 minutes so he could make a tee time. But when he deeply cared about something or someone — someone like Bailey Howell or Archie Manning — no one was better.

So, as I was saying, I thought I knew so much about Orley before he was diagnosed on 11/11/11. But here’s what I did not know: That he was courageous beyond even his own words. That he would fight a truly evil disease for 27 months. That he would remain Orley through all that hell on earth.

He did. And, as much as we all hate to lose him, he deserves this rest.

Rick Cleveland is the executive director of the Mississippi Sports Hall Fame and Museum and a syndicated columnist. His email address is rcleveland@msfame.com.
Tips for a new newspaper publisher

I have a new friend on Facebook. I just “accepted” Roger’s friend request this morning. More about that later.

While speaking at a convention last week, I noticed Roger sitting in the front row, taking notes furiously in my classes. There were sessions on photo editing, page design, newspaper management and PDF technology. He sat through every class, writing most of the time.

I hadn’t met Roger before, so I struck up a conversation with him during a break. I learned that he was new to the newspaper business. When I asked what he did at the paper, he paused.

I interjected, “Let me guess. Everything.”

He laughed and said, “Yes, just about everything.”

We chatted about that for a moment, then I explained to Roger that I’d heard that before. He told me he had recently purchased a paper and was doing everything he could to make it grow.

Here are some simple tips I give to folks like Roger to help grow their papers:

- Improve the quality of your content. For community papers, the key is hyperlocal. Include stories that are important to the readers.
- Improve the look of your paper. If I had to name one thing that could increase the popularity of many community newspapers, it would be improving the look of the product.

Looking over Roger’s paper, I see a lot of areas that could be improved:

- Headlines aren’t consistent. Some are centered. Some are justified. The leading (space between lines) is too great in the headlines.
- Black & White photos are too dark and muddy. It makes the whole paper look dirty. That will probably change after a private lesson I gave Roger between classes.
- Get rid of the clip art. Clip art can make a newspaper look more like a church newsletter. I’ll have a talk with Roger about that.
- Even more local content. I would have more columns like “Students of the Month” and “An In-depth Look at the Life of Our State Representative” and fewer columns like “Are You Ready For Valentines Day?” and a few others.

I like Roger’s paper. He’s done some really good things. He’s got a religion page with a column by a local clergy member that is full of ads from local religious groups. He has several stories about local athletes and ball teams. And I’m sure a lot of families pick up his paper for the kid’s page, which is very well done.

The keys to the future success of Roger’s newspaper aren’t that different from any other paper: local content that draws readers, continued updating of equipment and training to produce an attractive publication, plus consistent efforts to keep and attract advertisers.

I’ll look forward to checking out Roger’s paper in a couple of weeks and seeing if the training was worth it.

Email Kevin Slimp at kevin@kevinslimp.com.

Press associations join fight against new ad tax

>> From NAA

ARLINGTON, Va. >> Forty-seven press associations, including MPA, have voiced their opposition to an advertising tax proposed by Senate Finance Committee Chairman, Sen. Max Baucus, in his paper “Discussion Draft on Cost Recovery and Accounting Language,” which was released in December. The ad tax proposal would require all advertisers to wait up to five years before they can fully deduct the cost of half of their advertising as a business expense.

As the letter explains, “We believe the proposal in the discussion draft would severely undercut the economic power of advertising to generate sales and support jobs. The proposed tax on advertising would push our economy down at a time when businesses – including newspapers and other media that rely on advertising – are beginning to move forward in a positive direction.”

Advertising currently accounts for $5.8 trillion of the $33.8 trillion in U.S. economic output and supports 21.1 million of the 136.2 million U.S. jobs, according to estimates by economic consulting firm IHS Global Insight. “The proposed tax would have an immediate and devastating impact on newspapers and other media, where advertisers underwrite much of the cost of bringing news, information and entertainment to all Americans,” reads the letter.

The associations’ letter reminds policy makers that advertising is an ordinary and necessary cost of doing business and has been treated as a deductible expense for 100 years and urges members of the Finance Committee to reconsider including the proposed tax in a tax reform package.

NNA survey finds continued support for community papers

>> From NNA

COLUMBIA, Mo. >> Two-thirds of residents in small towns across America depend upon their local newspaper for news and information, according to the National Newspaper Association’s most recent newspaper readership survey.

NNA, founded in 1885, represents 2,200 members across the U.S. Its mission is to protect, promote and enhance America’s community newspapers. Most of its members are weekly or small daily newspapers in smaller or niche communities.

The survey noted that more readers are using mobile devices to shop, read and communicate. The number with smartphones jumped from 24 percent to 45 percent and 39 percent said they used the phones to access local news.

Newspaper websites remained the leading provider of local news, followed distantly by a local TV station’s site and then by national aggregators, such as Google and Yahoo.

The annual NNA Community Newspaper Readership survey was completed in 2013 in partnership with the Center for Advanced Social Research of the Reynolds Journalism Institute at the University of Missouri. Surveyors reached 508 households in communities where a local newspaper of circulation of 15,000 or less served the communities. The survey began in 2005. It has consistently shown the community newspaper to be the information leader in smaller communities.

Overall, readers in the 2013 survey gave high ratings to the accuracy, coverage, quality of writing and fairness of news reporting of the local print newspapers. In “coverage of local news,” “quality of writing” and “fairness of reporting,” their combined ratings were higher than in 2012.

94% of readers agreed that the newspapers were informative.

80% said that they and their families looked forward to reading the newspapers.

78% relied on the newspapers for local news and information.
Print still leads local consumption for news readers

>> From MediaPost

Just over half (55%) of the U.S. newspaper audience still reads their local newspaper in print only -- with no overlapping digital consumption.

That’s according to a new survey of 150 U.S. media markets conducted by Scarborough on behalf of the Newspaper Association of America. It found another 15% read their local newspapers both in print and online, while an additional 10% read newspaper content on a mobile device, as well as print and online.

Just 4% read their newspaper in print and mobile, eschewing other online consumption.

Given all these numbers, it’s easy to deduce that the digital-only newspaper audience (including people who avoid print and only read newspapers online, via mobile devices, or both) actually remains fairly small. Indeed, just 7% of those surveyed said they read their local newspaper only online, while just 3% read it with a mobile device, and a mere 5% read it both online and with a mobile device.

Delta road trip

MPA Vice President Joel McNeece (center) and Executive Director Layne Bruce (right) visit with member Scott Coopwood, publisher of The Cleveland Current and Delta Magazine, at his Cleveland office. The stop was part of a Delta road trip that took McNeece, Bruce and Meek School of Journalism and New Media Dean Will Norton to Marks, Tunica, Cleveland, Indianola, Greenville, Belzoni and Yazoo City.