



M A R Y B E T H W E S T

Mary Beth West, FPRCA

Maryville (Greater Knoxville), Tennessee (U.S.)

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Professional Summary

Mary Beth West delivers competitive impact for organizations through the power of strategic communications, helping senior management teams build credible, trust-driven relationships and brand reputations with diverse stakeholders who are mission-critical to financial success.



Her commentary has been included in *The Wall Street Journal*, *Harvard Business Review*, the *USA Today Network*, *Business Insider*, *PRweek*, *PR News*, *The Public Relations Strategist* and other business publications.

With her consulting colleague, Kelly Fletcher, Mary Beth co-founded the “**Ms. InterPReted**” **Podcast**, which dispels myths and misunderstandings about public relations, PR ethics, media, marketing to women, and larger strategic communications and management issues.

The University of Tennessee honored Mary Beth as its Public Relations Alumna of the Year in 2013 – the first time the honor was bestowed, nearly two decades after faculty from UT’s College of Communication & Information named her its Public Relations Student of the Year.

Mary Beth became Accredited in Public Relations (APR) by the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) in 1999, and is a past recipient of PRSA’s David Ferguson Award, honoring her national contributions to the advancement of public relations education. She is also a past national board member of PRSA, which inducted Mary Beth into its College of Fellows in 2017.

Mary Beth now invests her industry service with the London-based **Public Relations and Communications Association (PRCA)** – which named her as a **Fellow (FPRCA)** in summer 2022. In May 2020, the PRCA appointed Mary Beth as a founding member of its **Ethics Council**, of which she is now co-chair. She also serves on the PRCA’s **Global Advisory Board**, launched in September 2021.

A graduate of Leadership Knoxville and Leadership Oak Ridge in East Tennessee, Mary Beth has served actively on several non-profit and advisory boards, most recently including **Nurture the Next**, **Pellissippi State Foundation**, **First Horizon Bank** and the **Blount Memorial Foundation**.





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Professional Experience

January 2018 – Present. Senior Strategist / Contractor, Fletcher Marketing PR, Knoxville, Tenn.

- Serves as an independent contractor alongside senior team to develop client strategies, insights and campaigns to advance business objectives through effective brand communications and relationship-building
- Co-hosts and oversees content / production of the “Ms. InterPReted” PR Podcast

March 2003 – January 2018. Principal, Mary Beth West Communications, LLC, Maryville, Tenn.

- Launched as an independent consulting practice; grew client portfolio by 2007 with annual billings at nearly three times the national industry average for solo public relations consultancies in the U.S.
- Expanded business model to full-service public relations firm in 2008
- Led the firm in recovering from an office fire in September 2012 that destroyed all physical infrastructure
- Led subsequent growth of the firm by more than 300 percent in revenue over a 24-month period, with accounts nationwide – including manufacturing, financial services, technology, B2B services and education sectors
- Sold the firm to Fletcher Marketing PR in January 2018

May 1999 – May 2002. Regional Vice President – Marketing & Public Relations; Union Planters Corporation (NYSE: UPC; subsequently acquired by Regions Bank), Memphis, Tenn.

- Managed all communications programs / budget for Union Planters’ East Tennessee region – a \$1.3 billion, 35-branch banking group of a \$34.2 billion financial institution – the largest based in Tennessee at that time

Spring 2001 – 2002. Adjunct Instructor, University of Tennessee College of Communications

- Taught semester-long undergraduate courses, “Public Relations Writing” and “Public Relations Case Studies”

March 1998 – May 1999. Asst. Vice President/Marketing, BankFirst (NASDAQ: BKFR, subsequently acquired by BB&T), Knoxville, Tenn.

- Developed market research, strategic planning and implementation of advertising, public relations and promotional campaigns in the Marketing Department of this 23-branch, \$550 million community bank serving five East Tennessee counties

February 1996 – January 1998. Director, Community Relations, Corrections Corporation of America (NYSE: CXW; now rebranded as CoreCivic), Nashville, Tenn.

- Created and implemented internal / external communications programs to achieve business development and financial objectives for this international industry leader in private sector corrections
- Oversaw an award-winning crisis communications / preparedness program covering CCA’s 50-plus correctional facilities in U.S. and abroad

June 1994 – February 1996. Account Executive, Frontline Marketing, Nashville, Tenn.

- Managed advertising and public relations services for various manufacturing, financial services, technology and retail accounts





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Professional and Community Affiliations

- **Public Relations and Communications Association (PRCA)**, Member, 2019; PR Council, 2020; Global Ethics Council – Founding Member, 2020, Co-Chair, 2021-Present
- **International Communications Consultancy Organisation**, London, U.K. (ICCO), Board, 2020-Present
- **Nurture the Next** – Board Member, 2019-Present
- **Blount Memorial Hospital Foundation Board** – 2019-Present; Board Vice Chair, 2019-Present
- **Pellissippi State Community College Foundation Board** – 2018-2020
- **Ethics & Compliance Initiative (ECI)** – Washington, D.C.) – Member, 2018-Present; Grantor to partner with the PRCA in a global survey to assess ethics / compliance issues in the PR industry
- **Blount County Election Commission** – 2017-2021
- **Leadership Knoxville** – Graduate / Class of 2018; **Leadership Oak Ridge** Graduate, Class of 2014
- **First Horizon Bank / Maryville Region Advisory Board**, 2012-Present
- **East Tennessee Foundation**, Board of Directors, 2013-2018; **Blount County Community Fund**, Board, 2019-Present
- **Great Smoky Mountains Heritage Center**, Board of Directors, 2013-2018
- **University of Tennessee Alumni Board**, 2016-2018
- **University of Tennessee College of Communication & Information**, Board of Visitors, 2001-2015; Honorary BOV, 2016-2021
- **Champions for PRSSA**, National Co-Chair, 2009-2019
- **Public Relations Society of America (PRSA)** – Member, 1994-2021. Senior Counsel for Advocacy to PRSA National Board, 2008. Director At-Large, National Board of Directors, 2002-03

Education

- **Bachelor's degree in Communications, University of Tennessee—Knoxville, *cum laude***; awarded "Public Relations Student of the Year" in 1994 by UT College of Communications faculty

Honors and Awards

- **Public Relations & Communications Association (PRCA)** – Fellow, 2022
- *The (Maryville, Tennessee) Daily Times* – Wall of Fame Award, 2018
- Lorna Norwood Excellence in Mentorship Award, PRSA Volunteer Chapter, 2017
- City of Maryville, Tennessee / *The Daily Times* Athena Award Nominee, 2015
- **Public Relations Alumna of the Year**, University of Tennessee College of Communication & Information, 2013
- **Blount County Chamber of Commerce**, Woman-Owned Business Excellence Award, 2012
- "40 Under 40" Honoree – *Greater Knoxville Business Journal*, 2011
- **PRSA National David Ferguson Award** (for contributions to public relations education nationwide), 2010
- **Volunteer Chapter/PRSA Harvey I. Cobert Award** (for professional contributions in East Tennessee), 2006
- **Alpha Omicron Pi / Knoxville Chapter Alumna of the Year**, 2005
- **PRSSA National Hall of Fame Award** (for contributions to public relations students), 1997
- **University of Tennessee Chancellor's Citation for Extraordinary Campus Leadership and Service**, 1994
- **Sammie Lynn Puett Public Relations Student of the Year Award**, UT College of Communications, 1994

References available upon request

