

Harold Burson

Founding Chairman
Burson-Marsteller

Harold Burson, in a survey conducted by *PRWeek*, was described as "the century's most influential PR figure." This recognition is a culmination of more than fifty years of serving as counselor to and confidante of corporate CEOs, government leaders and heads of public sector institutions.

PRWeek's summary of his career recapitulates his role as public relations preeminent practitioner:

"The architect of the largest public relations agency in the world today, Burson-Marsteller chairman Harold Burson's contribution is immense in many other ways besides. He started practicing the concept of integrated marketing decades before the term was even invented. He brought PR into the advertising business at Young & Rubicam as an equal (it's arguably never been achieved again). His development of training programs set the benchmark that other agencies have only recently caught up with. He has personally sponsored and supported programs, industry bodies, universities and charities to improve the profession. His mentoring of talent has spawned a whole wave of ex-Burson PR agency start-ups. He created a unique Burson culture that still unites former employees. And last but certainly not least, his personal counsel has enlightened the thinking of boardrooms at many Fortune 100 companies and across the globe."

Mr. Burson has contributed to the public relations industry and worldwide community as a member and leader of several organizations, among them: Presidential appointee to the Fine Arts Commission, Washington, 1981-1985; Chairman of the National Council on Economic Education; trustee of The Economics Club of New York; Chairman of the USIA Public Relations Advisory Committee, and board member of the World Wildlife Fund (Geneva). He was elected to the Horatio Alger Society in 1986 and is an Executive Council Member of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi.

Mr. Burson is founder of the Kennedy Center Corporate Fund, Washington, D.C., a director of Kennedy Center Productions, Inc., and a trustee and founder of the Fortas Chamber Music Fund. He is a member of the New York Society of Security Analysts, the New York Academy of Medicine, the President's Advisory Board of the New York Academy of Sciences and the Advisory Board of the Business Council for International Understanding. He was Chairman of the Public Relations Seminar in 1984.

Mr. Burson has received numerous honors and awards, including The Public Relations Society of America Gold Anvil Award (1980), and the Arthur W. Page Society Hall of Fame Award (1991). He was named Public Relations Professional of the Year by Public Relations News (1977 and 1989). He received the Alexander Hamilton Medal from the Institute of Public Relations (1999); the Athena Award from the Partnership for Women's

Health at Columbia University School of Medicine (2000); PRSA Atlas Award for International Achievement (1998); the John W. Hill Award for Leadership from the New York Chapter of PRSA (1993). He also received the Millennium Award, University of Florida, College of Journalism (2000), and was the First Executive-in-Residence at the University of Kentucky, College of Communications (2000). Recently, he received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the College of Communication, University of Texas at Austin (2002) and the Alumni Hall of Fame (2002) Award from the Memphis City Schools.

Boston University honored him with a Doctor of Humane Letters degree (hon.) in 1988 and a Chair in Public Relations was established in his name at Boston University in 2002. He is a graduate of the University of Mississippi and was elected to the Alumni Hall of Fame in 1986. He is a veteran of World War II with service as a combat engineer in France, Belgium, Holland and Germany. As an Army news correspondent for American Forces Network, he covered the Nuremberg Trial of leading Nazi war criminals.

Mr. Burson is currently the author of a blog focused on the ever-changing role of public relations today.