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# USM captures nation's top public relations award

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Written by Submitted report

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The Public Relations Society of America has honored The University of Southern Mississippi with a Silver Anvil Award, signifying the highest level of achievement in public relations practices.

The University bested associations and nonprofit organizations in the category of Events and Observances of Seven or More Days for its entry, "The Southern Miss Story: Enriching the Brand of a Research University Through a Centennial Celebration." A first for the University, the Silver Anvil honor is the second for University President Martha Saunders,

a PRSA member who won a 1995 Silver Anvil for her role in a public safety communication campaign, "Just 2 It!," at the University of West Florida.

"The Silver Anvil is a coveted award among communication professionals," Saunders said. "We were in fine company with finalists from big companies such as Pepsico, American Express, eBay and FedEx to name just a few."

The University's entry included information on events and publicity, videos, publications, and more from 2010. Southern Miss celebrated the Centennial anniversary

of its March 30, 1910, founding throughout the calendar year.

The celebration included events such as a Symphony Orchestra performance with world-famous soprano Renée Fleming, a

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“So many people put in countless hours to make our Centennial a success,” Saunders said. “I am glad to see them get the recognition they deserve.”

PRSA also recognized the University with Silver Anvil Awards of Excellence for the same entry in two additional categories, Reputation/Brand Management and Integrated Communications. The University's Centennial history book, “Treasured Past, Golden Future: The Centennial History of The University of Southern Mississippi,” was honored with a Bronze Anvil Award of Excellence.

PRSA is the nation's largest community of public relations and communications professionals. Its 31,000 members represent nearly every practice area and professional and academic setting in the public relations field. The Silver Anvils, which PRSA began awarding in 1946, are regarded as the pre-eminent achievement of public relations -- the highest watermark of success for any practitioner and organization.

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