



Why a Philip Dorf Award for Mentoring?

Philip Dorf was the consummate New York City public relations executive. Yet throughout his fast-paced, workaholic career, he always found plenty of non-billable time to help up-and-coming professionals find their way into, and up through, the industry's ranks. As he was known to all, "Phil" began his career after nearly a decade of writing and editing radio news copy for United Press. He left UP to join one of New York's early PR firms, Tex McCrary, Inc., founded by the eponymous husband-and-wife team, Tex and Jinx.

Phil's career advanced quickly: to NW Ayer Public Relations, where he was hired by a young PR guy named William Safire—yes *the* William Safire. The first young account executive to work for Phil: Barbara Walters. From there he spent more than a decade at the Rowland Company, rising to Senior VP and head of the New York Office. By that time he was long since hard at work mentoring, aiding and abetting the careers of (among others) Robert Marston, Saul Bennett and Bob Rothenberg, all of whom became notable PR stars. Then he spent a decade at Harshe, Rotman & Druck, which eventually became part of Ruder-Finn, where he recognized the talents of many young people, including Jerry Schwartz and Ken Makovsky who are now two of the most prominent PR agency owners in the country. For nearly another decade after that he was back at Robert Marston as president of the firm's Corporate Division. Phil never retired. He loved his work and the talented young people who crossed his path every day.

But this award is not about Phil or the people he hired. It was established in his memory as a fitting way to encourage mentoring among everyone in PRSA New York. Taking the time, for example, to help a recent college grad or young journalist thinking about a career in public relations make their decision. Or getting them an introduction or a leg up—or two—on the ladder of success. Phil pushed many of the best and brightest to Dorf & Stanton, which was run by his son Bob and partner Alex Stanton, and which evolved into one of the biggest firms in the nation before it merged with a global giant. But mostly Phil tried hard to help bright young talents help themselves by leading them to a job or a networking opportunity or both. And along the way he'd edit their resumes, find typos or grammatical errors in their cover letters, and make time to give a helping hand to dozens—more likely hundreds—looking for a guiding light to help them navigate the currents of the city's PR profession.

That's why the New York chapter established this award: to recognize and encourage others who've made it in the profession to do as Phil did and to remind us each year of how important that time can be.

This sketch was adapted almost verbatim from remarks made by Phil Dorf's son Bob when he presented one of the awards in his father's memory at the Chapter's annual Big Apple Awards ceremony.