Alumni often help the institution in tangible ways. Many universities seek the political support of their alumni, frequently in the form of organizing a legislative network to lobby for state support of their programs. Oftentimes alumni also get involved by meeting and recruiting potential students. Recent developments in this area include the creation of mentoring programs to help young professionals get established in their careers.

Universities help their alumni stay in contact through the creation of alumni locators and directories; this helps strengthen ties to their alma mater. Finally, universities use alumni relations as a vehicle by which to recognize their distinguished graduates, usually in the form of distinguished alumni awards. These awards serve as the foundation for future development opportunities for the institution.

Keith M. Hearit and Lauren Berkshire Hearit

See also Alumni Relations; Employee Communication; Managing the Corporate Public Relations Department; News Services; Public Relations Department; Social Media

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Colorado Coal Strike

The bitter strike waged against the coal operators of southern Colorado in 1913–1914 was one of the first major tests of the emerging field of public relations in the United States.

The United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) sought to organize the immigrant workers who worked for some 70 companies in the state. However, the largest and most influential coal operator was the Colorado Fuel & Iron Company (CF&I), which was 40% owned by John D. Rockefeller Sr., scion of the Standard Oil Trust. Rockefeller took comparatively little interest in the company, which he invested in as a favor to railroad tycoon George Gould. The Rockefellers actually intended to sell their stake in CF&I as soon as market conditions improved, but events on April 20, 1914, squelched any hope of that occurring.

On that Monday morning, as the strike ended its seventh month, a gun battle broke out between Colorado militiamen and armed strikers who had been evicted from company-owned houses and were living in a tent colony near Ludlow, Colorado. Accounts vary about how the skirmish began, but by the end of the day at least eight men and one boy had been killed by gunfire before the tent colony burned to the ground. However, the real tragedy of the "Ludlow massacre" was the suffocation deaths of two women and 11 children who were consumed by smoke after hiding from the crossfire in earthen pits below ground.

The union, aided by sympathetic and sensationalistic newspapers in Denver, quickly blamed the entire affair on Rockefeller and his son, John D. Rockefeller Jr., who had assumed responsibility for the family's business affairs. Although they were 1,500 miles away from the incident and had not been in Colorado for 10 years, the Rockefellers were labeled as personally responsible for the strike, for the attack by the militia, and for the deaths of innocent women and children.

Newspapers across the country carried glaring headlines for the first several days about the tragedy, but the real pressure came as newspapers in New York and the East covered efforts by Congressman Martin Foster and President Woodrow Wilson to seek a settlement of the strike. Rockefeller had steadfastly refused to meddle with the local managers who, like their counterparts in all other Rockefeller investments, were allowed and expected to operate the day-to-day business. CF&I was a member of a mine operators association that staunchly opposed union recognition, particularly any union led by the leaders of UMWA District 15.

Rockefeller told a congressional subcommittee in early April 1914 that he was not opposed to unions, but JDR Jr. (and presumably his father) staunchly believed philosophically that men should not be forced to join a union and should be able to work anywhere they wished. About the

strike, he had told the committee prior to Ludlow, "My conscience acquits me." Those words would haunt him.

The Rockefellers were helplessly sucked into the fray. A well-oiled publicity campaign was launched by Walter H. Fink, publicity director of the UMWA in Colorado. Protests were also organized in Denver by journalist George Creel and in New York City and Tarrytown, New York (home of several Rockefeller estates) by Upton Sinclair. The socialist writer also picketed the Rockefellers' office at 26 Broadway and went to jail instead of paying a small fine in order to generate even more sympathetic press coverage. The Rockefellers received death threats from the radical members of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). Sunday services at their church were disrupted. Later, a bomb intended for the Rockefellers exploded in a New York tenement house and killed four suspected protesters.

Rallies were organized in cities around the country, ministers lashed out from pulpits across the country about the brutality in Colorado, and a delegation of miners' wives toured Washington and New York to tell their tales of woe. The Rockefellers were bolstered by positive letters of support from many business people, but crank letters containing threats were also received. For nearly two months, their family homes were under armed guard.

Public Relations Response

After six weeks of intense pressure, John D. Rockefeller Jr., and his staff desperately sought ways to set the public record straight, to rectify the damage to the family's name, and to solve the underlying problem between labor and capital. Therefore, in early June 1914, JDR Jr. enlisted the aid of two consultants, publicist Ivy Lee and industrial relations specialist William Lyon Mackenzie King.

Lee is often referred to as the father of modern public relations, although he always used the term "publicity" to describe his work. Lee was special assistant to the president of the Pennsylvania Railroad and, in addition to his regular job, assumed the job of helping one of the nation's most powerful families.

Lee set out to tell the Rockefellers' side of the story by issuing a series of 15 bulletins that were distributed to as many as 40,000 opinion leaders across the country. The bulletins detailed previously untold aspects of the strike favorable to the coal mine operators. He also sought publicity opportunities for the bulletins to appear in newspapers and served as an intermediary with the press. Lee moonlighted for the Rockefellers as a consultant for the remainder of 1914 and then joined the Rockefeller staff for 15 months in 1915 and 1916, before becoming an independent consultant with the Rockefellers as clients.

Lee gained considerable notoriety for himself and for the emerging field of publicity when information about his activities and errors pertaining to the salaries of union officials, which were contained in his bulletins, became disclosed publicly. The United States Commission on Industrial Relations (USCIR), which had been created by Congress to investigate industrial strife, grilled Colorado officials, Lee, and Rockefeller about Lee's activities. Although the USCIR's intent was to put Lee and Rockefeller in an unfavorable light, the USCIR hearings in 1914 and 1915 also shined the light of public scrutiny on the emerging power of publicity before World War I.

While Lee attended to publicity matters, King focused his attention on resolving the labor problems themselves. King proved to be a turn-of-the-century advocate for improvement of management-employee relations and proposed a mechanism for conciliation that would bring labor and capital to voluntary organization during a time before unions were guaranteed the right to negotiate.

King was almost as controversial as Lee. After being hired to study labor relations problems by the then-fledgling Rockefeller Foundation, USCIR investigators quickly questioned whether the nonprofit Rockefeller Foundation (which received a special federal charter in 1913) was misusing its resources to benefit the Rockefellers in Colorado. King had been the labor minister in Canada, until 1911, and was distrusted by American union leaders for his legislation, adopted in Canada, that required arbitration of labor disputes before any strike could be called.

The centerpiece of King's work for the Rockefellers was the Colorado Industrial Plan (CIP), adopted in 1915. The CIP became a prototype for company unions as it created mechanisms for

dialogue between management and rank-and-file employees. The CIP served as a model for American industrial relations until 1935, when Congress passed the Wagner Act, which guaranteed the right of unions to engage in collective bargaining. Moreover, King was successful in persuading young Rockefeller and CF&I officials about the need for employees to participate in management decisions and the value of good working and living conditions.

King, who became prime minister of Canada in 1921, proved to be more than a labor relations specialist. He also became a long-time trusted adviser to the Rockefellers. King (along with Lee) helped prepare Rockefeller for grueling testimony before the USCIR, organized a program of social welfare to improve economic conditions in Colorado, and orchestrated a highly successful three-week visit by Rockefeller to Colorado in October 1915. While in Colorado, JDR Jr. saw conditions firsthand, met with miners in their homes, spoke with community leaders, and committed himself to much needed improvements.

Industry and Humanity, a book penned by King while he served as a consultant to the Rockefeller Foundation in 1916–1918, serves as a treatise on labor-capital relationships that is a precursor of modern public relations thought. Among King's key points are the importance of two-way communication and mutual respect, the importance of stakeholders in organizations, and the value of publicity so that the activities of organizations are widely known and misunderstandings are avoided.

Kirk Hallahan

See also Lee, Ivy

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Commentary, Radio and Television

Radio or television commentary is a spoken explanation or interpretation of an event, activity, action, occasion, or statement by a person to add depth or context to a broadcast. It is an audible expansion of a topic. A person may offer more information on a topic, perhaps giving an illustration or narrative that adds depth or context. At times, a spokesperson from a public relations firm is asked to provide commentary about an event or occasion involving a client during a radio or television broadcast.

A person delivering such commentary uses words that assist in illustrating a point of view or opinion on a topic that may be important during a broadcast. Commentary may be delivered live or as a prerecorded statement. Often broadcasters include a commentator in a live report to discuss an event that is unfolding as the radio or television broadcast occurs in real time.

Commentary occurs on radio and television in many forms. Commentary about sports may be the most recognized form of this type of discussion concerning an organized event. Professional sports games typically have a play-by-play announcer who describes what is happening on the field of play while a commentary announcer gives context to the broadcast by presenting facts and opinions about players involved and the game in general. Political commentary is also an often-witnessed dialogue on network news radio and television stations. Cable television news networks that operate 24 hours a day host programs that often contain commentary from guests. A topic is presented and various people offer audible context and opinion that may inform and educate the audience.

Producers of broadcast programs select representatives from different political parties to comment on certain high-profile platforms during an election. This is known as radio and television commentary, depending on the format of presentation. For example, in the United States, television commentaries usually occur on election nights. Specifically, media establishments, such as NPR or Fox News, may invite university professors who research politics to comment on trends in voting.