



**FIRST EXPERIENCE COMMUNICATIONS AND MINTZ & HOKE WIN
"BEST IN SHOW" AT 2006 PRSA MERCURY AWARDS**

John Morgan of Quinnipiac University named Outstanding Practitioner of the Year

WALLINGFORD, CT, June 8, 2006. First Experience Communications of Glastonbury, CT and Mintz & Hoke of Avon, CT have earned "Best in Show" awards for Public Relations Campaign and Tactics, respectively, at the 2006 Mercury Awards, hosted by the Southern Connecticut, Westchester/Fairfield and Connecticut Valley chapters of the Public Relations Society of America.

The awards were presented June 8 at the Chevy Theater in Wallingford, among a total of 40 awards given at the eleventh annual Mercury Awards, Connecticut's premier event recognizing outstanding work in the public relations, communications and marketing professions. Entries were judged by the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania Chapter of the PRSA. Katishia Cosley of Fox 61 News emceed the event.

First Experience's award was for its integrated communications plan for Springfield Technical Community College, and was cited by the judges for its "thorough research, clear objectives, an explicit action campaign and an evaluation that was clearly defined before the campaign began." Mintz & Hoke won for its Mohegan Sun Insider Newsletter, which the judges praised for its "excellent situation and identification of need" and its results. (See attached list for all winners.)

The individual award for outstanding practitioner of the year was given to John Morgan, director of public relation at Quinnipiac University, for his work in advancing the profession through significant achievements, involvement and reputation within the industry. Morgan has been an active member of PRSA for ten years, including roles as 2003 president of the Southern Connecticut chapter and 2005 Tri-State District chair.

-MORE-

Page 2 of 4
PRSA announces 2006 Mercury winners

The Mercury awards were created in 1996 by the Connecticut Valley Chapter to recognize outstanding work in the public relations, communications and marketing disciplines. In 2004, all three Connecticut-based PRSA Chapters joined forces to make this a regional awards competition, reaching all of Connecticut, Western Massachusetts and Westchester County, NY. Named for the Roman god of commerce and travelers – the messenger and guide of the gods -- they are designed to honor creative and strategic excellence and encourage a higher level of performance. Information on the annual competition is available on the websites of the three PRSA chapters.

The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) is an individual membership professional society of more than 20,000 public relations practitioners. The Connecticut Valley Chapter serves Central, Northern and Eastern Connecticut, as well as Western Massachusetts (www.prsa-cvc.org). The Southern Connecticut Chapter serves New Haven and New London counties (www.prsact.org), and the Westchester/Fairfield Chapter serves Fairfield County and New York's Westchester County (www.prsa-wf.org).

#

-MORE-

Page 3 of 4
PRSA announces Mercury winners

The following awards were presented in the **STRATEGIC CAMPAIGNS CATEGORIES:**

Best in Show

First Experience Communications (Glastonbury, CT) – Springfield Technical Community College

Community Relations (For Profit)

Silver: Adams & Knight Advertising/Public Relations (Avon, CT) – Mortgage Lenders Network USA New Headquarters

Community Relations (Not-for-Profit)

Silver: Elements LLC (New Haven, CT) – Shop for Spot

Institutional Programs Over \$25,000

Gold: Mason Onofrio Public Relations (Bethany, CT)– Bruegger’s Year Long Program

Special Events and Observances over \$25,000

Silver: Reader’s Digest Magazine (Pleasantville, NY) - 1,000th Issue Promotion and Celebration

Special Events and Observances under \$25,000

Gold: Mason Onofrio Public Relations (Bethany, CT) – Bruegger’s Nashville Bakery Opening
Silver: Mason Onofrio Public Relations (Bethany, CT) – Liberty Safe Haven Opening

Marketing Products and Services

Gold: The Kotchen Group (West Hartford, CT) – York Wallcoverings
Silver: Tie: Response (New Haven, CT) – Logitech “Best Boomer” Consumer Promotion
Silver: Tie: Mason Onofrio Public Relations (Bethany, CT) – Bruegger’s Whole Wheat Bagel

Crisis Communications

Gold: Adams & Knight Advertising/Public Relations (Avon, CT) – Twinings Tea Plant Closing

Multicultural Communications (Not-for Profit)

Silver: Mason y Bauzá (Bethany, CT) – Areyto Latino Festival

Integrated Communications over \$25,000

Gold: Tie: First Experience Communications (Glastonbury, CT) – Springfield Technical Community College
Gold: Tie: Pita Communications (Hartford, CT) – Solidus Branding/Marketing Campaign

The following awards were presented in the **TACTICAL CATEGORIES:**

Best in Show

Mintz & Hoke (Avon, CT) – Building Loyalty (and Sales) with the Mohegan Sun Insider Newsletter

Media Relations (For-Profit)

Gold: The Kotchen Group (West Hartford, CT) – Wallpaper is Back!
Silver: Cashman & Katz (Glastonbury, CT) – Lake Compounce as More than a Seasonal Family Theme Park

-MORE-

PRSA announces Mercury winners

Media Relations (Not-for-Profit)

Gold: The Kotchen Group (West Hartford, CT) – School Nutrition Association

Silver: Cashman & Katz (Glastonbury, CT) – National Kidney Foundation Human Interest Stories and Events

Press Kits

Gold: Mason Onofrio Public Relations (Bethany, CT) – Charleston Tea Plantation

Newsletters

Gold: Mintz & Hoke (Avon, CT) – Building Loyalty (and Sales) with the Mohegan Sun Insider Newsletter

Magazines

Silver: Cheney & Company (New Haven, CT) – Quinnipiac University Business

Annual Reports (Not-for Profit)

Gold: Family Centers (Greenwich, CT) – Family Centers 2005 Annual Report

Brochures

Gold: Tie: Cheney & Co. (New Haven, CT) – The Art of Living

Gold: Tie: Pita Communications (Hartford, CT) – What's It Going to Take

Silver: Cheney & Co. (New Haven, CT) – Student Voices, Student Stories

Special Purpose Publications

Silver: Tie: Cashman & Katz (Glastonbury, CT) – Connecticut Lottery: When Someone Plays the Lottery, all 3.5 Million People in the State Win

Silver: Tie: Cashman & Katz (Glastonbury, CT) – Preparedness Brochure for National Preparedness Week

Direct Mail/Direct Response

Silver: Mintz & Hoke (Avon, CT) – Filling Seats with Mohegan Sun Instant Offers

Internal or External Video Programs

Gold: Adams & Knight Advertising/Public Relations (Avon, CT) – United Way

Silver: First Experience Communications (Glastonbury, CT) – CPCA – Community Health Centers: Connecticut's Health Safety Net

Television Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

Gold: Adams & Knight Advertising/Public Relations (Avon, CT) – United Way

Silver: Cashman & Katz (Glastonbury, CT) – Click It or Ticket

Bylined Stories/Articles

Gold: Andrea Obston Marketing Communications (Bloomfield, CT) – Don't Get Locked Out of Europe

Silver: Andrea Obston Marketing Communications (Bloomfield, CT) – Predictions for the 2006 Mortgage Market

Editorials/Op-Ed Columns

Gold: Mason Onofrio Public Relations (Bethany, CT) – Anthem Health Care Savings Account

Silver: Mason Onofrio Public Relations (Bethany, CT) – Anthem Charter Oak

Creative Tactics

Gold: Mason Onofrio Public Relations (Bethany, CT) – Bruegger's Patriotic Bagels

Interactive Media

Gold: The Kotchen Group (West Hartford, CT) – Kohl's Candies Fashion Launch with Hilary Duff

Silver: Vanguard Strategies Co. (New Haven, CT) – CT Review Goes Online