# TIONS JUNE 10 2 AG KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

### Agricultural Public Relations Hall of Fame

Presented by,



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## About the Hall of Fame

- Awarded annually to agricultural public relations professionals who have made lifetime contributions to the industry.
- Nominees must be a current or past member of ARC.
- Begun by the Agricultural Relations Council in 2012.



#### Previous Hall of Fame Recipients

- •2012: Don Lerch and Lyle Orwig
- •2013: John Harvey and Paul S. Weller, Jr.
- •2014: Richard Howell and Gary Myers
- •2015: Steve Drake
- •2016: Carol Bodensteiner
- •2017: ARC Founders
- •2018: Jeff Altheide; Jean and Carroll Merry

# Agricultural Public Relations Hall of Fame

#### Mace Thornton



# Mace, the real early years.

Mace had a great face for ag communications!





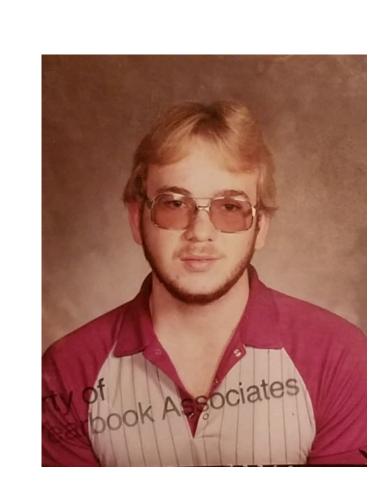


#### Mace, the early years...

First day of work, KFB











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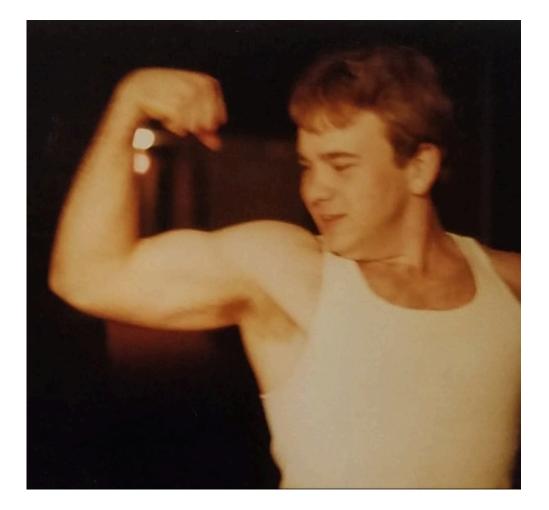
# Will the real Mace Thornton please stand up?





## Mace: Eye of the Tiger





"Eat your heart out Rocky Balboa."

#### Mace: his volunteerism





- First VP 2009 and 2010
- President 2011 and 2012
- Past President 2013 and 2014

Ag Relations Council: long time member, former president and board member. Helped lead the rebuilding of ARC from a membership of less than 10 in 2009.

# And all that jazz

## Mace: his volunteerism

#### Other Organizations:

- U.S. Farmers and Ranchers Alliance, current chair, Communications Committee
- Center for Food Integrity, current board member
- America's Heartland Public Television Program, past member of Advisory Board
- AgChat Foundation, Member of Founding Group, past member of Advisory Board
- American Agricultural Editors' Association--Highest Master Writer Level in 1993
- And I'm sure we've missed a few

## Mace: his life and career

Mace – The Early Years

- Raised on small hog farm in Kansas
- FFA for one year (did you get kicked out?)
- First paid freelance article: Topeka Capital Journal for \$50 (beer money).
- B.A., Journalism, Benedictine College, Atchison, KS, 1984

#### Mace – Career Highlights

- McPherson Sentinel, general assignment reporter/photographer
- Moonlighted as freelance writer for Farm Journal Magazine
- Kansas Farm Bureau, 1985-1990
- American Farm Bureau Federation, 1990-2019
- United Soybean Board, joined organization on June 10

#### Mace – At Home

- Currently residing in Chesterfield, MO
- Wife, Denise, holding down the fort in Stafford, VA
- Three adult children: Trace of Stafford, VA, Troy of Seattle, WA, and Taylor of Alexandria, VA
- Enjoys KC Chiefs football, Kansas State sports, smoking all kinds of meat (and an occasional cigar)



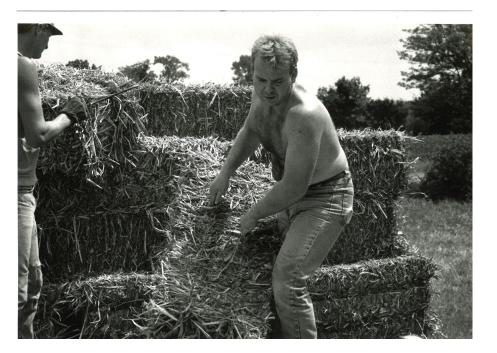




# Mace, always willing to give a helping hand!



Mace with Ronald McDonald. Mace was instrumental in the 1997 launch of the American Farm Bureau's long-running Food Check-Out Day program through which members provided Ronald McDonald Charities with food and monetary donations. Mace "putting his back into a story" he was writing at Kansas Farm Bureau. The farmer being interviewed invited Mace to help out with hay harvest and he did so.





#### Mace: Farm Bureau

#### Schlageck, Thornton, King



We can thank John Schlageck and Jack King for bringing Mace into the world of Farm Bureau public relations. Schlageck hired Mace at Kansas Farm Bureau; King hired him at the American Farm Bureau (Jack is retired from AFBF and also California Farm Bureau Federation).



#### Mace: ARC Years











#### Mace: ARC Years











#### Chris Chinn Missouri Director of Agriculture

Congratulations on being inducted into the Agricultural Public Relations Hall of Fame! I can't think of anyone more deserving than you. You have dedicated your entire career to serving America's farmers and ranchers by sharing their stories with a heartfelt passion that money cannot buy. It's been my honor to be your friend all of these years and I'm thankful for the many memories we have navigating the issues affecting many farmers and ranchers across America.

I will never forget the first time we met in Washington, D.C., during the Young Farmers & Ranchers media training. You were supposed to drill Kevin and I and be tough on us during a radio interview, and you did it well. I remember thinking, "this guy hates us!" Little did I know in that moment what a soft heart you had and that you would become one of the people who pushed me to be all that I could be. Your friendship means the world to me and I am so thankful for the support and tough love you have always shown me You're encouragement and leadership helped make me the leader I am today.

Congratulations again on your honor. You have earned it!





Charlie Arnot President, CEO, Founder at Look East PR CEO, The Center for Food Integrity

The definition of the consummate agricultural public relations professional would include attributes like a deep understanding of the complexities of today's farming environment, the ability to integrate the impact of policy, regulations and markets on all of agriculture, an appreciation of the unprecedented rate of change facing the entire food system, seasoning to understand the difference between important and urgent, insight and empathy to appreciate the varied perspectives on tough issues, and decades of experience to put all of this into meaningful context for those seeking to understand. Mace Thornton epitomizes this definition.

There isn't a challenge or issue Mace hasn't experienced in his 30 plus years in agricultural public relations. His ability to synthesize complex issues into meaningful and persuasive communication sets him apart from others in the field. As a member of the CFI board of directors, he is able to bring the perspective of agriculture and the farmer to the food system conversation in a way that builds both understanding and support. Building both appreciation and allies for today's agriculture is a skill in short supply in ag communications, but something Mace does exceptionally well.

It is a personal and professional privilege to support his induction to the Agricultural Public Relations Hall of Fame.





#### Den Gardner Executive Director, ARC

I recently reviewed some notes from a January 2009 board call (our first at G&G with the ARC leadership more than 10 years ago). Mace was first vice president at the time. We noted we had 10 members at that time and hoping for 25 by the end of 2009. It was his first board call of the "new" ARC. For the next six years, Mace stepped up as first vice president, board president, then past board president as one of our great leaders of ARC. "We've come a long way baby" thanks to Mace (and many others of course).

What always drove G&G to serve ARC and re-build the association was his passion for ARC and, from a 30,000foot level, ag communications in general. He continues to see the importance of telling the story of agriculture to industry leaders and to consumers. He has never lost sight of that. It was always about the greater good of ag communications. A rising tide does indeed lift all boats as ARC today has more than a hundred PR professionals in its membership and continues to grow.

Finally, I'll never forget those early meetings in 2010, 2011 and so on. Smoking cigars late at night and solving most of the world's problems through our eyes – ALWAYS in the interest of our members and their careers. Mace, you put us on the right tractor in the right field at the right time! Congrats to you. Well-deserved my friend!





#### **Daren Williams**

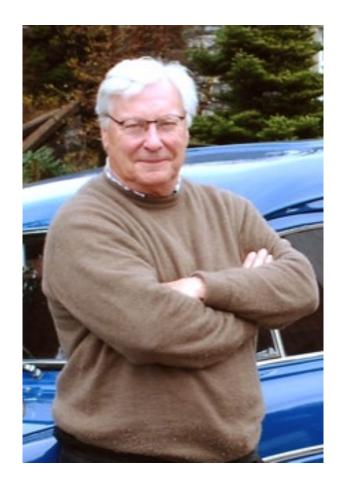
Senior Director, Global Communications, Almond Board of California

From the first time I met Mace – sometime after his arrival in Washington, D.C. in the early '90s – I knew I would like him. Not just because he was from the Great State of Kansas, but his down-to-earth middle America demeanor clearly set him apart inside the beltway. I don't think anyone would have predicted he would stay in DC almost 30 years in a variety of communications positions at the American Farm Bureau Federation, from chief speechwriter to executive director of communications. He has represented Kansas and all of American agriculture well in the nation's capital, while staying true to his midwestern roots, and will continue to do so as his illustrious career carries on at the United Soybean Board.

Mace's importance to agriculture goes beyond his work at the Farm Bureau. His leadership within the Agricultural Relations Council, particularly at a time when we needed it most, has helped advance the entire profession of agricultural public relations. His dedication to the organization is why we are all gathered in Kansas City this week. His achievements in our profession are why we honor him today. Congratulations, Mace. Ad astra per aspera!



# Best of Mace John Schlageck



Writer/Editor

Harken back to the days of tending squealing sows, plunkin' squirrels and pure living in rural, northeast Kansas.

Getting dirty, tossing the pigskin and just being a kid of the South wind. Making friends, family ties, respecting others and settling into your own skin.

School at Benedictine. The McPerson Sentinel.

A short sojourn with Kansas Farm Bureau beginning in 1985. Then on to the Windy City —the American Farm Bureau — and finally D.C. — 34 years.

Now a new adventures calls. The United Soybean Board beckons and you're going back where it all began — the Heartland.

All this time, you tirelessly advocated for agriculture. In Kansas, throughout this areat country — around the world...

So many faces, places and stories, you've painted to life with your brilliant prose. Moving the needle of public opinion on behalf of agriculture with your strategic thinking, steadfast work ethic and passion for farmers and ranchers.

#### All from a farm boy from Troy

More importantly, you've given us friendship we will cherish always. That's why everyone is here today. To celebrate your achievements and introduction into the Agricultural Public Relations Hall of Fame.

Well into your third decade as a champion for agriculture there's no need to urge you to stick to your guns. We know you will, and we simply salute your admirable run.

And all this time, you've enjoyed the stalwart strength and support of your beautiful bride, Denise, her love and that of your three children, Trace, Troy and Taylor.

Mace, we're all richer for having known you. Congratulations and God bless.



#### Mace and Denise

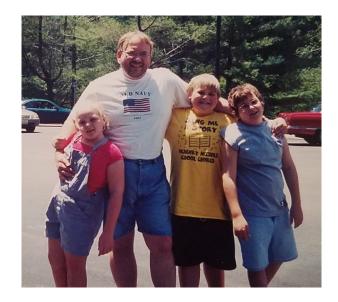




## Mace's Family



#### Mace and Denise with children, Trace, Troy, and Taylor





#### Congratulations Mace Thornton!

Welcome to the Agricultural Public Relations Hall of Fame.



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