

2013 CCI Alumni Award Winners

Kevin Kirksey, a 1998 CCI graduate, is the **2013 Advertising Alumnus of the Year**. Kevin is *Senior Director for Brand Communications and Digital with Nike North America in Portland, Oregon*. He leads advertising efforts for Nike in North America across the Running, Basketball, Women's Training, Football, Athletic Training, Soccer, Action, and Sportswear categories. He began his career in account management with Young & Rubicam, then Ogilvy & Mather (both in New York City). Key accounts for which he worked include: KFC, Sony, United Airlines, and Goldman Sachs. He later spent 11 years driving brand awareness and media consumption of ESPN content across all platforms including: SportsCenter, Without Sports, X Games, 30 for 30 and It's not crazy, it's sports. Raised in Bristol, Tennessee, Kevin is a recreational long distance runner. He's captained relay teams, ran in multiple Half Marathons and finished the 2011 New York City Marathon. He's also an avid outdoorsman, skier and snowboarder. Kevin served as the keynoter for UT's 2013 Social Media Week. **[Kevin Kirksey regrets that he could not be with us tonight due to a business conflict].**

Dean Rice, a 1994 CCI graduate, is the **2013 Communication Studies Alumnus of the Year**. Dean is Chief of Staff for Knox County Mayor Tim Burchett. His career has focused on the fields of government policy and political consulting. Prior to this, he was a partner and vice president of Pratt, Pratt & Rice, a government and community relations firm he helped found in 2006. He has over 15 years of experience in the political and governmental sectors in Tennessee, Washington and South Carolina. Most of this time was spent working for the United States Senate and House of Representatives. He also serves as an adjunct faculty member in CCI's School of Communication Studies where he teaches a course examining political persuasion and communication strategy. Dean is an emeritus member and past chair of CCI's Board of Visitors, and he was the recipient of the 2004 Phi Eta Sigma Excellence in Teaching Award. He enjoys cultural photography and has had several public exhibits of his work from trips to rural southern China and Turkey.

Dr. Shali Zhang, a 1988 Master's in information sciences graduate, is the **2013 Information Science Alumna of the Year**. Dr. Zhang is Dean of Libraries and Professor at the Mansfield Library at the University of Montana. Prior to this position, she worked at several academic libraries, including the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Wichita State University, University of South Carolina at Spartanburg, Ohio Wesleyan University, and the University of Kentucky/Southeast Community College. Dr. Zhang has published extensively and serves on the editorial boards of six professional publications. She is also the principle investigator/project director for a \$1.8 million Institute of Museum and Library Services grant. She is a past chair of the American Library Association's (ALA) International Relations Committee and of ALA's International Relations Round Table. She edited ALA's *International Leads from 2000 – 2003*. She has received a number of national awards including: the 2012 Distinguished Services Award from the Joint Conference of Librarians of Color and the 2012 Presidential Recognition Award from the Chinese American Librarians Association. **[Shali Zhang regrets that she could not be with us tonight due to a business conflict].**

Dean Littleton, a 1992 CCI graduate, is the **2013 Journalism and Electronic Media Alumnus of the Year**. Dean is Vice President & General Manager of Knoxville's WATE-TV. Prior to coming to WATE, he served as General Sales Manager at Knoxville's WVLT-TV, Denver's KUSA-TV and Knoxville's WBIR-TV. He has received a number of awards including: Gray Television/WVLT's 2012 J. Mack Robinson Spirit Award for Leadership, a Gannett Project Upfront Award and AP and SPJ Awards for news photography. He is an active member of the Knoxville community where he serves: as a Director of the Intercollegiate Online

News Network, as an Advisory Board Member for UT's School of Journalism and Electronic Media and as a Board Member of The Cancer Support Community.

Mary Beth West, a 1994 CCI graduate, is the **2013 Public Relations Alumna of the Year**. She is the key strategist and Principal of Mary Beth West Consulting, a Maryville-based firm she founded in 2003. Prior to starting her own firm, she served as Vice President of Regional Marketing for Union Planters Bank of East Tennessee and Southeastern Kentucky, as Assistant Vice President of Marketing for Knoxville's BankFirst and as Director of Community Relations for Corrections Corporation of America in Nashville. She has won a number of awards for her professional work as well as her work with the Public Relations Society of America including: an "Award of Excellence" from the Volunteer Chapter of PRSA and the PRSA National David Ferguson Award. She has served in national leadership roles for PRSA including leading PRSA's National Advocacy Advisory Board and serving two separate terms on PRSA's national board. She is also an active member of the community where she serves as a member of: the College of Communication and Information's Board of Visitors, the Board of Directors of the Girl Scouts of Southern Appalachian Council, the Board of Directors of the Blount County Chamber of Commerce and the Fort Loudoun Regional Library Board.