

WALTER SORG. APR

[REDACTED]
Lansing, MI 48910 1116

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PROFILE

Nationally accredited communications professional with a broad range of success in economic development, public policy communications, journalism and broadcasting

EXPERIENCE

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Founding board member, Voters Not Politicians ballot committee

Assistant Executive Director (Media) for the State Bar of Michigan

Primary media spokesperson and staff director for Michigan Department of Commerce

Majority communications staff director and Press Secretary to the Speaker of the House of Representatives

Communications consultant; clients included Michigan State University, multiple state agencies, Fortune 100 companies, nonprofit associations and political campaigns

BROADCASTING AND JOURNALISM

Producer/co-host Michigan Policast (2019-2020)

Co-founder, TalkLansing.net Inc. (Michigan's first full-time internet radio station)

News/talk producer and host on WILS-AM and TalkLansing.net

Award-winning broadcast journalist for radio/television stations in Detroit and Lansing including CBS TV-Detroit; CBS TV-Lansing; NBC TV-Lansing; CKLW, WXYZ, WCAR (all Detroit)

Producer of syndicated broadcast television programs and non-broadcast videos

Contributing writer and columnist, *Lansing City Pulse*

NEW MEDIA

Website design/development

Created and implemented social media marketing campaigns

Researched/implemented internet-based, no-cost system for worldwide remote radio broadcasts

Regularly explore evolution of new media for influencing public policy

ADVERTISING/MARKETING & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Senior recruitment team for Mazda Motor Company manufacturing plant (Michigan Dept. of Commerce) and numerous first-tier supplier plants

Development/management of multi-million-dollar Michigan Economic Development advertising campaign (team led by Deputy Director Louis Glazer)

Led development of \$500,000 television image campaign for State Bar of Michigan

Created marketing programs for clients of radio news/talk program

COMMUNITY/CIVIC INVOLVEMENT

Co-founder and board member, Voters Not Politicians Ballot Committee (2016-2018)

Elections judge, City of Lansing (2008 - 2020)

Member, City of Lansing Public Service Board (2019-present)

Board member, Mid-Michigan Environmental Action Council (board president for 3 years)

20-year on-air fundraising volunteer, WKAR-TV (MSU public television)

"Applause" Award for support of the Arts, Greater Lansing Area Arts Foundation

Lifetime Achievement Award – South Lansing Business Association

Past president - East Lansing Rotary

Past president - Business Network International Lansing chapter

Volunteer publicist and fundraiser - Michigan Special Olympics (1977-2012)

Volunteer publicist and fundraiser - Care Free Medical Clinic (healthcare for uninsured low-income patients)

Underwriter - Lansing Symphony Orchestra (2009-10 season)

EDUCATION

Thomas A. Edison State University; Trenton, New Jersey
B.A. Business Communication

Guest Lecturer, Michigan State University
Department of Advertising, Public Relations and Retailing;
School of Journalism

PROFESSIONAL AWARDS/ACCREDITATION

Accredited in public relations - Public Relations Society of America

Outstanding radio journalist - Michigan Associated Press Broadcast Association

Outstanding newscast (two years) - Michigan Associated Press Broadcast Association

"PACEMaker of the Year" (Individual professional excellence) - PRSA Mid-Michigan Chapter

Outstanding Special Communications - National Association of State Bar Executives

Ten "PACE" Awards for professional excellence - PRSA Mid-Michigan Chapter

MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES WITHIN VOTERS NOT POLITICIANS

As the only founding board member of Voters Not Politicians with significant experience inside Michigan State government, I had multiple responsibilities as we built and campaign for placing Proposal 2 on the ballot.

- Created the ballot committee name — Voters Not Politicians — which became the 3-word message of the campaign
- Developed and implemented media relations strategy
- Counseled the Communications Committee which developed printed and web support materials
- Provided media training for the Executive Director (Katie Fahey) to prepare her for interviews
- Created initial PowerPoint presentations on gerrymandering for use at Town Hall meetings
- Spoke at two-dozen Town Hall meetings in the first month following creation of the ballot committee — voter education combined with volunteer recruitment and local media outreach
- Primary liaison with numerous Michigan political and non-profit organization leaders
- Member of the core drafting committee for the outline of the redistricting proposal along with other board members and our legal counsel (the final draft was crafted by our attorneys)
- Counseled Board of Directors in hiring of communications and legal consultants



Walter Sorg

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October 16, 2020

Michigan Independent Redistricting Commission
C/o Redistricting@michigan.gov

Playing a role in the initial independent redistricting of Michigan would close the circle for me which began in 2013 when I first became involved in the efforts to reform redistricting in Michigan, and led me to become a founding board member of Voters Not Politicians.

I would bring to the Commission a passion for its mission as a nationally accredited communications professional with relevant management experience in all three branches of state government:

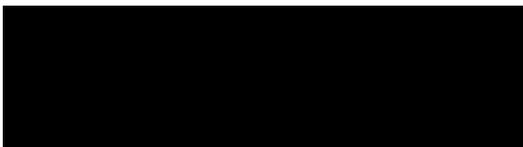
- Nine years as Majority Communications Staff Director/Press Secretary - Michigan House of Representatives
- Three years as Bureau of Public Affairs Director - Michigan Department of Commerce
- Three years as Assistant Executive Director (Media) - State Bar of Michigan

As one of the people who developed the constitutional amendment creating the Commission and was deeply involved in every aspect of the effort to enact it, I'd bring to the Commission full understanding of both the language and intent of the amendment coupled with a deep personal commitment to having the process work as well as possible.

The mantra of Voters Not Politicians in support of Proposal 2 was "F-I-T": Fair, Independent and Transparent. That was our commitment to the people of Michigan, a commitment which would be my focus as Communications Director.

I look forward to talking with the screening committee and full Commission, either in person or online.

My best always,



References

Kelly Rossman-McKinney
Director, Public Information and Education
Office of the Attorney General, State of Michigan



David Waymire
Partner
Martin Waymire Communications



Cindy Kyle
Director of Communications
MSU Institute of Public Policy and Social Research



Nancy Wang
Executive Director
Voters Not Politicians



Response to Questions in the Position Posting

- ◆ I have more than 40 years experience in public policy communications, public relations and media.
- ◆ I have held senior management positions in all three branches of state government:
 - Majority Communications Director and Press Secretary, Michigan House of Representatives (9 years)
 - Director of Public Affairs, Michigan Department of Commerce (4 years)
 - Assistant Executive Director, State Bar of Michigan (3 years)

In addition I have served as a communications consultant to multiple state agencies, private sector companies and Michigan State University; board president of a non-profit environmental organization where I was responsible for staffing.

- ◆ A communications strategy consists of these primary stages:
 - In consultation with commissioners and Executive Director, develop messaging consistent with the mission of the Commission
 - Identify critical target audiences
 - Develop a communications timeline consistent with the constitutionally mandated functions of the Commission (pre-map hearings, map development, post-development hearings, legal challenges)
 - Create a crisis communications plan,
 - Provide media training for Commission spokespersons as identified by the Commission.
- ◆ I have more than 10 years experience in developing strategic communications and outreach programs.
- ◆ Most recently I was lead for the series of town halls which provided the foundation for the efforts of Voters Not Politicians. We held 33 events over a 6 -week period. We later created a Speakers Bureau for outreach statewide. A major focus was presentations to civic groups (Rotary, Kiwanis), labor unions and local governmental leaders. As communications director of the state House of Representatives I was responsible for creating individual outreach for multiple members of the caucus.