

About Ray Strother

Dole Institute FELLOW – FALL 2008



Raymond D. Strother was born in 1940 in Port Arthur, Texas and was graduated from Thomas Jefferson High School in 1958. He attended Northwestern State College in Natchitoches, Louisiana on a track scholarship which he held for two years until he was asked to leave the institution because of political activities. He moved to LSU where he became advertising director of the *Daily Reveille* and later editor. While attending LSU and while he worked on his graduate degree he was the night reporter and photographer for the Associated Press.

While earning his MA in Journalism, Strother focused on propaganda and its use in politics. In his 1965 Master's thesis (*The Political Candidate and the Advertising Organization*) he predicted that media and not organization would dominate future political campaigns.

He has been the media producer and consultant for Senators Lloyd Bentsen, Russell Long, John Stennis, Dennis Deconcini, Gary Hart, Al Gore, Mary Landrieu, Blanche Lincoln, and others. Strother guided the Gary Hart media campaign for president in 1984 and 1988 and was assigned the Super Tuesday states for Albert Gore. He worked in governors races for Bill Clinton, Arkansas; Mark White, Texas; Bill O'Neil, Connecticut; Rudy Perpich, Minnesota; Martha Layne Collins, Kentucky; Buddy Roemer, Louisiana; Roy Barnes, Georgia and Mike Lowry, Washington. Strother has handled more than 50 campaigns for the U. S. House of Representatives and scores of campaigns for other statewide office. He has won awards for long form documentaries for civil rights hero, John Lewis and U. S. Treasurer Lloyd Bentsen.

In 2008 Strother was inducted into the American Association of Political Consultants Hall of Fame for his lifetime of work and achievement. He has also served as President and Chairman of the Board of the AAPC. Other honors include the LSU Journalism Hall of Fame; an exhibit depicting his life in the Museum of the Gulf Coast; and the Northwestern State University Long Purple Line. Strother was named a Fellow at the University of Akron and was a resident fellow at Harvard University. In 2008 he was awarded the Erbon Wise Endowed Chair in Journalism at Northwestern State University.

In 2002 he was given a new national award created to recognize political professionals who have an “exemplary record of achievement in the field and contributions to students and academic organizations.” The award is now called *The Strother*.

He has published a novel, *Cottonwood*, about a political consultant who loses his soul and a highly acclaimed autobiography, *Falling Up, How a Redneck Helped Invent Political Consulting*. He is currently working on a novel in the *Cottonwood* series and another memoir. Strother is a frequent commentator on network television and was an analyst in 2000 on the Vice Presidential Debates for PBS. He has written for *Newsweek*, the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Atlanta Constitution* and scores of other publications. *Campaigns and Elections Magazine* called him, “The Poet of Democracy.”