

NCTIA Public Service Award

In Honor of Bill Sharpe

North Carolina's First Tourism Director

In recognition of outstanding contributions by individuals and/or organizations for what they presently are doing or have done for the betterment, welfare, progress, recognition, promotion and development of the travel industry of North Carolina.

Rules and Regulations

1. An individual and/or organization's contributions must be an apparent service to the development and/or promotion of travel in North Carolina. Candidates need not be a resident of North Carolina.
2. This service must transcend the individual and/or organization's financial gain.
3. In the case of an organization or business receiving the Award, the principal officer of such organization or business shall be designated as recipient.
4. In the case of an organization or business being considered for the Award, their contribution must have materially benefited travel promotion and/or development across the state of North Carolina.
5. Any government agency, department, or government tax-supported association or organization qualifies for the Award.
6. An unsuccessful candidate one year may be renominated for the Award the following year, or for any number of subsequent years.
7. No former winner of the Award may receive it a second time.
8. Only a North Carolina Travel Industry Association member in good standing may make nominations for the NCTIA Public Service Award.

About Bill Sharpe

Few people have been more closely identified with North Carolina travel promotion than Bill Sharpe.

In 1937, the State Legislature authorized the creation of a state advertising division. Then Governor Clyde R. Hoey tapped Mr. Sharpe to head up the division. He left his newspaper job in Winston-Salem and came to Raleigh, setting up a makeshift office in the Sir Walter Raleigh Hotel. As Mr. Sharpe tells it, "I had a quarter million dollars to spend, and didn't know the first thing about what they wanted; but that wasn't much of a handicap because they didn't know what they wanted either."

Many Tarheels had never thought of their state's travel attractions as a significant enough economic commodity to warrant a state-supported advertising and promotion program. Within two years of its creation, the Division was getting favorable North Carolina stories into out-of-state papers and magazines at the rate of 500 a day. In addition, the Division – now established as a clearinghouse for NC information – had published promotional materials, established photo and information files and set up a correspondence link with key persons throughout the nation.

Until his death early in 1970, Mr. Sharpe had directed NC publicity and advertising under four governors, and became one of America's top publicists. It is notable that his identity as the state's top publicist transcended all politics.

Previous Winners

Kelly Miller.....	2010
Neal Connelly.....	2009
Bob McCoy.....	2008
Millie Barbee.....	2007
Caleb Miles.....	2006
Bill Russ	2005
North Carolina Ferry Division...	2004
David Scheu.....	2003
Penny Leary-Smith.....	2002
Debbie Vargas	2001
Mikie Wall	2000
Carol Lohr	1999
Dana Clark	1998
Judith Grizzel	1997
Gary Everhardt	1996
No recipient	1995
Sandra K. Thompson	1994
North Carolina Zoological Park.	1992
Mark R. Sumner	1991
Keep NC Clean & Beautiful	1990
Charles Kuralt	1989
Frank S. Conlon	1988
Charles Heatherly	1987

