

# Cynthia Bemis Abrams

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## Professional Experience

### **President ■ Cynthia Bemis Abrams Leadership & Public Relations Consulting (current)**

Leadership and PR consulting practice is based on my own leadership experiences, and 25+ years in executive-level PR work in the non-profit and public sectors. It includes:

- Public relations/communications advising and social media use/strategy.
- Leadership advising and development sessions with individuals and groups, emphasizing areas like communications, generational understanding, values, trust, decision making and conflict resolution.
- Experienced public speaker, presenter and strategic planning and focus group facilitator.
- Producer and host of *Advanced TV Herstory*, a podcast that tells the stories of women in and of TV. Measurable growth of listenership is occurring through expanded relationships and social media presence.

### **Adjunct Professor ■ Minnesota State University, Mankato (2014 to present)**

Develop and deliver curriculum to Honors Program students on leadership that fulfills their requirements of being able to critique leadership models or styles within group contexts and nurtures their leadership within campus or community organizations.



### **Director of Alumni Relations & Special Events ■ Minnesota State University, Mankato**

Responsible for communications and engagement of the university's 105,000+ alumni. Worked with senior administration and staff from athletics and fundraising to deliver consistent messages through traditional and social media. Utilized technology for outreach and storytelling to enhance worldwide access and exposure to the university. Represented Alumni Association at fundraising and social events intended to strategically advance alumni, fundraising and university goals.

- Led development of a 5-year strategic plan that emphasized communication, alumni engagement at higher levels, and development of the Alumni brand. Recruited new members to make the board more diverse geographically, ethnically and in age. Introduced innovative programs to generate alumni awareness among student body and increase affinity and business planning principles to reunion and event management processes.
- Supervised the campus-wide committee charged with planning, execution and improvement of semi-annual graduation ceremonies for 12,000 participants and guests.
- Managed nine positions, many vendor relationships. Chaired two campus-wide committees.

**Director of Public Relations & Marketing ■ Fairview Southdale Hospital**

Led external and internal communications and marketing efforts for a major Minnesota hospital (390 licensed beds, 1,800 employees) and clinics. Annual budget rose from \$75,000 to \$1.2 million. Managed three employees and college interns.

Developed and executed multi-layer public relations plans for annual PR and marketing activities. My tenure marked great change in the history of Fairview's best-performing hospital: a \$40 million facility expansion that featured full overhaul of customer experience (clinical/ non-clinical disciplines collaborating for technological and service delivery infrastructure).

- Provided leadership on external and internal communications during the 2001 nurses' strike and significant improvements in employee engagement and emergency preparedness.
- Coordinated media relations training for administrators and clinical leaders, planned media portion of hospital's emergency plans for internal and external crisis situations, coached and supported spokespersons, and pitched positive news to Twin Cities and statewide media.

**Deputy Press Secretary ■ United States Senator Dave Durenberger**

Working with colleagues in the Washington office, I was the primary contact in Minnesota for print, radio and TV and responsible for issuing press notices and releases, arranging interviews when the Senator was in the state.

**Education****Master of Arts, Organizational Leadership ■ St. Catherine University**

Concentration in Strategic Management included these classes: Management, Finance, Leading Organizational Change, Professional and Organizational Ethics, Cross Cultural Dispute Resolution and Mediation.

**Bachelor of Arts, Summa Cum Laude ■ Minnesota State University, Mankato**

University Scholar (Honors Program) Majors: International Relations and German; Minor: Scandinavian Studies. Recognized by the University as a Distinguished Young Alumna, 2001.

**Executive Education, Authentic Leadership: Courage, Coaching & Ethics ■ University of Minnesota, Carlson Institute of Management****Current Volunteer & Member Associations****Certified Medical Advocate Volunteer ■ YWCA of Metropolitan Chicago**

Serving in an on-call capacity to aid survivors of suspected sexual assault in hospital emergency rooms in south side Chicago.

**Board of Directors ■ Mines Advisory Group (MAG) America**

This is the American affiliate of an international non-profit organization that clears landmines and unexploded objects, assists with arms management and reduction and educates the public about the unseen hazards that impede a restorative peace.

**Member ■ Alliance for Women in Media**

This is a national organization committed to supporting women across all media segments, to expand networks, educate and celebrate accomplishments

**Elected & Appointed Positions (former)****Council member at-large ■ Bloomington (Minnesota) City Council**

Served 2013-2016 to represent all 86,000 residents. Represented the city on the Minnesota Commissioner of Health's State Community Health Advisory Committee.

**Board Member ■ Community Action Program of South Hennepin**

Appointed by the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners, 2014-2016 to guide the work of federally funded safety-net programs. A highlight of this work was state and federal approval to expand the organization's service area to include all of Hennepin County (1.1 million residents).

**Former Vice Chair & Board Member at-Large ■ ClearWay Minnesota**

This nonprofit organization improves the health of Minnesotans by reducing tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke through research, action and collaboration. The Board of Directors oversees grants and financial management of the \$202 million endowment. Served as chair of the Nominating Committee and member of the Audit/Finance Committee.

**Community Co-Chair ■ Elementary Neighborhood School Renewal Project**

Appointed by the Superintendent of Bloomington Public Schools to facilitate work and discussion of a 42-member task force. Comprised of parents, educators and administrators, the task force developed recommendations (later adopted by the School Board) for elementary school attendance boundaries.

**Former Member, Board of Directors ■ Southdale YMCA**

Appointed to represent Fairview Southdale Hospital in service of shared community missions. Served on capital campaign committee that launched multi-year fundraising for site expansion.

**Former Vice Chair & Elected Member ■ Bloomington School Board**

Served 1998-2002 as member and chair of the audit committee; member of the strategic planning committee. District serves 10,000 students pre-K to grade 12 and employs 1200 staff.