



OPC newest "Faces" receive universal approval

By Hunter Samuels, Communications Committee

It's said that the apple doesn't fall far from the tree, and on Nov. 22, the apple found itself on the barroom floor, right next to said tree. No fall required this time.

Jim and Todd Murphy were enshrined on the Omaha Press Club barroom floor, honored as the 163rd "Face" in the club's history. The father-son pair has been running Universal Information Services, Inc. for almost 60 years now, but that kind of tenure did not prevent their closest friends from roasting the pair at the well-attended event.

The 121st "Face on the Barroom Floor," Allen Beermann of the Nebraska Press Association, served as emcee, setting the stage for the evening with a litany of jabs at both honorees, noting that Jim "has a mind like a steel trap, but it rusted shut." As Beermann turned his attention to Todd, he said, "Todd, despite his dad's help, is a real self-made man, which means he has no one else to blame."

The floor was then turned over to a host of roasters, including John Prescott of Prescott Communications & Consulting, Paul Cohen of the Omaha Douglas Public Building Commission, Rob Owen of Bio Nebraska Life Sciences Association, Trace Ward of the Flagstaff Convention & Visitors Bureau, Mark Laughlin of Fraser Stryker, PC LLO, and Tom O'Connor of UNMC Public Relations ("Face" No. 148).

Prescott kicked things off with a nod of respect to one of the honorees, saying, "Jim Murphy is one of the nicest guys I've ever known. If you think I'm going to say anything bad about Jim Murphy, you're nuts. I don't care how funny it is. Now, Todd, on the other hand . . ."

"Like father, mock son," if you will.

Todd certainly found himself at the receiving end of several lines throughout the evening, including those aimed at his taking over the family business. Cohen spoke of Todd getting started at Universal Information Services on the ground floor after college, and "through diligence, attentiveness, skill and nepotism, he worked his way up to CEO in a matter of hours."

Laughlin called Todd, "Tommy Boy Murphy," referring to the classic 1995 film. He later added "The only person that would hire him in the whole world was his father!"

Todd's longtime friends, Owen and Ward, each shared stories from the honoree's past, with Ward even creating a mock mayoral campaign poster with Todd sporting an impressive mullet and a tagline reading: "He's all business upfront, party in the back."

Jim didn't escape unscathed, of course. Cohen noted that Jim went to the University of Maryland, "along with everyone else who applied."

O'Connor had some jabs at Jim's military career, noting, "He insists on 'Hail to the Chief' being played throughout the office" every day when he walks in, and that "Casual Fridays" are instead "Camo Wednesdays."

The night had more than just jokes, however.

Beermann summed up the room's thoughts on the Murphys by saying "These are great and gracious people because they are genuine, have a warm heart, a real smile, a helping hand and a sense of appreciation." He also added, "They never do work for recognition; rather, they always do work worthy of recognition."

Jim thanked his friends and colleagues for their support before Todd took the podium to do the same, prior to pulling out an envelope containing a donation from both honorees to be given to the OPC Foundation's scholarship fund in memory of the late Susan Eustice, proving once again their dedication to supporting the future of journalism.

**Wayne Sealy's Description:
Jim and Todd Murphy, communications entrepreneurs – the 163rd Face on
the Barroom Floor**

I included quite a few details in the drawing, as the Murphys are quite accomplished.

For Jim Murphy, I included:

- Several elements to reflect his 36-year career with the Nebraska Army National Guard – a helicopter for all the troops he deployed; camouflage pants; combat boots; Desert Storm tags; a Retired One Star General tag; and a Camp Ashland stool.
- He's holding his famous coffee cup that he has used for the past 47 years;
- He also is wearing a boxing glove to reflect his brief stint in the Golden Gloves.

For Todd, I included:

- Some of the tools of his trade – a microphone, a TV set, a PR measuring yardstick, and a magazine.
- He's holding a guitar, the instrument he claims to be able to play.
- He's riding in a boat bound for Peru, where his latest client is located. The boat has the Universal logo and a list of the various types of clients that Universal serves. Attached to the boat is a license plate from his vintage 1958 MGand there's a Lake Okoboji sign where the Murphys have their summer home.
- Todd has a big record collection, so I have the RCA dog listening to a record player with lots of records flowing out of it.

At the bottom of the drawing, I put a Big 10 log in the water. On the left side is a Maryland Terrapin where Jim went to college. He's holding an axe depicting Jim's time as a firefighter with the Rocky Mountains U.S. Forest Service. On the right side is a Wisconsin Badger where Todd went to college.

I've also included a Rotary Club logo, as both Jim and Todd are past presidents of the Omaha Downtown Rotary....and an Epilepsy Foundation of Nebraska logo, as Todd is chair of the organization's advisory board.

So, there you have it, my rendition of Jim and Todd Murphy, the 163rd Face on the Barroom Floor.