

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY VITAE
for
Jim Lowry



Jim Lowry, shown here with Martin Lancaster President of the North Carolina Community College System.



Lowry's work is often behind the camera. Here Lowry captures North Carolina Labor Commissioner, Cherie Berry, and NCUA president, Justus Everett at the Fall Banquet in Boone, North Carolina. Bringing political leaders and industry leaders together is a primary function of an association executive/registered legislative agent.

Jim Lowry began his advocacy career by organizing, producing and serving as emcee for the Environmental Assembly at Washington High School on the first Earth Day, April 22, 1970. Lowry's work collecting coli form bacteria samples from the Pamlico River, motivated his work and propelled him to attend North Carolina State University's School of Forestry Resources.

His first assignment as a lobbyist came with his appointment as the first Executive Director for the North Carolina Recreation and Park Society where he cultivated an understanding of the operations of the North Carolina General Assembly championing the causes of parks, recreation and senior services. Lowry successfully ushered through legislation enabling local education agencies to lend school buses to local agencies serving seniors. Lowry also orchestrated a successful 11th-hour effort to save the positions of the regional consultants in the NCDENR's Division of Parks and Recreation, Consulting Services Section, which at the time were key to drawing Land and water Conservation Funds into the State.

In Ohio, Lowry's governmental relations work earned him appointments to the Ohio Natural Resources Commission, the Governor's Commission on Ohio Citizens Outdoors and an opportunity to address the President's Commission on American's Outdoors. Capping his accomplishments in government relations in Ohio, Lowry was asked to present the ODNR Parks Budget to the Ohio General Assembly along with a citizen's petition of support. In Ohio, Lowry also served on the Governor's Advisory Board for Travel and Tourism and as a member of the Community Education and Technical Assistance Network (CETAN) under the Ohio Department of Education. As treasurer of the Ohio Environmental Council, Lowry introduced the concept of an Environmental Gala reception that would bring together policy-makers with the many environmental and natural resource groups in Ohio- a program that became an annual affair. Lowry's other major collaborative advocacy project was dubbed "The Prairie Fire Forum", taken from Governor Lamar Alexander's closing remarks in presenting the President's Commission on Americans Outdoors Report to Congress, "What we need now is a prairie fire of support to catch on across America". The Prairie Fire Forum brought together political leaders, state and local agency representatives, corporate executives such as Stu Northrup of Huffy Corporation and Sheldon Coleman of the Coleman Corporation and paved the way for the Ohio Legislature to pass a dedicated funding source for local parks and recreation.

Returning to North Carolina as the first Director Craven County's Tourism Development Authority, Lowry secured used his government relation skills to secure a development grant from the North Carolina Department of Commerce's Division of Travel and Tourism and assisted in hosting the first Governor's Conference on Travel and Tourism in New Bern.

Moving back into the association management world, Lowry, who was then the Executive Director of the North Carolina Social Services Association, worked closely with Reps. Julia Howard and Cherie Berry and the members of the Association in redesigning the State's Social Services System as driven by the national welfare reform movement.

Lowry then assisted the North Carolina Association, Long Term Care Facilities by collecting intelligence to support the organization's advocacy efforts and helping monitor select committees and commissions.

Serving as the Executive Director for the Virginia Automated Merchandising Association (VAMA) Lowry assisted the organization in holding a legislative day at the Virginia General

Assembly in Richmond to educate legislators on the dynamics of the industry and to seek recognition for the group as issues that might affect the industry were to come before the Legislature.

Working with the National Public Records Research Association, Lowry provided staff support and facilitated communications between board members, legal counsel, and association members in a successful Amicus Curiae brief before the Supreme Court of the State of Washington. The action preserved thousands of contracts in force and sustained the industry's billing practices.

Today Lowry represents the interests of underground utility contractors in North Carolina and proudly represents the contractors and associates that proclaim "***We Dig North Carolina***". Lowry likes to add that when it comes to economic development, "*Nothing happens until the pipes are in the ground.*" Lowry is proud that his work, representing this industry, allows him to bring together the elements of public health, environmental management, and economic development, which have all been hallmarks of his career in government relations.

In serving as the Registered Legislative Agent for the North Carolina Utility Contractors Association, Lowry monitors and presents information as needed to legislative, regulatory and allied organizations that will serve the interests of the NCUCA. Lowry regularly communicates with members of the General Assembly; members and staff of the North Carolina Environmental Review Commission; members and staff of the North Carolina Sedimentation Control Commission; the State Water Infrastructure Commission; key contacts within the North Carolina Departments of Labor and Transportation; as well as establishing and sustaining relationships with allied professional and trade organizations.