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## Alumni focus: Margot Morris Dawkins

March 19, 2012



Finding a job after graduating from college can be quite a challenge. The question, “what now?” often surfaces when looking to finally start a career. Margot Morris Dawkins, President of Atlanta Advertising Novelty Company, had this exact experience when entering the work force. Little did she know she would grow and develop to be a successful promotional products consultant catering to hundreds of businesses and be recognized on a national level.

Graduating from Georgia Southern College in 1976, Dawkins received a bachelor of science in economics with a minor in public relations. Through fulfilling her degree, she gained experience in all aspects of business. Dawkins originally planned on going into banking. However, the dean from the College of Business Administration (COBA) offered her an internship that changed her mind. *“I became the first student from COBA to intern. The Vice President’s Office of Development ran an intern program based on public relations,” Dawkins said. “After I did my internship, I realized it would be fun to work on the public relations and marketing side of business.”*

When Dawkins graduated, the country was still experiencing effects of the 1970’s recession which made it difficult to find a job. At the time Dawkins father, Marc Morris, owned Atlanta Advertising Novelty Company, a small promotional products company. He asked Dawkins to work for him during the summer just until she found another job. *“As the summer progressed, and I had only one real job offer I realized that I should look into the opportunities with my dad and his business,” Dawkins said. “My dad had a successful entrepreneurship he had been working with my entire life-I guess you could say that I was in the right place at the right time.”*



The company was originally founded in 1918 by Walter Richard as the Atlanta Novelty Company. Richard worked as a calendar salesman traveling around the Southeast back in the early days of promotional calendars. In 1961, Morris purchased the company and began expanding as he improved customer relationships. As the company grew, [Atlanta Advertising Novelty Company](#) was incorporated.

In the mid 1980's, Morris began promoting Dawkins for president as he stepped back from some of his responsibilities. *"My father worked until 2008, when I finally 'forced' him to retire at the age of 83!" said Dawkins. "I have been president since 1990."*

Working primarily in sales and customer service, Dawkins has used her skills and abilities to develop relationships with customers that have lasted close to 40 years. *"I consider my customers friends and family, and am blessed that many of these relations go back for most of my career," said Dawkins.* Her sales opportunities have allowed her to work with large-scale companies as well as smaller local companies every day.

Representing about 3,000 different manufactures, Atlanta Advertising Novelty Company works as a promotional product distributor. *"We create products, we design packaging, and we direct market," Dawkins said. "As a small company, we do whatever is required to give the customer the best value for their marketing dollars."*



Over the years, Dawkins has worked with companies such as Hilton Hotels, Coca-Cola, Orkin Pest Control and the March of Dimes. During the 1980's when the Hilton Hotels were working on national promotion, Dawkins created personalized in-room amenities throughout the country. She helped promote the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Coca-Cola and was responsible for helping create the first walk-a-thon for the March of Dimes, planning promotional strategies on a national level.

Overtime, Dawkins has also had the opportunity to create products and promotions for customers that have won national awards. Her latest national recognition was the 2010 Promotional Products Association International (PPAI) Pyramid Award for her work with Georgia Power. To receive this award, Dawkins developed an Earth day campaign designed to involve "employees and key environmental

constituents while leveraging its commitment to service and existing channels for communication and project work.”

Besides her busy work schedule, Dawkins has remained involved with her Alma Mater. She was the Georgia Southern Alumni President in the early 1980’s and she currently is involved with the Atlanta Alumni group. She was on the original COBA Advisory Board, and for the last 20 years has been a trustee for the university. Dawkins even had the chance to petition for university status with the Board of Regents and remembers the day when Georgia Southern became the first regional university in the university system.

*“When I graduated from Georgia Southern, there were only 6,000 students,” Dawkins said. “I love to feel that I have had the opportunity to share the Georgia Southern story over the years, and to help with the growth of ‘our’ university.”*

In the future, Dawkins hopes she will continue to have the opportunity to work for many more years just like her father.