Nancy Wiser Named First Recipient of the Tom L. Preston Lifetime Achievement Award

The PRSA Thoroughbred Chapter's new honor recognizes Wiser Strategies President Nancy Wiser's distinguished career in public relations.

Nancy Wiser receives the Tom L. Preston Lifetime Achievement Award 2026 from Marc Whitt, PRSA Thoroughbred Chapter President. Photo credit: TOPS Photographer Tracie Dillon.

LEXINGTON, KY, UNITED STATES, October 12, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Wiser Strategies President Nancy Wiser, APR, Fellow PRSA, has received the inaugural Tom L. Preston Lifetime Achievement Award from the Thoroughbred Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA). The Central Kentucky chapter of the premier PR industry organization presented the award on Sept. 24, 2026, in Lexington.

The PRSA Thoroughbred Chapter created the award — its first named honor — this year to recognize a person whose career reflects the highest standards of the PR profession and has made a measurable, lasting impact on the community. It will be presented annually.

> Through Tom Preston, I learned that PR is a behavioral science grounded in research, integrity and respect. To be … the first recipient of an award bearing his name is an extraordinary honor."
> *Nancy Wiser, APR, Fellow PRSA*

"When our board created an award to honor Tom Preston's legacy, Nancy was the natural choice to receive it first," said Marc Whitt, president of the PRSA Thoroughbred Chapter. "Tom was highly influential in Nancy's career, and she has spent a lifetime influencing the practice of public relations in Kentucky and beyond. Her career shows what excellent public relations looks like."

Over her career, Wiser has distinguished herself as a strategic counselor, communicator, entrepreneur, educator and leader. She has counseled organizations of all sizes — from small businesses and nonprofits to major corporations and universities —

through complex public issues, working across government, public agencies, engineering, construction, transportation, B2B companies, higher education and nonprofits.

Wiser has also invested in the profession itself by developing communication training programs, teaching future communicators, mentoring colleagues and serving PRSA at the local, district and national levels. She holds the Accreditation in Public Relations (APR) credential, the gold standard in the communications and PR industry.

Wiser is a member of the prestigious PRSA College of Fellows, a national honor held by only a few hundred practitioners, and the PRSA Thoroughbred Chapter Hall of Fame. She has also received the PRSA East Central District Platinum Award. Wiser serves on the Lexington Center Corporation board and chaired the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Airport Board.

Wiser founded Wiser Strategies in 2011, and before that, she co-founded the Lexington firm Wiser, Hemlepp & Associates in 2000. Her PR career began in 1982 in healthcare, and from 1992 to 2000, she served as vice president of The Preston Group, a Lexington-based national full-service public relations and research firm founded by Tom L. Preston, her award's namesake.

Marc Whitt presents Tom Preston with a plaque celebrating the newly established Tom L. Preston Lifetime Achievement Award, which will be given annually. Photo credit: TOPS Photographer Tracie Dillon.

PRSA's 2026 award recipients are joined by the chapter's president and president-elect. Photo credit: TOPS Photographer Tracie Dillon.

"Through Tommy Preston, I learned that public relations is a behavioral science grounded in research, integrity and respect. He holds himself and those around him to high standards, while

continuing to challenge us with innovative ideas and fresh perspectives. Tommy is also deeply kind and generous," Wiser said. "To be selected by my peers as the first recipient of an award bearing his name is an extraordinary honor."

Preston is a public relations pioneer. He began his career in 1956 as Kentucky's youngest newspaper editor, at the Carrollton News-Democrat, and in 1968 founded The Preston Group, a consulting firm that grew to serve clients in 42 states and Washington, D.C. He later served as senior adviser to Gov. and U.S. Sen. Wendell Ford and Gov. Steve Beshear and as executive director of the Kentucky Office of Homeland Security. He was the first Kentuckian elected to the PRSA College of Fellows.

He was among the first to recognize the impact of terrorism on business and the role of communications in preventing, mitigating and responding to threats. He established one of the nation's earliest formal counterterrorism and workplace-violence consulting practices with a specialty in corporate preparedness.

"I am humbled that the PRSA Thoroughbred Chapter would create an award in my honor, and I couldn't be more pleased that Nancy is its first recipient," Preston said. "I watched her grow as a professional and invited her to join my firm because of her talent for strategic thinking, astute communication and genuine warmth with clients. Watching her build her own firms and mentoring so many young professionals has been especially rewarding to me."

The chapter's 2026 awards also honored Amy Preske, APR; Brandi Doss; Jordan Strickler; Delaney Wolfe; and Fr. Jim Sichko. More information about all 2026 honorees is available at kyprsa.org/2026-award-honorees.

About Wiser Strategies
Wiser Strategies helps organizations and the people who run them achieve greater success through effective communication. Founded in 2011 by Nancy Wiser, the Lexington-based firm crafts and executes custom communication strategies that strengthen relationships, raise awareness and motivate key audiences. Wiser Strategies has deep experience in transportation, healthcare, energy and utilities, education and nonprofit organizations. The firm is a WBENC-certified Women's Business Enterprise and a Kentucky Transportation Cabinet certified Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE). Learn more at wiserstrategies.com.

About PRSA
The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) is the leading professional organization serving the communications community through a network of more than 400 professional and student chapters in the U.S., Argentina, Colombia, Mexico, Peru and Puerto Rico. Guided by its Code of Ethics, PRSA empowers its members to succeed at every stage of their careers through a wide breadth of premium professional development programs, exclusive networking events and leadership opportunities. Signature events include the Anvil Awards and ICON, the premier annual gathering for communications professionals and students. For more information, visit

prsa.org.

About the PRSA Thoroughbred Chapter
Founded in 1984, the PRSA Thoroughbred Chapter has represented public relations professionals from Lexington and Central/Eastern Kentucky for more than 40 years. The chapter is one of two PRSA organizations in Kentucky. The Thoroughbred Chapter was recognized for its excellence with the PRSA East Central District's PRominent Chapter Award in 2023, 2024 and 2025. The East Central District represents 16 chapters in Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia. For more information, visit kyprsa.org

Keegan Wolfinger
Wiser Strategies
+1 614-565-2947
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