

HISTORY OF SAAGA/GAPPP

The Specialty Advertising Association of Georgia had a very informal beginning in the early 1960's as the Advertising Specialty Association of Atlanta. The Association became the Specialty Advertising Association of Atlanta in 1962, and in 1991 became the Specialty Advertising Association of Georgia to better reflect the regional nature of the Association and its members.

John Hiles, Sr. and Tip Dyrenforthe of Specialty Counselors and Walt Barber began meeting on an informal basis to discuss mutual problems in our profession. In 1962, at the Cherokee Country Club, they and several other local distributors met to form the Association. We copied the charter of the New York City Club and the informal organization was begun. Meetings were held at the Club for the next several years, the third Friday of each month. Early members included Bo Carroll, Reg Fauber, Sid Schachter, Creighton Perry, Mike Webb, Tommy Schultz, Phil Mitchell, Charlie Keel, Marc Morris, and Helen Quick as secretary.

In 1968, the meetings were moved to The Progressive Club. Membership continued to grow. New members included Jack Rosenberg, Dan Stonecypher, Otto Meyer, Glen Moore, and Elaine Knowlton.

Programming at that time comprised monthly meetings and annual daylong seminars on various aspects of our profession, such as the manufacture of pens, presented by Bob Burnham. Other leaders of our profession conducted seminars on various methods of printing, among which was hot stamping, silk screening, and lithography. One of our earlier programs was a supplier-rating chart. This was later picked up by ASI and is a service they still provide.

We also had wonderful social events: Christmas parties at the Lakeside Country Club, outings at Elaine Knowlton's farm, and fun evenings with the Wits End Players.

Our early efforts in lobbying at national shows brought the 1974 National Association (SAAI) Show to our city. The show was in Atlanta AGAIN IN 1978 AND 1981. During these shows, our association aided the National Association by hosting all-day sports events at the Atlanta Athletic Club and the Ansley Golf Club. This allowed people from all over the country to participate in sporting events before the shows.

A number of our members have become deeply involved with SAAI. John Hiles, Sr. and George Curran have both been Chairmen of the Board. Bo Carroll, Walt Barber, Bill Stubbs, and Steve Newfield have served on the national board as directors. Other members sit on national committees. In 1974, Bo Carroll was named "Man of the Year" by The Counselor magazine. In 1985, he was elected to the SAAI Hall of Fame.

In the mid 70's, we opened membership to suppliers' reps, who have become an important part of our organization. In 1979, we were named National Association of the Year and recognized by The Counselor.

Our annual three-day event, which brings the most recognition to SAAGA, is the ESP show. This brings together approximately 80 suppliers and hundreds of salespeople in an “Educational Seminar for Profit”. Our ESP program started in 1975 and fills up every year.

For many years, our illustrious bell ringer was our Executive Secretary, E.L. (Mickey) Murray. Mickey worked with Sheaffer Pen Company before his retirement, after which he worked exclusively for SAAGA and did a terrific job until his death in 1989.

Over the years, we have helped the American Federation of Advertising when they have held the annual meetings in Atlanta. Annually we award scholarships to the SAAI sponsored education programs.

Our appreciation to John Hiles and Jack Rosenberg for their contributions in the preparation of this history.

RECENT HISTORY:

GAPPP: in the late 1990’s, the Specialty Advertising Association International changed its name to the Promotional Products Association International. Under the leadership of Lisa Bibb, the SAAGA Board decided to change the name of the Georgia association in 1999. The change to Georgia Association of Promotional Products Professionals was done to put our association in alignment with the international association, to reflect the changed nature of our industry, and to emphasize the professionalism of our members.

In 2007, GAPPP expanded the tabletop show and hotel room presentations into what is now known as GAPPP University and EXPO, a two day event that, on Day 1, features an opening keynote speaker, 10 – 25 minutes education sessions, and Rapid Fire presentations at the end of the day. Day 2 opens with End Buyer-friendly education and a breakfast, and a convention hall filled with over 100 booths. GAPPP’s End Buyer EXPO is the largest of its kind in the southeast.

In addition to growing the EXPO and University Program, GAPPP has a one day fall show, featuring an education session in the morning, and exhibits in the rooms, also known as a Suites Show.

GAPPP and neighboring regional association CAAMP have collaborated to create PROMO University, a one day education session that is open to members and nonmembers alike.