



Speech Center

Charlie Fern puts words in the mouths of luminaries

CHARLIE FERN

Expertise: Communications

Resume: Speechwriter for Laura Bush
Owner, Charlie Fern Ink

The power of pen takes on considerable meaning when you're writing for the first lady of the United States. That's what **Charlie Fern** did for two years as the chief speechwriter and press aide for Laura Bush. She wrote Mrs. Bush's speeches, letters, books, introductions and columns on sundry topics. "It's an honor that I'll never recover from," says Fern. "It's very hard, exhausting work, but I learned a lot about humanity and what is important to me."

Fern started out in the correspondence office of former Texas governor Ann Richards, writing greetings and proclamations. In 1995, when George W. Bush took over the office, Fern stayed, eventually following Laura to Washington.

Now Fern operates Charlie Fern Ink, a full-scale communications consulting firm that offers public relations, event planning, speechwriting, executive coaching and media training for clients that have ranged from Fortune-500 companies to elected officials, government agencies, U.S. ambassadors, and nonprofits.

Last year Fern started teaching public relations at St. Edward's. Committed to knowing her audience, Fern quickly learned that her students wanted real-world experience. So she set up a project with Launch Industries, a Canadian firm that makes an energy-drink chewing gum. This summer she also encouraged a couple of her students to work on a project with Seeds for Change and Mobile Loaves and Fishes, an Austin-based nonprofit that provides food and shelter for homeless people. The students spent the summer planning and launching a comprehensive survey for Austin's homeless to determine solutions for permanent housing.

"My students just dived into these real-world projects," says Fern. "They got to learn and help the community."

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Publishing, 2007)

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University Press, 2009), a historical novel
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Press, 2009)