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MISSISSIPPI, BELIEVE IT![™] **IN THE NEWS**

“Mississippi has long chafed at those perceptions, which in some cases spring more from stereotype than from statistic. Some time back, however, Rick Looser, chief operating officer of the Cirlot advertising agency in Jackson, acting at his own initiative, set out to counter the low self-esteem inspired by them. The advertising campaign that Mr. Looser and his colleagues created — called ‘Mississippi, Believe It!’ — addresses the old clichés directly and seeks to turn them to its advantage as a way of spreading a message about some of the state’s more notable accomplishments.” – **“Heard the One About Mississippi? It’s Fighting Back,” *New York Times*, Brenda Goodman, November 8, 2008**

“The most striking of that ad campaign’s slogans is: ‘No Black. No White. Just the Blues.’ That is the ideal and the future towards which Mississippians should be striving, instead of emphasizing a hate-filled past that might be described as: ‘Just White. No Black.’” – **“Woman Up, Mississippi Leaders!”, *Huffington Post*, Robert S. McElvaine, August, 23, 2015**

“This sort of national guffaw, which is neither new nor exclusive to Congress (people in other poor states, like Arkansas and Alabama, are forever saying, ‘Thank God for Mississippi!’), has given new life to a buzz-generating advertising campaign from a public relations firm in Jackson (about three hours south of Memphis), that uses equal parts pride and fury to tell the rest of ‘murica where to get off... As a Holmes County native, I can tell you the best part of the ads is that they leave out the full wording. This is good writing. You say one thing and people know you mean something else.” – **“Now in Mississippi: Four S’s, Four I’s, And a Dollop of P.R.,” *Washington Post*, Neely Tucker, December 3, 2006**

“The inspiration for Mr. Looser’s ‘Mississippi: Believe It’ ad campaign came from a business trip to Washington four years ago during which the advertising executive was confronted with the persistent image of the state as backward and racist... The ‘Mississippi: Believe It’ campaign has been popular in the state. The agency sent sets of 11 posters to 1,500 schools throughout Mississippi to help promote students’ sense of pride in their native state.” – **“Legends of Mississippi,” *The Washington Times*, December 4, 2006**



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“Rick Looser, a Mississippi-based advertising executive, is at the center of a campaign aimed at dispelling common stereotypes about the state. Materials from the ad blitz, ‘Mississippi, Believe It,’ have been strategically circulated among the nation's top newspapers, magazines and among the state's colleges and universities.” – **“Believe It: Proud Mississippians Shun Stereotypes,” *NPR*, March 10, 2008**

“Responding to these stereotypes, as ridiculous as they may sound, provides a humorous way to invite viewers to question the remaining stereotypes that they may have about the state. If the campaign is able to effectively undermine some misunderstandings, they are also able to build up feelings of identification. Instead of feeling that the South – and Mississippi in particular – is a foreign land, they can celebrate the unique qualities of the state (literary figures, musical artists, athletes, etc.), while also concluding that the South has changed and is more similar to the rest of the nation.” – **“*Mediated Images of the South*,” Alison Slade, Dedria Givens-Carroll, Amber Narro, 2012**

“One might not believe it, but acknowledging the 800-pound gorilla in the room — outdated, false stereotypes of Mississippi elsewhere in the country and world — instead of ignoring them led to the successful pro bono campaign by The Cirlot Agency called Mississippi, Believe It! (www.mississippibelieveit.com), that has now gotten an estimated 120 million hits. In addition to the website hits, the campaign has been featured in many of the nation's largest media outlets ranging from ‘The Today Show’ to *The Washington Post*, *Washington Times*, *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, *The Christian Science Monitor* and ‘Morning Edition’ and ‘All Things Considered’ on National Public Radio.”
– **“Mississippi, Believe It! campaign back with new stories,” *Mississippi Business Journal*, Becky Gillette, June 2, 2008**



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“One reader forwarded us a link to a pro bono ad campaign for Mississippi designed by the Jackson-based Cirlot Agency. The *Mississippi ... Believe It!* campaign sought to highlight some positive aspects of the state, and after the post this morning we elected to highlight some of them... The project got positive feedback from *The Daily Mississippian* from a writer who saw the ads and was finally happy to own up to living in Mississippi, positive press from the *Mississippi Business Journal*, and scored the creators an interview on 'Tell Me More' on NPR.” – **“There Was A Lovely Ad Campaign Designed To Fight Mississippi’s Reputation As The Worst State In America,” *Business Insider*, Walter Hickey, May 29, 2013**

“Confronting stereotypes, touting accomplishments, and celebrating the unique characteristics of the state allows the campaign to attempt to change the image of the state that outsiders tend to have. Importantly, however, it also allows Mississippians the opportunity to recover the state’s history (in noting the state’s cultural heritage and accomplishments), while also reshaping the way they think about their image of the state. For that reason, the advertisements have potential for bringing the various audiences together – those within the state and those outside Mississippi – and strengthening the overall image of the state.” – **“*Mediated Images of the South*,” Alison Slade, Dedria Givens-Carroll, Amber Narro, 2012**