



GEORGE WASHINGTON'S MOUNT VERNON

*“To Keep Him First “ \$85 Million Expansion Plan,
Promotional Program to Increase Attendance*

When Mount Vernon Estate and Gardens, the home of George Washington, launched its \$85 million expansion plans in May 2002, they selected Global Communicators to prepare and publicize the announcement through major national media. The home of our first president was set to construct a new Orientation Center, Education Center and Museum on the estate grounds located 15 miles south of Washington, DC, in an effort to refocus attention on Washington and the Mount Vernon campaign To Keep Him First among U.S. presidents. The initiative reflected a growing national concern that young people are suffering from historical amnesia, as Pulitzer-prize-winning historian David McCullough described it.



In approximately one month, the GC team succeeded in generating print and electronic media coverage that reached more than 30 million Americans, generating in excess of \$1 million in media attention.



Media coverage included the front page of The Washington Post and extensive coverage in Time magazine, the New York Times, Associated Press, CNN, Reuters, AP Broadcast, and major regional daily newspapers and magazines across the United States.



Campaign to Increase Attendance...

Faced with declining attendance in the mid-1990s, Mount Vernon turned to us for creative solutions to their problem.

Located near Washington, DC, on the picturesque banks of the Potomac River, Mount Vernon offered an interesting, historical day trip for tourists visiting Washington, DC.

However, with the development of new historic sites and museums in the region and competition from nearby theme parks, Mount Vernon saw its annual attendance slip below the one million mark.

We developed a *Congressional Welcome Tour* concept through which Mount Vernon provided special admission tickets and promotional information to each of the 535 congressional offices. This unique distribution network was an instant success.



Virtually every congressional office delegates one staff member to handle the thousands of requests annually from constituents for tourism information about the Washington, DC area.

We identified those key staff, invited them to an evening guided tour and reception at Mount Vernon, and provided them with the Congressional Welcome Tour package. The package included applications for discounted tickets and coupons for use at the Mount Vernon shops and restaurants. The new marketing campaign attracted widespread news media attention.



Members of Congress viewed the program as a benefit to their visiting constituents. They publicized the program through news releases, radio and television interviews with hometown media, franked newsletters, and mailings to families in their districts.

The campaign succeeded in boosting attendance literally overnight and has been used ever since.

