People

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Image-Makers

Gerry Gunster has been promoted to partner at Goddard Claussen, a political strategy and public-affairs firm. He most recently served as executive vice president and has been a deputy to co-founder **Ben Goddard** for the past 10 years. Goddard is perhaps best known for creating the "Harry and Louise" ads that helped sink health care reform during the Clinton administration. Gunster also has some film experience: He was associate producer of HBO's *Last Best Chance,* a thriller about nuclear war, and he wrote the documentary *Our Land, Our Future,* about the Shinnecock Indian Nation.

Gunster formerly did ballot-initiative work in Los Angeles for one of Goddard's rivals, Winner & Mandabach. Why did he join the competition? "I really wanted to learn more about Ben Goddard, in particular, and I wanted to learn more about his famous campaign, 'Harry and Louise,' " he explains. "And when I sat down and talked to him about 'Harry and Louise,' he told me that not only did [the firm] do the initiative and the referendums but they also had a thriving public-affairs operation."

Joining Goddard Claussen allowed Gunster to return to Washington, where he had worked for Rep. **Paul Kanjorski**, D-Pa., shortly after graduating from college. Gunster is from the Wilkes-Barre area of northeastern Pennsylvania and grew up in Kanjorski's district.

Over the years, Gunster has handled government affairs for Joseph E. Seagram & Sons and the Grocery Manufacturers of America. He says he was drawn to issue advocacy and visual media because the work is fundamentally different from other Washington trades: "It's a different skill set and a different mentality than strictly lobbying. I was able to combine politics, message development, and advertising."

Gunster, 43, also sits on the board of Brighter Day Care, a center in Loudoun County, Va., that helps children with autism. **—Gregg Sangillo**

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