

Toastmasters Honors Successful Women on International Women's Day

RANCHO SANTA MARGARITA, Calif., March 2, 2016 /PRNewswire/ -- In honor of International Women's Day on March 8, Toastmasters International salutes women around the world. More than half of the organization's 332,000-plus members are females who join Toastmasters to become more confident speakers and leaders.

During her tenure as Toastmasters' first female International President from 1985-86, the late Helen Blanchard, a former civilian Navy manager, encouraged women to "commit to excellence." The trailblazer, who broke barriers in Toastmasters and in the workplace at a time when few women were leaders, said she lived by that motto. "Committing to excellence is not about something you put *on*. It's about something you bring *out*. By doing the very best I could do in any situation, it always led to better opportunities," said Blanchard.

Below is a list of other inspirational female Toastmasters:

- [Shurooq AlBanna](#) of Dubai, United Arab Emirates, works for the Noor Dubai Foundation, a nonprofit organization that aims to eradicate preventable forms of blindness. In 2013, AlBanna became the first Arab woman to advance to Toastmasters World Championship of Public Speaking.
- [Lori Hartwell](#) of Glendale, Calif., is a speaker, author and kidney-failure survivor who inspires people who suffer from chronic kidney disease through her example and message of hope.
- [Susan Hawkins](#) moved from London to Brazil four years ago to start her own business. She has since become instrumental in the growth of Toastmasters clubs throughout the country. As Toastmasters' first-ever developing market specialist, she has more than doubled the number of Toastmasters clubs in Brazil. Hawkins is a Chartered Financial Analyst and managing partner at SHP Training in São Paulo, a company that provides training for professional certification in finance, accounting, valuation and financial English.
- [Pat Johnson](#) of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, is one of five Past International Presidents of Toastmasters. She has international experience as a speaker and trainer and is skilled in conflict resolution, negotiation and mediation.
- [Tammy Miller](#) of Port Matilda, Pa., is an international speaker, auctioneer and breast cancer survivor. She also served on the Toastmasters Board of Directors from 2005 to 2007 and, in 2012 earned the Accredited Speaker designation – the most prestigious title offered by Toastmasters International.

Toastmasters' self-paced program and accessible network of clubs have helped countless women find their voices by helping them become more confident and competent communicators and leaders. As a result, they have assumed leadership roles in their careers and communities, and have improved their quality of life.

To schedule an interview with a successful female Toastmasters leader, email pr@toastmasters.org.

About Toastmasters International

Toastmasters International is a worldwide nonprofit educational organization that empowers individuals to become more effective communicators and leaders. Headquartered in Rancho Santa Margarita, Calif., the organization's membership exceeds 332,000 in more than 15,400 clubs in 135 countries. Since 1924, Toastmasters International has helped people from diverse backgrounds become more confident speakers, communicators and leaders. For information about local Toastmasters clubs, please visit www.toastmasters.org. Follow [@Toastmasters](#) on Twitter.

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