Toastmasters International Media Center

Toastmasters Announces Speakers for 2017 Convention in Vancouver, Canada

RANCHO SANTA MARGARITA, Calif., June 14, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- Toastmasters announced an exceptional lineup of speakers for its 2017 International Convention, to be held at the Vancouver Convention Centre, Aug. 23-26. Nine dynamic speakers will share their insights and expertise on a variety of topics. Attendance at this annual event is expected to exceed 1,600 members from around the world.



"We have an outstanding and diverse group of speakers taking the stage at this year's International Convention," says Mike Storkey, Toastmasters 2016-17 International President. "Each presenter will offer attendees a unique perspective to help them become more well-rounded communicators and leaders in their homes, communities and professions."

Delatorro McNeal II will deliver the keynote presentation during the Opening Ceremonies on Wednesday, Aug. 23. McNeal is one of the top motivational speakers in the world and the executive producer and star of the business reality TV show *The Keynote.* In his presentation, *Toastmaster to Top Speaker*, McNeal shares what it takes to achieve any goal with excellence and integrity.

World-renowned speaker and educator **Erin Gruwell** is the recipient of Toastmasters' 2017 Golden Gavel award. Gruwell transformed her high school students' lives through writing, and later through public speaking. She captured their collective journey in the best-selling book, *The Freedom Writers Diary*, which also became a critically acclaimed movie, *Freedom Writers.* She later founded the Freedom Writers Foundation which offers programs designed to improve the education of students and teachers around the globe. Gruwell joins an illustrious list of past Golden Gavel honorees that includes Stephen Covey, Walter Cronkite, Anthony Robbins, Muhammad Yunus and Zig Ziglar.

Other expert presenters:

- **Mohamed Ali-Shukri** is a health and safety expert, a corporate trainer, an award-winning speaker and a Co-Active coach. Ali-Shukri's presentation, *Life in Your Speech*, will teach attendees how to change lives by putting life in your speech.
- **Shailee Basnet** is a professional speaker and freelance trekking guide from Nepal who has summited Mount Everest. Basnet was the coordinator of the "Seven Summits Women Team," the world's first female group to climb the highest mountain on each continent. In *Together We Reach Higher*, she shares lessons learned during her journey that you can apply to your own life.
- **Diane Ciotta** is a professional keynote speaker and entrepreneur whose Training Classics sales refinement company

teaches about integrity and accountability to sales professionals. In *Life is Like a Sales Call*, attendees will learn more about selling from their heart—not from their head.

- **David Dye** is an internationally recognized expert in leadership and employee engagement. In his presentation,*Winning Well: Leading for Transformational Results—Without Losing Your Soul*, Dye will share tips, tools and techniques for volunteer leaders.
- **Kindra Hall** is an award-winning columnist, author and national champion storyteller. Hall will present*The Irresistible Power of Strategic Storytelling*, where she shares the psychology behind strategic storytelling and how to take full advantage of it in one's career and presentations.
- **Mark Hunter** is the 2009 Toastmasters World Champion of Public Speaking® and has held leadership positions for more than 40 years. In *The Voice of the Bonsai—A Conversation on Leadership*, Hunter will share how his interest in growing bonsai trees led to insights in leadership lessons from the relationship between a bonsai master and their trees.
- **Sandra McDowell** is a sought-after speaker and facilitator with extensive experience in communication, executive coaching and leadership in the financial services industry. In her session, *Neuroleadership: Leading With the Brain in Mind*, participants will learn about new developments in neuroscience and how to best harness your brain for improved productivity, communication and overall well-being.

In addition to these speakers, more than 100 contestants will compete to become the 2017 Toastmasters World Champion of Public Speaking. There are also seven speakers attempting to earn the Accredited Speaker designation, which recognizes professional speakers who combine expert knowledge in a particular subject and mastery of the spoken word.

To learn more about Toastmasters' 2017 International Convention, Aug. 23-26, and obtain a complete schedule of events, including the Opening Ceremonies, Education Sessions and the Toastmasters World Championship of Public Speaking, visit https://www.toastmasters.org/events/2017-international-convention. The public is welcome to attend.

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 345,000 in more than 15,900 clubs in 142 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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