

Two Toastmasters Earn Accredited Speaker Designation

Eldonna Lewis Fernandez and Darren LaCroix become the latest Toastmasters to earn prestigious title for excellence in professional presentations

RANCHO SANTA MARGARITA, Calif., Nov. 02, 2016— To further advance their careers as professional speakers, Eldonna Lewis Fernandez of Irvine, Calif., and Darren LaCroix of Las Vegas, Nev., sought Toastmasters Accredited Speaker designation. After a year-long process, they became only the 68th and 69th recipients of this title. Fernandez and LaCroix were among five speakers attempting to earn the designation at the Toastmasters annual convention, held in Washington, D.C., Aug. 17-20.

Toastmasters International is a nonprofit, educational organization devoted to communication and leadership skills development. Those seeking a career in professional speaking can apply for the Accredited Speaker designation, which includes a rigorous set of requirements, including the presentation of at least 25 speeches before various audiences within three years. The presentations must vary in topic and purpose, and include speeches that persuade, entertain, inform and motivate. Only 67 other Toastmasters have earned the title since the Accredited Speaker program began in 1981.

Fernandez is a retired Air Force veteran with 23 years of honorable military service. She is a negotiation and contracts expert with more than 30 years of leadership, contracts management and negotiation experience. She has negotiated hundreds of millions of dollars of complex contracts both stateside and internationally.

As the CEO of Dynamic Vision International Inc., Fernandez specializes in training people on negotiation, communication and leadership skills. She is also the author of *Think Like A Negotiator, 50 Ways to Create Win Win Results by Understanding the Pitfalls to Avoid* and the *GoPINK Rules of Engagement 5 Foundational Principles for Taking Control of the Handlebars of Your Life*.

"Earning the Accredited Speaker designation is quite an honor," says Fernandez. "I will use this accreditation to enhance my career and help more audiences think like a negotiator, speaker and leader."

In 1992, Darren LaCroix took the stage in a Boston comedy club and bombed miserably. Nine years later he won the 2001 Toastmasters World Championship of Public Speaking®. Since that victory, Darren has been inspiring audiences around the world teaching them the secrets to creating powerful presentations.

Darren is the founder of StageTimeUniversity.com, an online program for presenters. Through his online programs and live workshops, Darren works with presenters eager to learn what it takes to connect deeply with their audiences.

"Although I've been a professional speaker since 2001, I never thought about getting accredited until two years ago when I was challenged to earn the designation," says LaCroix. "It wasn't until I decided to go for it that I realized the hard work and preparation it takes to become an Accredited Speaker."

Since its founding in 1924, Toastmasters International has helped more than four million men and women become more confident in their speaking and leadership skills. The organization's membership exceeds 345,000 in more than 15,900 clubs in 142 countries.

For more information on the Accredited Speaker Program or Toastmasters International, please visit www.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 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](https://twitter.com/Toastmasters) on Twitter.