Dallas Resident Is First Woman in More Than 20 Years to Win World Championship of Public Speaking!

PRNewswire
RANCHO SANTA MARGARITA, Calif.

It was the World Series of public speaking, the Olympics of oratory, the final bout for the heavyweight title of "World Champion of Public Speaking." Who would win? Recently, a crowd of nearly 2,000 Toastmasters from dozens of countries gathered in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, to cheer for their favorite speaker at the Toastmasters International Speech Contest.

LaShunda Rundles, a Toastmaster and motivational speaker from Dallas, Texas, emerged victorious and claimed the title of 2008 World Champion of Public Speaking. Her speech, "Speak!" encouraged people to use their voices to change the world. Rundles is the first African-American woman -- and only the fourth woman ever -- to win this prestigious competition. She hopes to leverage her new championship title to become the national spokesperson for the Lupus Foundation of America. As a lupus survivor, she says she feels particularly qualified to speak on behalf of other patients.

Her winning speech in the World Championship competition discussed her childhood as a prodigy, where she was at risk from misbehavior due to boredom, and being saved by her mother's guidance into the public speaking arena.

The speech contest culminated Toastmasters International's four-day annual convention, held August 13 - 16, 2008, at Calgary's TELUS Convention Centre. A panel of 20 Toastmasters judges evaluated 10 contestants from different parts of the world, all of whom had advanced to the finals following a year-long process of elimination, using club, area, district and regional speech competitions. Criteria used in judging included speech content, organization, voice quality and gestures.

Second- and third-place winners in the World Championship of Public Speaking were Loghandran Krishnasamy of Puchong, Malaysia, with his speech "Finding the Rhythm" and Katherine Morrison of West Roxbury, Massachusetts, with her speech "Baby, Don't Believe Them."

Toastmasters International is a nonprofit educational organization that teaches public speaking and leadership skills through a worldwide network of clubs. The organization currently has 230,000 members in 11,700 clubs in 92 countries. Since its founding 84 years ago in October 1924, the organization has helped more than four million men and women give presentations with poise and confidence. For information about local Toastmasters clubs, please visit www.toastmasters.org.

First Call Analyst:
FCMN Contact:

SOURCE: Toastmasters International

CONTACT: Beth Black, +1-949-858-8255, x 268, bblack@toastmasters.org, or
after hours, Suzanne Frey, +1-949-246-4237, sfrey@toastmasters.org, both of
Toastmasters International

Web site: http://www.toastmasters.org/