

Glendale Man Wins World Championship of Public Speaking

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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 1,600 Toastmasters from around the world gathered in Toronto, Canada, to cheer for their favorite speaker at the Toastmasters International Speech Contest.

Lance Miller, a 3-year veteran Toastmaster from Glendale, California, emerged victorious and claimed the title of 2005 World Champion of Public Speaking. His speech, "The Ultimate Question," dealt with the importance of validating others with sincere compliments, repeatedly using the phrase "cha-chink" to drive home the notion of validation. Miller is a veteran contestant in local Toastmasters speech contests but this was his first time competing as a finalist in the World Championship. "Competing pushes you outside your comfort zone," he says. "You get to feel uncomfortable in many different speaking situations."

Miller is president of The Way to Happiness Foundation in Glendale and former vice president of the International Foundation for Human Rights and Tolerance. Winning the speech contest was the step he needed to reach his goal of becoming a professional public speaker.

The speech contest culminated Toastmasters International's four-day annual convention, held August 24-27, 2005, at the Westin Harbour Castle in Toronto, Canada. 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 Angela Louie of New Westminster, British Columbia, Canada, and Erick Rainey of Edinburgh, Scotland.

Toastmasters International is a nonprofit educational organization that teaches public speaking and leadership skills through a worldwide network of clubs. The organization currently has 211,000 members in 10,500 clubs in 90 countries. Since its founding 81 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.

SOURCE: Toastmasters International

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

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