

Toastmasters Elect First Canadian Woman as International President in 85-Year History

Top officer of the 260,000-plus member organization hails from Victoria, British Columbia

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Pat Johnson of Victoria, BC, Canada, has been elected President of Toastmasters International (www.toastmasters.org), the world's leading nonprofit organization devoted to teaching international communication and leadership skills. Johnson was elected for a one-year volunteer term at the organization's 79th annual International Convention, held Aug. 11-Aug. 14 in Palm Desert, Calif., U.S. Johnson is only the fifth woman - and the first Canadian woman - to lead the 260,000-plus member organization.

A seasoned business executive, Johnson is assistant director for business education at the British Columbia Pension Corporation (www.pensionsbc.ca) in Victoria. She has a background in adult education and has spent many years as a leader in the corporate, government and not-for-profit worlds, specializing in executive coaching and strategic planning.

Johnson cites herself as a prime example of someone transformed by Toastmasters. "Professionally, I really discovered who I was in Toastmasters," she says. "Fellow members could see things in me that I couldn't see in myself. I eventually got enough confidence to get some education and build a career as a trainer."

"My career is really built on Toastmasters skills."

Within the organization, Johnson has held a number of leadership positions, including International Director from 2004 to 2006. She also belongs to three Toastmasters clubs in Victoria: Rise and Shine, Victoria Beaver Toastmasters and the Camosun club, as well as one in Kelowna, BC, called Toastmentors. She first joined Toastmasters 28 years ago in Swan River, Manitoba, where she remained for six years. Johnson has attained Distinguished Toastmaster status, the highest speaking level a member can achieve.

Johnson is passionate about guiding the organization to an even bigger and better future. With the 2010 International theme of "Toastmasters: Achieving Greatness Together," she encourages countless more people to "go forward in their lives as more effective leaders."

Photo of Pat Johnson is available here: www.toastmasters.org/PatJohnsonImage

About Toastmasters

Toastmasters International is a nonprofit educational organization that teaches public speaking and leadership skills through a worldwide network of clubs. The organization currently has over 262,000 members in 12,500-plus clubs in 113 countries. Since its founding 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.

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Pat Johnson

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