

Zimbabwean runner-up in 'Olympics of Public Speaking'

Zimbabwean Jonah Mungoshi has broken two records to become the first African to win awards in the Toastmasters Interdistrict Championship and the World Championship of public speaking.

Mungoshi, who was representing Southern Africa, gave an emotion-laden speech Angry to win the first prize in the Interdistrict Speech Contest where he defeated contestants from Britain, Ireland, New Zealand, Australia, Taiwan, Philippines and Japan. Four days later he represented all Toastmasters outside the United States and Canada in the World Championship, the Olympics of oratory, emerging as the third best speaker in the world.

In the speech entitled Angry Mungoshi expressed his rage at the indifference that is paralysing the world whilst AIDS is wreaking havoc. "My people are on the verge of extinction", he said. He told the mostly American audience that one out of every three American girls will have been sexually molested by the age of eighteen. "This is the time to get angry and to take action."

Crazy was the title of Mungoshi's speech in the World Championship. His message was that the major challenges facing the world right now require unorthodox or crazy solutions. Using the lives of Mother Theresa, Abraham Lincoln and Nelson Mandela as examples, Mungoshi demonstrated that extraordinary results are achievable by those who adopt a creative or a crazy mindset.

Mungoshi, the father of a four year old boy and a nine month baby is married to his No 1 fan and critic, Chenai. He is currently the Head of Information Technology (IT) at the Jewel Bank in Zimbabwe. He is a member of the Bahá'í Faith which teaches the unity of mankind. Mungoshi says, "All my speeches are inspired by my values and principles which emanate from my belief in God".

The World Championship culminated Toastmasters International's four-day annual convention, held August 21 - 24, 2002 at the Marriot Rivercenter in San Antonio, Texas. A panel of 18 Toastmasters judges evaluated the nine contestants, who had advanced to the finals following a year-long process of elimination, using club, area and regional speech competitions. Criteria used in judging included speech content, organization, voice quality and gestures.

First and second place winners in the final contest were Dwayne Smith and Jim Key both from USA.

Toastmasters International is a nonprofit educational organization that teaches public speaking skills through a worldwide network of clubs. The organization currently has nearly 185,000 members in 9,000 clubs in 70 countries. Since its founding nearly 78 years ago in October 1924, the organization has helped more than four million men and women give presentations with poise and confidence. For more information about local Toastmasters clubs, please call Larna Anderson on 041 367 4246.

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