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McArthur Wins 1994 World Championship of Public Speaking

Dr. Morgan J. McArthur, a 1983 graduate of the Iowa State University College of Veterinary Medicine, recently won the World Championship of Public Speaking, taking First Place at the annual Toastmasters International Speech Contest. From a field of more than 30,000 speakers, Dr. McArthur was one of nine finalists who vied for the international title on the stage in Louisville, Kentucky, in August.

Dr. McArthur’s winning speech was built around “a peak moment of frustration” in his veterinary career—the moment ten years ago when his wet hand stuck to a stainless steel bucket while delivering a calf at midnight in 20­below-zero weather. He asked his diverse audience of 1400 if they “would care to compare bad days at the office...” In that barn, he realized his life was figuratively stuck, and was inspired to pull free of his personal “bucket” to pursue his dreams. Soon after the bucket incident, Dr. McArthur left rural Salmon, Idaho, for better opportunities in Idaho Falls.

McArthur, a large animal practitioner in Idaho Falls, Idaho, has long been an advocate of improved communication skills. He joined Toastmasters seven years ago because he linked his capability to communicate effectively with clients—whether one-to-one or before a group—directly to success in practice. “Keep in mind it’s the four-leggeds upon which you earn your living. It’s the two-leggeds that determine your destiny in veterinary medicine. Whether you’re in practice, in research, in any sector of the profession where you have to deal with people, anything you can do to improve your communication skills will catapult you ahead of where you are now,” says McArthur.

Apparently he’s done well in his study of the art of public speaking, for McArthur has won a number of speech competitions. In 1993 he placed first runner up at the international competition in Toronto with a speech entitled, “The Difference....is Horsepower,” about a Shire foal that defied the odds of surviving a difficult dystocia and femoral nerve damage to thrive through persistence, or horsepower. Hearing his own message, this year he persisted through five levels of competition and returned to win the championship.

Building mostly upon experiences from practice, Dr. McArthur takes time from his part-time veterinary work and full-time position of University Liaison at the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory to deliver inspirational and humorous speeches. Since winning the international title, he has already had offers to bring his enthusiastic and highly entertaining speaking style to audiences around the country. Dr. McArthur plans to turn part-time speaking into a full-time career over the next three years while maintaining contact with large animal practice in Idaho.