

Championship speaks to Rundles' tenacity

Staff Report

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As the fourth woman and the only African-American to ever win the Toastmasters Championship of Public Speaking, Detroit native Lashunda Rundles should be congratulated for her hard work and dedication in the face of adversity.

She serves as an inspiration to those around her not only because of her achievements, but also because of her determination to succeed when many others would have given up hope. Diagnosed with lupus in high school, Rundles has had numerous surgeries and setbacks on her pathway to success, but always persevering, she drew on a lifetime of speaking and performing skills encouraged in large part from an early age by her mother.

She gently ignored the advice of some when they suggested she not involve faith in her speeches, and instead spoke from her heart, telling of her personal journey and the role her family and her faith has played in her life — and her success. Her strategy worked. From a pool of close to 30,000 entries at the beginning of the Toastmasters competition and 2,000 at the international level, Rundles came out on top.

With her success in the Toastmaster's competition — eight months of competition during a year when she had two lupus surgeries — Rundles now has the credentials she needs to make a career in the world of public speaking. With invitations to speak all over the United States and abroad, she is able to carefully choose when and where she speaks so that she can use her talents and at the same time protect her health.

Rundles, whose prize winning speech encouraged people to speak out and to leave a positive legacy behind them, has done just that. Her tenacity and determination will not soon be forgotten by those who heard her speech or know her story.

The Paris News would like to congratulate Rundles for her success, but also thank her for the inspiration she brings to the lives of so many individuals.