



November 30, 2012

Marion, West Memphis Speakers Win MSCC Speech Contest Titles

Mid-South Community College students Shannon Jordan from Marion and Tristan Vaughn from West Memphis made the best oral presentations to win first-place awards at the Fall 2012 Speech Contest held on Tuesday (Nov. 27).

Jordan captured top honors in the Prepared Speaking competition, and Vaughn prevailed in the Impromptu Speaking division.

“I really appreciate everyone who participated,” said Mary Field, MSCC Communications instructor who coordinates the competition. “Public speaking is one of those things that a lot of people rank right up there with fear the airplane is going down while they’re on it.”

“It takes a lot of courage to get up and do this, so I commend our participants for their courage, preparation, and poise.”



Top finishers in the MSCC Speech Contest include, from left, Shannon Jordan, first, Prepared Speech; Jessica Denbow, second, Prepared Speech; Ruth Black, third, Prepared Speech; Tristan Vaughn, first, Impromptu Speaking.

For the Prepared Speaking competition, students selected from three topics pertaining to higher education and MSCC. Jordan addressed how “MSCC has had a positive effect on my life and my future.”

Raised in what she described as a “dysfunctional family,” Jordan left home at the earliest opportunity.

“As soon as I was able to move at age 17 when I graduated, I quickly ran,” she said. “Moving out so early forced me to work a lot of dead-end jobs.”

She started a family, but soon after the birth of her second daughter, “I woke up one morning and the right side of my face was completely paralyzed. I thought I had a stroke, but later I was told it was Bell’s Palsy,” a disorder of the nerve that controls face muscle movement.

“I was not able to speak, drink, eat, or even close my eye. I had to basically learn how to speak again. I had to glue my eye shut, and that caused me to sink into a deep depression.”

Her outlook changed when she decided to attend MSCC. “I came to MSCC and enrolled in two classes just to see if I could handle the stress and anxiety of being back in public.”

Jordan did well in her classes and made connections with Pam Capps, who coordinates MSCC’s Medical Assisting program.

“She enrolled me in the Medical Assisting program, and that was probably the best day of my life. She has been by my side every step of the way, making sure I stay on track, stay positive. Since being in the program, I have developed self-confidence and self-esteem. I feel like I’ve gotten my passion for life back.”

“Thanks to MSCC, I feel like I finally have a bright future. I feel like in some ways MSCC has helped to save my life. I intend to graduate in May, and I plan on having gainful employment. MSCC has also had an impact on my daughters’ lives. They have seen how important college is; they know you have to go to college to get anywhere in life.”

For the Impromptu Speaking competition, all participants received the same topic, “If you were on a deserted island and had food, water, and shelter, what three things

would you want to have with you on that island and why?” Contestants had 10 minutes to develop their presentations.

Vaughn said he would want a knife (to fend off wild animals or carve wood), a Bible (to look toward for confidence and guidance), and a book with a million empty pages as well as an unlimited supply of ink (to write to help keep himself sane).

Jessica Denbow, Proctor, placed second in Prepared Speech competition. She talked about what MSCC has meant to her.

“For me personally, it’s for me not being a statistic. I’m the very first in the Denbow family (to attend college). Because of my father’s background (no higher education), I felt like I didn’t have a chance. Statistically, I wasn’t meant to go to college. I was told that by many people. But with MSCC’s help and the tutoring in the LSC, I’ve been able to fulfill my dream.”

Denbow said she wants to become a junior high school language arts teacher.

“I used to hate school, especially junior high, but now I want to teach it,” she said. “I want to show kids that school isn’t to make your life miserable; it’s to help. I want to help with school and their personal lives as well. I want my students to be able to come to me for everything.”

Ruth Black from Crawfordsville finished third in the competition. She addressed “Why I would recommend Mid-South Community College as a community college to attend.”

“It’s basically a family tradition for all of my siblings to attend Mid-South before transferring anywhere else,” she pointed out. “My mom recently graduated from Arkansas State University through Mid-South with a degree in education. I have been more than pleased with the campus, quality of education, the student-teacher ratio, and the organizations on campus.”

Other contestants in the speech competition included Tanesha Kinsey from Heth and Dominique Neal and Terry Atkins, both from West Memphis.

MSCC employees Tabitha Casey, Stephanie Eley, Erin Gordon, Donnylle Hampton, Michelle McMillen, Melissa Powers, and Ben Wise assisted with the annual event. Mid-South’s Student Activities department provided prizes.

For more information about special academic events and competitions at the college, please call (870) 733-6728 or visit the campus at 2000 West Broadway in West Memphis. General information about the college can be found at www.midsouthcc.edu.

