

DERA awarded its Gold Medal to Ms Sadineni Yamini (VU2YAM) at the Dayton Hamvention. A Report by Ms. Kathryn M. Dunlevy-Wilson

DERA awarded its Gold Medal for Public Service to Ms Sadineni Yamini (VU2YAM) at the Dayton Hamvention on May 17, 2008.

Instead of the traditional ceremonies that normally accompany this prestigious award, Ms Yamini (who prefers to be called "Yamini") requested that the award be presented at a gathering of Young Lady Radio League (YLRL) members in order to highlight the importance of women taking on prominent leadership roles in emergency communications, community preparedness and international projects. In accepting the award, Yamini said, "The right woman with the right qualifications, who is confident in what she is doing can change the world if she has enough courage, goodness of heart and absolute determination.

" Courage, determination, and success were indeed the very reasons Yamini was selected for the DERA Gold Medal over more than 150 other nominees. As overall manager for the T19KK DXpedition to Costa Rica's Isla Del Coco, Yamini was faced with a daunting task of logistics planning, political negotiation and emergency response on a grand scale. Major obstacles which would have derailed the entire DXpedition developed during initial team deployment, and Yamini alone had to negotiate with senior government officials in Costa Rica.



Despite severe language barriers (Yamini does not speak Spanish and government officials could not locate a translator who could speak Tagulu) Yamini's superb command of the English language allowed a clear and candid exchange during difficult, contentious negotiations that extended over several days. To the credit of the government of Costa Rica, senior officials recognized Yamini's technical expertise and ability to manage a complex and highly dangerous operation. Despite sensitive environmental concerns for a pristine island and special security concerns, Yamini persuaded the government of Costa Rica to reverse its emergency quarantine of the island and allow the T19KK team to proceed as planned under her leadership and personal responsibility.

While the DXpedition did not have emergency communications as its primary purpose, all the elements needed for rapid and effective management of communications response to a major international disaster under dynamic and unpredictable conditions were present, and Yamini handled them all successfully.

The credibility she established with the governments of Central America through her candor, determination and professional management style will pave the way for future international cooperation

in a region of the world particularly vulnerable to devastating tropical storms, flash floods, landslides and far-reaching environmental emergencies. Her ability to successfully deliver to the government on 100% of her assurances will go a long way toward paving future cooperation during crisis situations. Presenting the award on behalf of DERA was Bascombe Wilson, WØAIR, Chair of the DERA Board of Directors, and Dennis Hardin, KFØLF, representing DERA's international membership at large. Honored guests for the presentation included Dr. Sudhakar Rao, (VU2SH) of India, whose corporate offices are in New Delhi, Washington, DC, and Newark, NJ, Mr. S. Suri (VU2MY) and S. Ram Mohan (VU2MYH) of the National Institute of Amateur Radio in India, Leszek Fabjanski (SP3DOI) of Poland and Jeanie Parker (WA6UVF) of YLRL. The DERA Gold Medal for Public Service is awarded annually to an individual who has made lifetime contributions to the field of emergency management, courageously made sacrifices in the service of others, or who has distinguished themselves in public service through uncommon courage, skill, and achievement in the face of overwhelming obstacles. The medallion itself is two inches in diameter on a ribbon representing the national colors of the recipient, accompanied by an engraved parchment attesting to extremely noteworthy achievement.

DERA has presented gold medals for public service since 1962 but the award given to Yamini represents the first award that was not connected with a specific catastrophic disaster event or the sacrifice of one's life that others might live. The DERA Board concluded that Yamini's work and contributions will have far-reaching consequences in international disaster assistance and will contribute significantly to breaking down barriers such as those that tragically delayed international assistance to cyclone victims in Myanmar. DERA's Board of Directors Chair Bascombe Wilson stated: "Yamini and her friends in YLRL provide real hope for a better world in the future. DERA is privileged to recognize Yamini, VU2YAM, for her remarkable achievements and selfless dedication to the service of others."