

## What Does Freedom of Speech Mean to Me?

Graduate student wins PSA contest

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Felicia Tonga, a graduate student at Andrews University, was the first place winner of the annual [Freedom of Speech PSA Contest](#), facilitated by [The National Association of Broadcasters Education Foundation](#).

Tonga's heritage is evident in her name—Tonga—but she was born and raised in Southern California. After completing an undergraduate degree in strategic communication, she enrolled in the graduate program at Andrews. Part of her decision to participate in the contest was her interest in the opportunity to tell a story through her public service announcement.

“I love creating stories whether it is through writing or through film,” Tonga commented.

The NABEF contest looks for 30-second television or radio PSAs that examine the topic of free speech as well as creatively answer the question, “What does freedom of speech mean to me?”

When Tonga heard about the contest, she brainstormed a storyline and then used footage of her young son, adding a personal voiceover expressing to viewers that today’s children deserve to grow up with their freedom of speech protected.

Tonga's interest in film began when she was 19, working at a summer camp. She observed the camp's film crew capturing footage during the week that they compiled into a video highlighting the events of the whole week. Seeing the final feature with the rest of the camp inspired her to do the same.

"I wanted to capture memories and tell other people's stories," she says.

Two years later Tonga received her first laptop from her parents, which enabled her to assemble videos for graduations, funerals and weddings. This fostered the skills that would lead her to make other films such as documentaries and promotional videos.

Now, ten years after Tonga's revelation at summer camp, she is working toward her master's degree in [communication](#), with a concentration in [community development](#). She also won an award at the [SonScreen Film Festival](#) in 2013 for her documentary short titled "The Irrevocable Call," which won best in the Ministerial Category.

With regard to her plans for the future, Tonga said, "I'm hoping to work with underdeveloped communities creating programs that will help with economical and educational growth." She would also like to create a videography business and start a blog for her work.

The winning video can be found on the [contest's website](#).

## Related Links

- [Department of Visual Arts, Communication & Design](#)
- [Community & International Development program](#)
- [National Association of Broadcasters](#)
- [NABE Foundation](#)
- [SonScreen Film Festival](#)
- [Watch the winning PSA](#)

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