

2003 M. Arch grad crowned

Miss Galaxy 2004, Gina Ferrer, said pageant preparation eased oral exam pressure

Gina Ferrer, a graduate student in the Master of Architecture program at Texas A&M University, was crowned Miss Galaxy 2004 at the international beauty pageant held June 21 in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio.

Ferrer competed with 30 delegates from around the world for the chance to reign as Miss Galaxy for one year, with duties that include travel and appearances at special events. She also received \$1,000 plus numerous prizes donated by pageant sponsors.

Though the Miss Galaxy Pageant is "one of the largest international pageants today," Ferrer said, it is not as well known as the older, more established Miss America and Miss Universe pageants.

The three-year-old Miss Galaxy Pageant is one of three major pageants, including Miss Teen Galaxy and Mrs. Galaxy, run by Coronation, Inc. of Canton, Ohio. As in other pageants, the contestants vie for points in five specific areas: photogenic appeal; social and conversational skills; health and fitness, also called the swimsuit category; style and personality; and poise and grace, otherwise known as the evening gown competition.

Ferrer got involved in pageant competition after graduating from the University of Texas. She qualified for the Miss Galaxy Pageant after winning the Miss Texas U.S. Galaxy 2003 Pageant in Houston.

"Pageants are a celebration of women and femininity, and all that it entails - intelligence, beauty, strength,



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integrity, dedication, grace and compassion," Ferrer said. "Pageants empower women, build confidence, cultivate leadership and communication skills while offering a young woman the opportunity to grow personally in poise, goal setting, public speaking, physical fitness, and self discipline."

Beyond her pageant victories, Ferrer said competing has helped her develop valuable personal and professional skills.

"The biggest skill I have learned" she said, "is the ability to speak in front of people comfortably. The panel interview at Miss Galaxy helped prepare me for my oral examinations as a graduate student. It taught me how to prepare for questions I may be asked, as well as natural follow up questions. Amazingly, an interview is an interview, regardless of the purpose of the interview or the format."

Ferrer, who plans to graduate this August with a Master's degree in Architecture, credits her interviewing skills with helping her land a job with one of the nation's top architectural firms, HKS, Inc. in Dallas. The company was named "firm of the year" in 2002 by the Texas Society of Architects.

In addition to graduating and pursuing a career in architecture, Ferrer has set her sights on obtaining a professional license and eventually, on returning to school to earn a Ph.D. in architecture history. Ultimately, she said, "I may someday teach at the collegiate level while simultaneously maintaining a private practice."

- The End -

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