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Rekha Muddaraj is Miss Asia Arizona

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Rekha Muddaraj, a senior at the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism, Arizona State University, was crowned Miss Asia Arizona 2004-2005 at a pageant in Phoenix, Arizona.

She will represent Arizona at the Miss Asia USA Pageant in Los Angeles in April.

Twentythree women representing Korean, Japanese, Malaysian, Laotian, Indian, Cambodian, Chinese, Filipino, Thai and Vietnamese communities competed in the 2nd Miss Asia Arizona Pageant at the Pinnacle High School auditorium. The event was hosted by Gene Flores, executive director, CityHits Production, which produced the pageant.

The competition segments included a preliminary interview, national and ethnic costume parade, a swimsuit competition, evening gown and on-stage candidate interview. A talent showcase was also organized.

The masters of ceremonies were Ross Shimabuku of News Channel 3, Nafeesa De Florias, Miss Arizona USA 2003, and Theresa Nguyen, Miss Asia Arizona 2003-2004/Miss Asia International 2005.

Muddaraj, 21, was Miss India Arizona 2003-2004. She had also won the People's Choice award. She was the first runner-up in the Miss India USA 2003-2004 pageant, where she was chosen Miss Beautiful Smile and Miss Supermodel in Style.

She was a reporter for State Press magazine for a year and contributed to local publications such as Valley India Times and Asian Magazine. She has done broadcasting internships locally and nationally.

'I work for a CNN affiliate in Phoenix. I have also worked for Clear Channel radio and the ABC affiliate in Phoenix. I spent the summer in Washington, DC, interning at Independent Television News, a London-based news network,' she said.

'I love to dance. I've been learning Bharata Natyam since I was four. I've also learned Kuchipudi and Kathak. I danced throughout high school and college, doing jazz, hip-hop, lyrical and modern dance,' Muddaraj said.

She is president, for the second year, of the Theta Nu Xi Multicultural Sorority and founder of its ASU chapter.

Muddaraj volunteers with the National Conference for Community and Justice. She said her 'platform is diversity awareness.'

She wants to anchor a morning network news show.

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