

A Person of Truth

Tension hung in the air. Rosalie Elliott had spelled her way to the fourth round of a national spelling bee in Washington, D.C. The 11-year-old from South Carolina now faced the task of spelling the word *avowal*.

In her soft Southern drawl, she began to recite the letters. However, when she reached the next to last letter, the judges could not discern whether she said a or e. They debated among themselves for several minutes, listening to a tape of Rosalie's effort. The crucial letter, though, was simply too accent-distorted to decipher. Finally, the lead judge sought input from the only person who could provide the answer.

"Was that second to last letter an a or an e?" he asked Rosalie.

By this time, thanks to the whispering of her nearby competitors, Rosalie knew the correct spelling. Still, without hesitating, she replied that she had misspelled the word and walked from the stage.

The entire audience – including some 50 newspaper reporters – stood and applauded. The moment was especially proud for her parents. Out of defeat, Rosalie had emerged a victor. And much more was written about her than the child who ultimately won the spelling bee.

Being a person of truth, even when the truth hurts, brings the greatest and most lasting rewards.

--Beecher Hunter