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Captain Evangelyn Nathan, Achieving in the LAPD

The captain of the West Los Angeles Division of the Los Angeles Police Department to be one of six women honored at today's Women of Achievement Luncheon, presented by the Century City Chamber of Commerce.

By [Anne Louise Bannon](#) | [Email the author](#) | 5:55am

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Back 30 years ago, a police recruiter told Evangelyn Nathan and her friend Ann Young that they were welcome to sign up for police training with the Los Angeles Police Department. But, he added, most women washed out.

"We said, 'Hm. We'll just see about that.'" Young said, recalling the incident later. "And we applied. We both went through the Academy together and we didn't wash out and we were both very successful."

Both Nathan and Young have achieved the rank of captain, and Nathan will be honored today at the Women of Achievement 2011 awards event, put on by the Century City Chamber of Commerce Women's Business Council.

Nathan, who is head of the West Los Angeles Division of the Los Angeles Police Department, will be joined in honors by Lois J. Cox, of UBS Financial Services, Inc., Tracey Gluck, of J.P. Morgan Securities, Barbara Van Wormer, of City National Bank, Jane Shay Wald, of Irell and Manella, LLP, and Laura Wasser, of Wasser, Cooperman & Carter.

"It was certainly the wow factor," Nathan said about how she felt when learned that she was receiving the award. "They're a great bunch of ladies."

While she didn't say so, Nathan is a large reason why there are significantly more women on the force now than there were 30 years ago.

"She's paved the way, like many of us," Young said. "We're just hoping that when we leave that our legacy will be that we did reach back. Van has had a lot of hard knocks. We just hope that what we've gone through hasn't been in vain."

Nathan said that the department had started new hiring policies to bring on more women and minorities, which made her, as an African American woman very distinctive.

"You had some individuals who wouldn't embrace change and that change was us," Nathan said, adding that when she started there were maybe a few women sergeants, but no women ranking any higher.

Now, there are women in all parts of the department, including the SWAT team, and even at the highest ranks.

Deputy Chief Debbie McCarthy said that Nathan's work ethic has gotten her far in the department.

"She was one of my picks for captain, and the reason was that Van is very hard working," McCarthy said. "She's compassionate, but no nonsense."

Both McCarthy and Young said that Nathan has done a lot to help women and minorities in the department, working through the union and various officer organizations to help bring others in and to resolve difficult situations.

As head of the West Los Angeles Division, Nathan oversees the largest division in the LAPD. She's worked almost all areas, including homicide and vice. Because it can be tough to deal day in and day out with the darker side of humanity, Nathan says it's important to keep a work/life balance.

"For me, it's family and close friends," she said. She's close to her two nieces and nephew.

And 30 years after she took that dare offered by an unnamed recruiting officer, Nathan still loves the job.

"I have never regretted it," she said.

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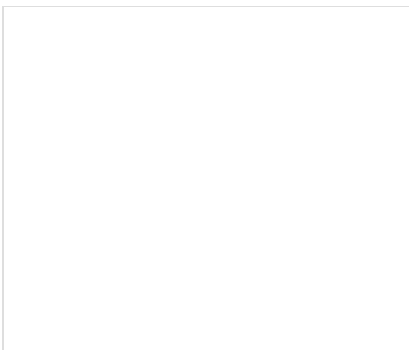
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