

# 2003 RECIPIENTS UNDER THE IAWP OFFICER OF THE YEAR AWARDS PROGRAM

---

## 2003 OFFICER OF THE YEAR

### CORPORAL LEANNE FITCH



Corporal Leanne Fitch

Corporal Leanne Fitch followed in her father's footsteps, chose a career in policing. She began her career in 1986 with the Fredericton Police Force in Canada. Corporal Fitch worked in a number of areas in the department including Patrol Response Division, Street crime unit, community policing, family services section of the criminal investigation division, and is presently assigned to training and media. During her spare time she attained her Masters Degree in Sociology and is currently an instructor at the University of St. Thomas.

This outstanding officer is dedicated to her job, is ethical, and shows initiative.

Her ongoing quest for knowledge is admirable. Her dedication to personal and professional development is honorable. Corporal Fitch is highly respected by her peers, her subordinates, and her community. She is a leader, a mentor, and investigator and is community oriented. I could impress you with numerous examples of how she has accomplished all of these areas but I won't take the time.

I want to spend a few moments on how you know that the correct person was picked for this award. I have the privilege of contacting the winners for the awards. I had trouble getting a hold of Leanne and had to leave some messages and finally Amy Ramsay came to my rescue as she knew her supervisor. When I finally reached someone at her office I was told by everyone that IAWP made the best choice. When I told someone they said please don't tell her let us tell her. I of course had already sent her an e-mail and a letter to try to contact her. Leanne was on vacation and did not know what was coming when she returned.

Her staff had hid her phone so she couldn't retrieve any messages and put her office out of order, disabled her computer, and confiscated her mail. They made her work down in the basement while they set up a staff meeting and party without her knowledge. She then was summoned into the chiefs meeting and told there was a very important matter they had to solve immediately. She went in and was told the information. Most of the time I am told Leanne is very articulate and knows what to say all the time. Her comment was, "Get out of Town."

When a department and staff go to so much trouble to honor someone and they want to be a part of the surprise you know that the person is deserving. I asked Leanne how I should introduce her and she said, "I am a really nice girl and I work in a really nice place." So I would like to introduce a really nice Officer of the Year Corporal Leanne Fitch.

It should be noted that Leanne was promoted after she was notified of her award. She did say in her interview that she was going to receive the officer of the year award. She thinks that is what gave her that little extra edge to get promoted. After meeting Leanne she gained her promotion because of all her talents, poise, energy and commitment. Congratulations, SGT. LEANNE FITCH.

## 2003 COMMUNITY SERVICE

### SGT. NADINE GRANT-BROWN



Sergeant Nadine Grant-Brown

"The desire to contribute in a meaningful way to my country and Fellow men inspired me to enlist in the Jamaica Constabulary Force in 1990. My commitment to service has intensified even more significantly over the thirteen years I have been serving. I have observed and am totally convinced that as women our role cannot be confined only to female prisoners, juveniles and clerical duties. Increasingly, women of the force are now serving in all areas, branches, divisions, sections and units that were previously considered to be male oriented. However, the onus is on us as women police to equip ourselves for the challenges and changing needs of our job description."

Sgt. Nadine Grant-Brown wrote those words. She is in a community that struggles for support of the police and especially women. Nadine has developed community policing in Jamaica without the training, without the financial support and without peer support. She has a belief and now she is putting it into practice and maintaining a holistic approach to the community and police. Nadine has made community outreach and youth development her top priorities. This is shown in the many programs she is involved in. Sgt. Brown is the founder of the Adopt-a-needy student project. She is the leader of Cops for Christ and the Association of Christian Peace Officers. Nadine is currently a Peer Counselor. It is through these ministries that she motivates, educates and mentors her colleagues. Sgt. Grant-Brown is the secretary for the Special Olympics Committee. She serves on various school boards and disciplinary committees. She is the marketing manager for the school's family magazine and writes many guiding articles. Because of all her commitment to schools, and athletic building was named in her honor.

In 2002 Nadine was selected for the Lasco Top Cop competition and became the first female to attain this award in the Jamaica Constabulary Force.

Let us honor Sgt. Nadine Grant-Brown's hard work and positive outlook on the role of Women Police and her commitment to her Jamaican community with the IAWP Community Service Award.

## 2003 EXCELLENCE IN PERFORMANCE

### STAFF SGT. JUNE DOBSON



Staff Sergeant June Dobson

Staff Sgt. June Dobson has been a member of the Ontario Provincial Police for the past 13 years. During this time she has worked in general policing and in the Criminal Investigation Branch on major cases. She has also been a qualified trainer for the Ontario Police College.

June is known internationally for her expertise in domestic violence, sexual assault, and children who witness violence. In this position she worked with Regional Abuse Issues Coordinators from across the province in abuse related issues and also with the Ministry of the Attorney General on implementation issues related to the Domestic Violence Protection Act. In

2002 she was approached by the Commissioner's officer to work with the Ministry of Public Safety and Security. June was to evaluate the "Model Police Response to Domestic Violence". She is currently evaluating other police services across the province on their response to Domestic Violence.

June's investigative skills are exceptional. June is a cut above in her field with her skills, commitment, passion and generosity. She had a case where she was investigating a multi-victim sexual assault on the First and Six Nation Reserve. Sgt. Dobson had to learn the culture, build trust with the community and successfully prosecute the perpetrator. The ages of the victims ranged from 4-38. There was a successful judgment. Because of her excellent work and trust she had built up more victims came forward because they now believed in the legal system.

June successfully investigated a crime where there had been sexual assault going on in a foster home for over 25 years. There were multiple victims with a successful arrest. She has opened cold cases where her colleagues have closed them for lack of evidence. But because of her tenacity she gave the victim their due justice.

Staff Sgt. June Dobson has dedicated her entire career to working with victims of abuse. She has been recognized by every sector in the policing community for her thoroughness, compassion, professionalism, expertise, and most importantly her commitment to victims.

Now we as the International Association of Women Police will recognize her dedication with this award for excellence.

## **2003 LEADERSHIP AWARD**

### **CHIEF COMMISSIONER CHRISTINE NIXON**

Christine Nixon is the first female Commissioner of an Australian Police Organization. At the time of her appointment in April of 2001 the morale was at its lowest ebb. The police organizations were grossly understaffed due to cost cutting measures of the previous administration and government. Attrition rates were at double-digit figures.

Christine had to provide positive leadership and direction. She decided the best way to do that was to join them on the street and work hand and hand. She then set out to find the issues that were causing all the problems. She consulted over 8,500 members and provided each and every member ample opportunity to exchange information. Over 500 issues were identified and Christine decided a bottom up approach in solving these issues reflected the trust she had in her workforce.

Significant changes were implemented almost overnight; the removal of physical barriers to employment of women, police uniforms to reflect the working environment, allowing male members to wear beards, revamp of promotional exams, freeing of inflexible policies, humanizing of staff-command relationships, rebuilding professional communications with police associations, review of ethical standards.

Cynicism was replaced with open and frank dialogue, the government recruiting promise of 800 + was fulfilled twelve months ahead of schedule. The office of Women's Liaison was established to ensure women's issues were in the forefront of policing in Australia.

Under Christine's leadership there have been benchmark results in crime reduction. Motor thefts down 28%, burglaries saw a 25% reduction. Victoria Police currently has the highest levels of satisfaction and the lowest crime rate, nationally.

Christine gives of her time unselfishly in addressing various forums of community and business groups. In Victoria Christine Nixon would rank as one of the most sought after public speakers and presenters of all time.

Chief Commissioner Christine Nixon has had the conviction to lead Australia's police force in her own unique and personable manner. Despite being from New South Wales.

We were all impressed by her work as a host at the 2002 IAWP conference and pass on our congratulations. Christine was not able to attend the awards ceremony, but accepting her award was Senior Sgt. Sue Findlay and Sgt. Frances Deeble.

## 2003 MENTORING AWARD

### STAFF SGT. BRENDA GLASS



Staff Sergeant Brenda Glass

You really want to know Brenda her enthusiasm is infectious. Then if you are lucky enough to have her as a mentor your career would be a smooth sailing. Her smile makes you happy even on your worst down days.

Brenda has been a member of the Halton Regional Police Service since 1977. She has been a very active member of IAWP and OWLE encouraging and supporting women in Law Enforcement throughout her career. Brenda doesn't stop with law enforcement but puts her heart and soul into Big Sisters, school mentoring, volunteering with Camp Trilluim and Cops for Cancer. Her new

adventure is to volunteer at a local nursing home with the Pet Visitation Program.

As you can see Brenda is very involved in her community and values volunteering. But her greatest talent is appreciation others. Brenda has always been eager to promote and recognize others relating to their achievements. She has put pen to paper and her nominees have been winners of much deserving awards. Brenda has known how important it was to promote women in policing as a viable career choice. She has also known how important networking and communication were among other women in law enforcement. In 1997 Brenda played a key role in the birth of Ontario Women in Law Enforcement. She was a founding executive member and the first Professional Development Coordinator. She was responsible for training and networking sessions. She was also the first coordinator for there annual award banquet.

The most famous words around Brenda are, "Brenda what do you think? Well IAWP what do you think of Brenda.

Please congratulate Staff Sgt. Brenda Glass as the 2003 IAWP Mentoring Award Winner.

## 2003 MEDAL OF VALOR

### OFFICER ZENAIIDA FLORES



Officer Zenaida Flores

Officer Zenaida Flores has been a member of the Boston Police Department for five years. She has been working as a prisoner transporter. As all good officers we try to remember information about bad people. On a warm day in August Zenaida remembered. She pointed out to her partner that a person she saw resembled a suspect that was extremely dangerous and armed. Officer Flores confirmed her suspicions. In order to position themselves and get back up they attempted to head off the suspect. Officer Flores and Williamson ended up confronting the suspect. The suspect grabbed for his

waist, as if to have a gun. The officers made repeated demands for him to put his arms up. The suspect refused and the officers attempted to grab his arm.

The suspect pushed Zenaida against a wall in an attempt to knock her out. Both officers struggled for their lives trying to stop a 6'4", 340 pound man. Zenaida was able to get to a radio and call for more help.

During her call for more help she heard two gunshots those shots went by her partner and hit her torso. As she lay on the ground dying from the gunshots the suspect stood over her and shot her again in the

left leg. Officer Williamson was finally able to get a shot off and the suspect fled. Officer Flores was fighting for her life but also feared for her partner. She kept calling out his location and eventually the suspect was caught. She received excellent emergency medical attention and is able to be with us today. Officer Flores is a tribute and an example to all those who put on a uniform. Her actions during this incident were in the highest tradition of bravery.

## 2003 MEDAL OF VALOR

**OFFICER TAMMY FRIESTLEBEN  
&  
OFFICER MELISSA SCHMIDT (1967-2002)**



Officer Tammy Friestleben

On August 1, 2002, Officer Tammy Friestleben was working with her partner, Officer Mark Madich. They responded to a person with a gun call, however upon arrival, discovered that the female with the gun had left the scene. Officer Friestleben gathered all the information available and notified other officers that they were looking for a 60 year old black female who lived in a public high rise near by.

Officer Melissa Schmidt was a public housing officer and knew of this woman. She responded to the high-rise and located the suspect and put her into custody with the help of Officer Friestleben and Officer

Madich. A thorough search was conducted of the car and suspect. No weapon was found but some ammunition was recovered.

The suspect asked to use the bathroom and at that time, Melissa and Tammy escorted the suspect to the nearby public bathroom. Officer Schmidt realizing that something was not right noticed the suspect trying to retrieve a .38 caliber gun from her buttocks. Officer Schmidt yelled to Officer Friestleben and grabbed the woman in an attempt to wrestle the gun away. Officer Friestleben rushed to the bathroom stall to help, as she entered the stall, the suspect fired a shot that barely missed Tammy, leaving stippling on her temple from the bullet. The second shot fatally wounded Melissa Schmidt.

Despite her injury, Officer Melissa Schmidt returned fire, killing the suspect. Officer Schmidt then kept cover on the suspect while Officer Friestleben secured her and made sure the suspect was incapacitated. Tammy then alerted medical services and provided assistance of Melissa until rescue medical services could arrive.

Officer Friestleben heroically rushed to aid her fellow officer, even unknowing what type of situation she was rushing into. She clearly faced a dangerous and terrifying situation, however she continued to provide the assistance that was needed to both secure the suspect and help her fellow officer.

Tammy was at the award ceremony to receive her award and receive praise for her work from the IAWP audience.

It is with great honor that the International Association of Women Police bestows the 2003 Medal of Valor posthumously on Officer Melissa Schmidt. Accepting her award were her parents Carol and Steve Schmidt. Officer June Sackette, from the Minneapolis Police Department, spoke in Melissa's honor.