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Fond du Lac's Tina Braun named 2009 Wisconsin Woman Officer of the Year

BY RUSSELL PLUMMER • GANNETT WISCONSIN MEDIA • OCTOBER 23, 2009

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FOND DU LAC — Lt. Tina Braun just wanted to be a patrol officer.

ADVERTISEMENT Fifteen years after joining the Fond du Lac Police Department, Braun — the first woman to reach a supervisory role in the department — can call herself the 2009 Wisconsin Woman Officer of the Year.

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The Wisconsin Association of Women Police bestowed the honor on Braun earlier this month.

"I was shocked," Braun said of being selected as one of the state's best. "In fact, I had told Capt. (Steve) Thiry when he said (Chief Tony Barthuly) wanted me to be nominated that it really did not fit me."

She told Thiry he was too busy and should not "waste his time" writing up the nomination.

"I don't have any goals. I never did," Braun said. "Day 1 when I started, the officer I rode with asked what I wanted to do in the department. I said, 'I want to be a patrol officer.' That is all I wanted to be."

But opportunities arose, and Braun was quick to grab them.

Now, Braun has many roles, including Fox Valley Technical College unified tactics instructor for criminal justice students.

"The mentoring and training of others is so great. Some of the people I instruct end up here in our agency," Braun said. "It's great to instruct them, then work side-by-side with them and see the finished product."

Fond du Lac Police Officer Amy Jost's first experience at the department was serving as a community services officer, a role Braun briefly supervised before Jost joined the force in 2001.

"I did my first ride-along with Tina," Jost said. "She was kind of instrumental in me wanting to be a cop."

"She's very easy to get along with and she's not afraid to tell you if you are doing something wrong."

Jost also praised Braun's physical fitness for the job.

"When it comes to physical fitness, she is in better shape than most of the guys in the department," she said.

Team Player

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Barthuly said Braun is the perfect candidate for the prestigious award.

"She is the ultimate team player and I can always count on her. The department can always count on her and the community can always count on Tina," he said.

Braun joined the team Aug. 22, 1994, and quickly began moving up the ranks. In about four years, she worked with Capt. Steve Klein as a K-9 handler. In 2001, she was promoted to sergeant.

"She is a great role model for women in the law enforcement profession," Barthuly said. "In fact, she is a great role model for a woman who simply wants to succeed."

Fit For The Force

When Braun joined the department, she was one of three women on the force. Now seven women patrol city streets.

She said hiring a woman when she started was noteworthy. Fifteen years later, it is normal.

"I don't usually like separating women officers from men officers," Braun said. "We do the exact same job, we wear the exact same uniform.

"My experience has been if they are going to disrespect the uniform, it doesn't matter if it is a male or female wearing it."

Russell Plummer writes for The Reporter, Fond du Lac.

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