

LAABP's Trailblazers

■ LAABP salutes outstanding City employees.

LAABP — Councilmembers, General Managers and City staff came together Feb. 15 for the Los Angeles Association of Black Personnel's Trailblazers Reception, held in the Tom Bradley Room at City Hall.

The event recognized individuals who have contributed to the progress of African Americans in City government as well as achieved notable positions in their City careers. The honorees were Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, Robert Allen, D'Lisa

Davies, Grace Harper, Ronnie Cato and Art Newborn.

Among the 130 guests offering salutes to the honorees were City Council President Eric Garcetti; Councilmember Janice Hahn, Councilmember Bernard Parks and Fire Chief William Bamattre. Also attending were Cynthia Ruiz, President, and Commissioners Valerie Lynne Shaw and David Sickler of the Board of Public Works; Carolyn Webb de Macias, Special Adviser to the Mayor; Clifford Graves, General Manager, Community Development Department; Gary Lee Moore, City Engineer;

Ed Ebrahimian, General Manager, Bureau of Street Lighting; Rita Robinson, General Manager, Bureau of Sanitation; Asst. Chief Jim McDonald, LAPD; Asst. Chief Roxanne Bercik, LAFD; John Reamer, Inspector of Public Works; Ken Sommons, Executive Officer, ITA; and Andrew Adelman, General Manager, Building and Safety.

Steve King, LAABP Director, served as host for the reception. Other program participants were Jeffry Whitmore, LAABP President, and Cora Jackson-Fossett, LAABP First Vice President.



Robert L. Allen District Supervisor, DWP



Robert L. Allen, District Supervisor, DWP with Councilwoman Janice Hahn.

A native of Philadelphia, Robert has worked for the City for 28 years. Starting his career in 1977 with Public Works Bureau of Sanitation, he soon moved to the DWP as a Construction Equipment Service Worker, and has since served as a Sand Blast operator, Electric Craft Helper, Electric Distribution Mechanic, Electric Distribution Mechanic Supervisor, and Transmission Distribution District Supervisor B.

Currently, he is District Supervisor A with DWP, responsible for designing the overhead distribution system for the entire City of LA.

His role models were his father and mother, who both stressed discipline and constant learning, and he says, "I am the better for it today."

Robert loves to travel and has visited nine countries in Africa as well as countries in Europe, Central and South

America, Asia, and most of the Caribbean Islands. He loves golf and has played in every country he's visited.

His words of wisdom: Never forget the humble beginnings from where we have all come from. It helps to assist others along our very short journey in life.



Stacy K. Burnette Telecommunications Manager, ITA



Stacy K. Burnette, Telecommunications Manager, ITA with Councilwoman Janice Hahn.

Stacy Burnette is an award-winning attorney and a Telecommunications Manager in the City's Information Technology Agency. As an attorney, Stacy received a Sustained Superior Performance award from the District of Columbia, based on her record of winning numerous jury trials litigated in the District of Columbia Superior Court and United States District Court for the District of Columbia.

As a Telecommunications Manager, Stacy has negotiated several multimillion-dollar telecommunications contracts, and she has written telecommunications policy for local municipalities. Plus, she's been quoted by the *Wall Street Journal*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Multichannel News*, *Cable World* and a host of other publications regarding cable matters.

A native of Los Angeles, Stacy earned a law degree and a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from

Howard University, where she was named in *Who's Who Among American College and University Students*.

Off the clock, she travels and has visited Africa, Europe and throughout North America.



Ronnie Cato Sergeant, LAPD



Ronnie Cato, Sergeant, LAPD with Councilwoman Janice Hahn.

Sergeant Ronnie Cato is a 25-year veteran of the LAPD, assigned to South Traffic Division as the assistant watch commander.

Raised in Compton, Cato joined the Department in 1981, and in 1994, he became the First Vice President of the Oscar Joel Bryant Foundation (OJB). The Foundation was created after the death of Officer Oscar Joel Bryant, who at the time many believed to be the first black officer killed in the line of duty. In 2002, Cato became the president of the Oscar Joel Bryant Foundation and extended the progressiveness of the Foundation to be more inclusive to all members of the Department. The organization has become more involved in community empowerment, political affairs, mentoring, recruitment, housing for low-income families, credit repair, scholarship programs and providing legal assistance to combat racism and discrimination against the membership.

Cato's goal is to make the Foundation a one-stop stop for the membership by providing the members with everything they need to enhance their careers and livelihood.

His words of wisdom: "If you really want a difference, you must become the difference."



D'Lisa Davies Firefighter, LAFD



D'Lisa Davies, Firefighter, LAFD with Councilwoman Janice Hahn.

D'lisa Davies was the first African American female firefighter hired by the LAFD. Joining the Department in 1984, D'lisa has worked in various battalions as well as special projects, including Fire Chief's Intergroup Relations Committee, the Terrorism Committee, and several women's focus groups.

She is assigned to LAFD's Recruitment Unit. She is also an instructor at the West Los Angeles Fire Academy.

A native of Tucson, Ariz., D'lisa enjoys donating her time and talents to children's outdoor recreational activities. She participated in organized sports throughout childhood and as an adult, became the first female Director of Athletics at Harbor College. In 1989, she received the Education Medal of Valor in honor of her dedication to coaching children's teams.

She says, "I like coaching beginning sports. The result is seeing the improvement in their skill level. It's much like seeing new cadets develop into the fine firefighters of LAFD."



Grace Harper Dep. Superintendent, Building & Safety



Grace Harper, Dep. Superintendent, Building and Safety with Councilwoman Janice Hahn.

Dr. Harper began with the City in 1978 and has worked her entire career with Building and Safety. She started as an apprentice plumber and became the first female to graduate from a plumbing apprenticeship in spring 1977. Next, she became an Assistant Inspector, then Chief Plumbing Inspector, next Assistant Deputy Superintendent of Buildings and then to her current position as Deputy Superintendent of Buildings in Spring of 2001.

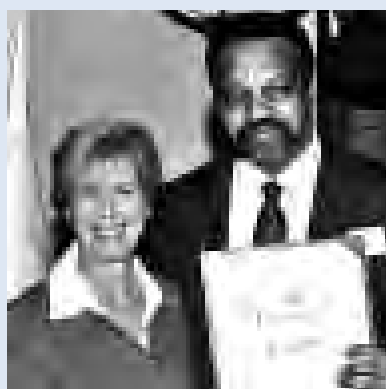
Her mother died when she was 13, and she is a product of the foster care system. She says, "I could have gone many different ways, but there was always someone who gave me a reality check or purposefully went out of their way to help me. I have had great mentors throughout my life, who have contributed greatly to my growth regarding human relationships and technical knowledge."

Off the clock, she enjoys computer games, learning how to create and record music and traveling.

Her basic tenants of life are to work hard, be focused on learning and growing and to enjoy life and keep negativity at a distance.



Art Newborn Division Manager, Street Lighting



Art Newborn, Division Manager, Street Lighting with Councilwoman Janice Hahn.

Art has 38 years with the City, starting as a Maintenance Laborer for the then-Bureau of Street Maintenance. Soon he was promoted to Street Lighting Electrical Craft Helper at the Bureau of Street Lighting. Utilizing his training and education in electronic technology from the U.S. Navy and college, he learned all facets of street lighting electrical work.

He was promoted to Assistant Street Lighting Electrician, then Street Lighting Electrician, Street Lighting Electrician Supervisor I, and in 1988, he was promoted to Street Lighting Electrician Supervisor II in charge of 80 Field Personnel involved in the construction, maintenance and repair of the City's entire street lighting system.

In May 2005, he was promoted to his current position as Division Manager of the Field Operations Division responsible for construction, maintenance and repair of the City's 240,000 streetlights.

His role models were his parents, who were hard workers and devoted to seeing that their nine children succeeded in life. They created the foundation for his strong work ethic and always encouraged him to strive for higher education and to overlook road blocks whatever they may be.

Off the clock, he's attempting to learn to golf and enjoys tennis, oil and watercolor painting and life drawing. During his formative years, he obtained the level of second degree black belt in Shotokan Karate.

His words of wisdom: "Through self-realization and continued education, you should focus on developing sound communication skills and hone your relationships with others."