

# Z for Excellence

**Councilman Dennis Zine presents his final Z Awards to honor public safety personnel.**

*Story and photos courtesy Jessica Tarman Nassour, Councilman Zine's office*

The 11th annual Z Awards for ExZellence luncheon was held May 16 at the Warner Center Marriott in Woodland Hills to honor public safety personnel who go above and beyond the call of duty to serve the citizens of the Third Council District and the greater Los Angeles community. Fox 11 News Anchor Christine Devine presented the awards to the recipients, and the Hon. Richard Katz served as the event host.

Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa also offered inspirational remarks.

Founded by Councilman Dennis P. Zine, the Z Awards for ExZellence is in its 11th and final year and recognizes individuals for their ongoing dedication, commitment, and "excellence" in their professional lives and outstanding contributions in the areas of law enforcement, public safety, and emergency services. At this year's Z Awards ceremony, Council District Three honored personnel from the LAPD, the LAFD, the

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, and the California Highway Patrol.

Proceeds from the Z Awards benefit local public safety youth programs such as the West Valley LAPD Cadets, the Topanga Police Cadets, and the LAFD Battalion Post.

*The Club congratulates all of this year's honorees, and thanks Councilman Zine for his civic spirit in the creation of the Z Awards program. This year's event marks the final one, as Councilman Zine is leaving Council service due to term limits.*



**Officer III Brian McClary**  
LAPD Valley Traffic Division

Officer III Brian McClary has been a member of the LAPD for more than 24 years and has been assigned to Valley Traffic Division (VTD) for the past 16 years. During his time at VTD, Officer McClary has worked as a collision investigator in the Detective Section. During this past year, Officer McClary was the primary collision investigator for some of the most horrific traffic accidents that the San Fernando Valley experienced. Due to Officer McClary's extensive investigative knowledge, he is a regular instructor at the Department's Basic Collision Investigation School and is a member of the Multi-Disciplinary Collision Investigation Team. In the last year, Officer McClary earned eight commendations where he was recognized for his professionalism, teamwork, investigative expertise, tactics and keen observation skills. Recently he was recognized for coordinating with the National Hockey League to have the Stanley Cup on display for a fundraising photo opportunity. The money was utilized to pay for a new VTD fallen officer memorial. Officer McClary was also the recipient of the 2012 MADD "Deuce Award," which represents all his DUI arrests from the previous year. Remarkably, this year's MADD Award is the 12th time Officer McClary has been recognized for his DUI enforcement efforts during his career.



**Sgt. Douglas Winger**  
LAPD West Valley Area

Sgt. Douglas Winger has been with the LAPD for 16 years and has held a multitude of assignments, both in patrol and specialized divisions throughout the Department, including the Mental Evaluation Unit. His knowledge about the various signs and symptoms of people suffering from mental illness is so expansive that he provided Roll Call training to his personnel on how to respond to field contacts with the mentally ill community. Following the Sept. 11, 2001 World Trade Center bombings and other terrorist attacks against the United States, Sgt. Winger was selected as one of the Multi-Assault Counter Terrorism Action Capabilities School's cadre members. As a MACTAC Instructor, Sgt. Winger has provided West Valley Area patrol officers with enhanced counterterrorism training to better prepare the West Valley field force to respond to critical incidents. He also serves as the Gang Enforcement Detail Supervisor, a highly coveted position requiring sound judgment and solid leadership skills.



**Officer Adam Smith**  
California Highway Patrol

Officer Adam Christopher Smith has spent the last seven years of his 12-year California Highway Patrol (CHP) career in the West Valley Area Division and has demonstrated an outstanding commitment to safety, security and service to the citizens of California. Officer Smith was born in the San Fernando Valley and was raised in Woodland Hills, where he was a Law Enforcement Explorer Cadet at the West Valley CHP Station from 1994 to 2000. His many details include: Motorcycle Officer, Protective Service Detail, Public Information Officer, Officer in Charge, and Child Safety Seat Technician. One of the highlights of Officer Smith's career was responding to a Department of Justice stop, wherein the suspect had a car full of merchandise – he eventually discovered that all of the items recovered belonged to the mother of LA City Councilman Richard Alarcon.



**Sgt. II Cathy Riggs**  
LAPD Topanga Area

Joining the LAPD in 1994, Sgt. II Cathy Riggs rose to the rank of Sergeant in 1999 and joined the Topanga Transition Team in July 2008 as an Assistant Watch Commander. Sgt. Riggs was immediately tasked with completing the Area Standing Plans, the department's preplanned responses for unusual occurrences of every type imaginable. On Sept. 12, 2008, she responded to the scene of the tragic Metrolink Train collision, where fellow Officer Spree Desha lost her life. Sgt. Riggs provided support to Officer Desha's family, including escorting her parents to Washington, D.C. for Police Memorial Week and the viewing of their daughter's name on the National Police Memorial. Just one month after the Metrolink tragedy, Sgt. Riggs and the Transition Team were mobilized once again to respond to the Sesnon Wildfire that lasted for four days and burned approximately 14,000 acres. Sgt. Riggs recognizes potential issues and seeks out of the box solutions far in advance of disasters. As an example of this innovative risk management thinking, she

reached out to private industry security personnel and joined with the Westfield Topanga Mall to teach, drill and assess active shooter scenarios in traditional soft targets with mass population. Additionally, in the wake of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in Connecticut, Sgt. Riggs met with her daughter's school principal and offered to provide training to the staff in such emergency situations. This eventually led to the creation of a program called "Seconds Count" in the Topanga Area, which brings together school administrators, psychologists, social workers, mental health experts, community organizations and multiple law enforcement agencies in a concerted effort to keep school violence at bay. Sgt. Riggs has also survived cancer, wherein she lost a good portion of her jaw and is a living testament to the power of positive thinking and resilience during times of hardship.



**Capt. David Rejino**  
LAFD Battalion 17

Capt. David Rejino has been a member of the LAFD for 25 years and has been assigned to Fire Station 72 in the Canoga Park area since 2008. During his career, he has held the ranks of Firefighter III, Hazardous Materials Specialist, Apparatus Operator, and since 2007, Fire Capt. Rejino and his crew provide

quality fire prevention education, fire safety awareness, and disaster preparedness instruction to the community. Examples of these initiatives include the Halloween Safety and Awareness Program, which teaches children and their families about wearing proper costumes and understanding the guidelines for risk-free "trick-or-treating" and a project that educates children, their parents, and teachers on the importance of wearing bike helmets, preventing serious pediatric head injuries. Capt. Rejino also trains volunteer firefighters for the City of La Habra Heights, where he also holds the rank of Captain. Through his passion for this work, many of the young men and women that he mentors in this volunteer position achieve their career goal of becoming professional firefighters. In fact, one of the current members of his crew at Fire Station 72 is one of those firefighters he trained from La Habra Heights.



**Firefighter III Todd Harris**  
LAFD Battalion 17

Firefighter III Todd Harris has been a member of the LAFD for 13 years, 12 of which have been spent working in the West Valley at Fire Station 73 in Reseda, Fire Station 106 in West Hills, and currently at Fire Station 105 in Woodland Hills. For the past 10 years, Firefighter Harris has been a part of the handpicked 40-member Brush Task Force, educating and verifying compliance of residential properties to clearance requirements throughout the City. Some of his distinctions and specializations include: certified member of the LAFD Tractor Unit, certified Swift Water rescue technician, and licensed commercial pilot for both fixed-wing and rotor aircraft. He also volunteers as an instructor for the LAFD Cadet program in West Hills, where he helps prepare young men and women who would like to pursue a career in the fire service. Prior to his time with the LAFD, Todd served as an LA County Deputy Sheriff working in the Custody Division, Patrol Division, Gang Suppression Team, and Warrant Unit. Firefighter Harris continues in his law enforcement career working on his days off as a Reserve Deputy.



**Deputy Darren Martin**  
Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

Deputy Darren Martin is a 16-year veteran of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) and is assigned to the Transit Services Bureau. He has been the driving force behind enforcement elements of the Orange Line and maintains an active role in every aspect, including the Orange Line Extension, photo enforcement, and basic maintenance along the route. Deputy Martin regularly conducts audits and studies across all bus lines and developed the Deployment Strategy to maximize LASD coverage while maintaining fiscal prudence. Because of his diligence and attention to statistical detail, the Orange Line and Valley Transit Buses enjoy relatively low crime rates. He also regularly meets with school administrators of the local junior high and high schools and was the key author of the Transit Juvenile Diversion Program. This program, the first of its kind, aims to reduce juvenile misconduct on Metro buses by educating youths on the merits of public transportation while simultaneously keeping them in the classroom and out of the criminal justice system.