

We are honoring the women who serve and protect us.

We are pleased to present to you Lincoln's finest...Tracy Graham, Lincoln Police Department Kim McKay, Lincoln Fire Department, Amy L. Merritt, Lancaster County Deputy—Sheriff's Department, and Julie Maaske, Nebraska State Patrol

Tracy Graham

What is your Title? Investigator/Domestic Violence Coordinator, Lincoln Police Department

What is your commissioned date? December 20, 2001.

What were your first duties? I worked 3rd shift patrol for 5 years (Northeast area and Southwest area), One year on 12-hour swing shift Southwest area (230 pm-230 am).

Then I began as Investigator/Domestic Violence Coordinator in January of 2008. I was also a Field Training Officer for the new recruits from 8-05 until I became an Investigator. While on patrol, I was in a cruiser and in uniform. I now work in plain clothes and an unmarked car. I also teach domestic violence in the LPD Academy.

How did you select this field? I kind of fell in to Law Enforcement never took a criminal justice class but it sounded fun so I applied. Therefore I had no previous training, but I did work for HHS/ Child Protective Services prior to becoming a police officer. That job pretty much introduced me to Law Enforcement since I did juvenile parole and also investigations into child abuse/neglect and was part of the juvenile court system.

Tell us about a "typical" day. I am assigned to the family crimes unit and am the only domestic violence coordinator for the police department. I follow up on domestic violence crimes and also protection order violations. I serve as a liaison for the county attorney's office for domestic violence and protection order cases. I also am a liaison for the community for providing training, information, etc on domestic violence and protection orders. Lastly, I carry a case load of family crimes cases, including child related cases such as child abuse/neglect/sexual abuse, etc.

What is your greatest reward? My greatest reward is that knowing I get to hold people accountable for bad behavior.

What advice would you give to women considering this as a career? Women that want to enter law enforcement should just remember that it is a difficult but rewarding experience. It brings new challenges everyday and that is what makes it so fun.

How do you feel about being a "Cover Girl"? It was flattering to have the opportunity to represent the department in a positive manner. Hopefully, it will encourage more women to want to be law enforcement officers.

The million dollar question...What is your favorite shoe? My favorite shoe is a pair of black Vera Wang stiletto heels but on an everyday scale, it would be a tie between my high heel tall brown leather boots and my high heel tall black boots.

Kim McKay

Name/Rank--Kim McKay-Captain, Lincoln Fire Department
Summary -- I began in November of 1988, with a class of 2 men and me. I was 30 years old, I was a firefighter for 3 years then got promoted to driver of a fire engine, In October of 1998 and I was promoted to Captain in the training division and am in this position today.

Field of work--During my education I spent time with Omaha fire and they really had a good bond and acted like they enjoyed their jobs so I decided to try it. Also, I had responded on calls with Lincoln Fire for 10 years with my job on an Advanced Life Support Unit.

Training-I have my Associates in Fire Science. After you get hired you spend 12 weeks of training before you go to the rigs.

Challenges--Staying physically fit as I get older.

Duties--I am responsible for training the department. We train on fire suppression (putting fires out), emergency medical issues, and hazardous materials. I also train the newly hired recruits.

Rewards--Working with new recruits.

Recommendations-- Study hard, you won't even get to the physical if you don't study. Then work out, the physical test is much harder for women just because we aren't as strong, especially upper body. Practice your interviews, go to SCC and get your fire science degree.

Being a Cover Girl-It is exciting, although I have done other articles and photos for being in a nontraditional career, my kids and grand-kids are excited comments-see the narrative that I sent Roger Favorite Shoe-Birkenstock or Keen

Amy L. Merritt,

Lancaster County Sheriff's Department

Rank: Investigator, Criminal Investigations Division

Commissioned: I was commissioned as a Lancaster County Deputy on 12 Sep 01. While I am currently Serving as an Investigator in the

Criminal Division, I have had the opportunity to work all shifts as a patrol deputy. During my tenure I have had the opportunity to serve as a court officer, a defensive tactics instructor, a Taser instructor, as well as a field training officer.

Why did you select this field of work? I come from a long line of law enforcement and legal professionals. Members of my family include a district court judge, an attorney, a retired Lincoln Police Department (LPD) detective as well as two former LPD officers.

Where did you received your training for this field? I received my basic patrol officer training at the Nebraska Law Enforcement Training Center in Grand Island, NE. I have received additional training as an investigator, a defensive tactics instructor, Taser Instructor and a field training officer as well as extensive training in interview techniques.

What has been your greatest reward? I am rewarded each and every day through my work at the Lancaster County Sheriff's Department. I am honored to be a public servant and I serve the community with pride.

Tell us about your everyday duties...As an investigator, I am involved in all aspects of law enforcement. I investigate all types of criminal violations to include misdemeanors as well as felonies. I conduct extensive interviews and follow up investigations in order to solve crime. As a public servant I am involved in community services.

What recommendations would you have to women that want to enter the service field? Being a law enforcement officer is a very rewarding career. It is important for anyone interested in the law enforcement profession to have a desire to serve the community and help others.

How did you feel about being selected as a "Cover Girl"? I am honored to be a member of such a professional organization and I feel it is imperative to share my experiences with the community.

Finally, what is your favorite shoe? Stilettos!!!! Or flip flops

Julie Maaske

Rank --Julie Maaske, Captain, Nebraska State Patrol

Career Summary -- 1986, Field Services as a Road Trooper, 4.5 years, Undercover Narcotics for 3 years, Criminal Investigation 3.5 years and then promoted to rank of Sgt. and Training Academy, Basic Recruit Training Cam, then Executive Officer, in Lincoln, Director of training, Lt. and Captain. As the Director of Training, I was responsible for the co-location of the training center to Grand Island. I returned to Lincoln to work at the State Headquarters. I currently am the Commander of Professional Standard Division, serve as Agency Legislative Liaison.

Your Education? --UNL, BS in Criminal Justice, minor in Psychology and Philosophy. Like the others, I fell into this job. I worked for 3.5 years at the Sheriff's and Police departments serving as the Sheriff Dispatcher, Jailer and Administrative Assistant in Holdrege.

What is your greatest challenge? --To keep a focus on the fact that 99 percent of the people in this state are law abiding citizens and that you don't loose fact of the 1 percent that are not law abiding. Don't loose that balance.

What has been your greatest reward? Knowing at the end of the day that you spent your time doing something useful for society. That your work is intangible and you spent your time not to make a profit, but the in the general overall fact that my work is beneficial to all the people. What I like is the small little individual cases that are one on one providing guidance and comfort.

Your recommendations for a woman seeking this career...-- Strongly look at public service as a professional. It has great rewards, and do it regardless of your size. The thing you use the most is your brain and the ability to communicate. It is not about out muscling people, it is the ability to interact with other people.

Comments about your career? My experience has been very favorable, rewarding, challenging, new everyday something new. I have really enjoyed, came by it by accident. I have had so many opportunities that I would never have had in another profession. For example, hanging out of a helicopter, with doors open doing surveillance!

What is it like being a "Cover Girl"?--That has been a unique experience. In some ways it was a little unnerving, representing women as a strong independent female, the law enforcement and the State Patrol. I didn't want to fail at any of those. It has been surprisingly fun and as a woman you get used to being stared at because of the uniform, but being on the other side of the camera was a whole different ball game. I am honored to be asked and honored and pleased by Stiletto to be a part of this campaign.

Your favorite shoe? -- A Slide Sandal by Keen, and Golf Sandals, because then I am enjoying friends and the great outdoors!

I would like to thank all four for participating. Roger Yant Editor