

Phyllis Nolan- 2011 Heritage Award Recognition

By Laura Goodman, Chair of IAWP Board of Trustees

The Heritage Award is an honor bestowed upon an individual member when warranted due to substantial and significant contributions to women police and the International Association of Women Police over a period of years and especially during milestones of the organization. The honor is meant to ensure the recording, recognition, and appreciation for outstanding and dedicated service to IAWP. The IAWP's Heritage recognition is the highest tribute given by the IAWP. This year's recipient of the IAWP Heritage recognition is Superintendent Phyllis Nolan.

In the late 70's, Phyllis Nolan was introduced to the IAWP through a friend from the International Police Association (IPA). At that time, the organization's membership was mainly drawn from North America, which had 11 Regions. Region 12 represented the rest of the world. Superintendent Nolan joined. In 1985, Superintendent Nolan was selected as a finalist for the International Scholarship Award. What an honor this was! But when the Chair of the International Scholarship Committee advised Superintendent Nolan's department of the honor, the department would not support Superintendent Nolan's attendance at the conference which would be held in

Alaska that year. Recognizing this opportunity, Superintendent Nolan was not going to be dissuaded, so she arranged her own transportation to Alaska. She traveled to Alaska via St. Paul, Minnesota where she was graciously hosted by Carolen Bailey, then Chair of the International Scholarship Award Committee.

The Alaska training conference was a life changing experience for Superintendent Nolan. Aside from global exposure to various styles in policing, training sessions were offered which were interesting and relevant to her style of policing in Ireland. While at this conference, she was also able to forge new friendships and international collaborations. She recognized and seized the opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences with other participants and she began to build a global network of resources.

Superintendent Nolan returned to her homeland (Ireland) with a very positive perception of IAWP. A couple of years later, she was elected as the Regional Coordinator for Region 12—the world outside of North America. Still later, Superintendent Nolan was elected to 2nd and then 1st Vice President. In total, she served on the Board from 1986—2000. Over this time and since, Superintendent Nolan saw many changes not only in IAWP, but in Ireland. "Today women make up 24% of the Police Force. Only last month, a woman made history when she was appointed Deputy Commissioner, a position that is second in command of the police force, with responsibility for operational policing at a national level.

"My proudest experience with the IAWP was while serving as Vice President. I was the first person outside of North America to be elected an Officer of the Board. It wasn't just my election, but that I had the opportunity to play a role in the growth of IAWP outside North America and the development initially of two Regions. That growth has continued to expand, making the organization truly International; thus providing opportunities to police women everywhere to enhance their opportunities" (Phyllis Nolan)

"During my term as IAWP President, Executive Director Angie Holt and I were blessed to have Superintendent Nolan serve as 2nd Vice-President.



Superintendent Nolan was ever an advocate for our Board and the sometimes difficult decisions to be made, yet her true advocacy resided with what would be most beneficial to the membership as whole. The strength of her decision-making, along with her collaborative nature, served to make IAWP a healthy organization for the betterment of law enforcement worldwide. At a time when our international membership numbers were small,



Superintendent Nolan consistently ensured our sisters in law enforcement around the world were remembered and attended to their needs” (Gale Buckner, Past President).

Perhaps the greatest asset Superintendent Nolan brought to the IAWP was that she came from a country on the western edge of Europe where as a member of a National Police Force, she brought a wider experience to IAWP, which at that time was mainly operating within the USA and Canada. She also was serving on the Permanent Executive Board of the International Police Association, with contacts in many parts of the world. These networks provided a wide platform for Superintendent Nolan to promote the IAWP.

What many people don't know about Superintendent Nolan is that she was the first police woman in the Garda Siochana (National Police Force of Ireland) to gain Office rank on promotion to Superintendent; 30 years after the first Ban Gardai

(women police) were trained. She is also the first woman to be elected to the International Board of the IPA, where she served for 12 years.

Superintendent Nolan is now retired from policing, but she continues her involvement with IPA at the local level as Chairman of the Dublin North Region and Manager of the Dublin IPA House. Superintendent Nolan also stays connected with her colleagues and friends at the IAWP.

“Superintendent Nolan has been a humble law enforcement leader who gratefully served Ireland in a law enforcement capacity and has been an advocate and mentor for all women in law enforcement” (Gale Buckner, Past President).

It is with great honor that this year we recognize Superintendent Nolan for her substantial and significant contributions to women police and the International Association of Women Police.