

1999 Recipient of the Dr. Lois-Higgins Grote Heritage Award ROSIE MASON



Rosie Mason Detective, Kansas City (MO) P.D.

DETEKTIVE Rosie Mason worked 39 years in the Kansas City P.D., and she came up the hard way. If you're just starting out, you may not know what that means!

In 1944 Rosie was hired as a civilian elevator operator for the department, a job she held for 10 years until Chief Brannon suggested she join the Juvenile Division. She was given a gun and badge—but retained her civilian status until she went through the Police Academy 12 years later. (Women weren't admitted into the Academy before that.)

While Rosie worked the Juvenile Bureau she was friends with all—police, the public, and juveniles she arrested. (They called her the nicest cop that ever arrested them.) She didn't do much undercover work because after 10 years most criminals knew her face very well, but she certainly enjoyed her job. She did investigations, made arrests and counseled young criminals. "It's the child abuse cases that hurt the most," she says. "Turning one of these young people around seems one of the most significant jobs a person can do."

In 1972 Detective Mason was given an all-expenses-paid trip to Pennsylvania to speak at the Butler "Ladies Night" program. Her subject? Self-defense for Women. Rosie has traveled to Europe and exotic places like Japan, Kenya and Ethiopia. Her house is full of police memorabilia and statuettes she brought back from trips abroad.

Rosie Mason was born in Arkansas, but she won't say how old she is—just "a veteran officer." In the Department, where



Rosie in Minnesota in 1990.

they called her "Mom," she adopted female street officers, even though she never worked patrol herself. And she doesn't fit the image of a police officer. Never a hair out of place or a wrinkle in her clothing. In fact, in the notes she sent for this story she said she was late for a beauty parlor appointment.

Detective Rosie is also active in her church, although she has cut down her activities considerably in recent years.

In 1976 Rosie Mason became the President of IAWP, an organization she had joined in 1967. According to President Mason, there were only 200 members at the time, owing to the layoff of 400 female officers from New York City P.D. IAWP members comprised women officers in the U.S., London, Canada and Africa. She noted, "There is a need to introduce the organization more vigorously in police departments." (Sounds familiar, doesn't it?)

In 1982 Rosie became Executive Director of the IAWP, whose membership had swelled to about 820 members, mostly in the U.S. and Canada.

At the banquet of every IAWP Training Conference, attendees would wait for Rosie to make her grand entrance in a classy outfit. We called her "Regal Rosie," and the name certainly fits.

Rosie, all your friends at IAWP thank you and wish you well. ★

This archival photo (you can tell by the poor quality—sorry) ran in the *Kansas City Star* in December 1982, when the paper did a feature article on the occasion of Rosie's retirement.



MARY ANN LYONS