Employee Writes to Heal, Inspire

You may know Debra Wilson from her role as a Management Analyst in the Contracts and Purchasing Division. Off the job? Meet Dr. Debra Wilson, author.

Dr. Wilson has a PhD in Multidisciplinary Human Services and a Masters’ Degree in Counseling Studies. Her book “Drop Your Fists and Raise Your
Hands,” was written to inspire and empower people who have experienced difficulties in their lives. Dr. Wilson says she was inspired to write as she struggled with personal challenges.

“During a season of turmoil and anguish in my life, I recognized my experiences could help others,” says Wilson. “I used writing as a way to safeguard my peace, my faith and my capacity to love.”

Wilson turned those writings into a book and a companion journal to share her strategies. Once written, the next challenge was to publish. She self-published in 2016, which is not as easy as it sounds. It was a major investment finding reviewers, those who could format the book for publishing standards and handle revisions. Wilson says she had help along the way from colleagues including Arturo Roque in Human Resources, who did the book cover conceptual design.

“When I ordered the first release of the book, I was so excited that I printed many copies only to discover many errors,” she says. “Lesson learned! It took several revisions before it was finally ready.”

Fast forward to 2019, Dr. Wilson collaborated with a formal publishing company for a re-launch of the book. In July, Downtown Book and Sound in Oldtown Salinas invited Debra to have a book signing event as a way for to feature and support ‘homegrown” talent. Today, her book and two journals are “on the shelf.”

What’s next for this author? Dr. Wilson says she is drafting her next challenge - a screenplay based on the book – with a few “twists and turns” not in the book!
Meet Lee Ann Magoski, Director of Emergency Communications

While law enforcement may have been her original target, Lee Ann Magoski hit the mark with a career guiding something all first responders depend on: emergency communications.

Lee Ann Magoski joined Monterey County Emergency Communications in February. It was the unique nature of the County’s 9-1-1’s center that drew her.

“Not many 9-1-1 centers are standalone departments,” explains Magoski. “Monterey County 9-1-1 provides services to almost the entire County in one capacity or another. I was honored to be selected.”

Prior to Monterey County, Magoski was Communications Dispatch Manager for the Marin County Sheriff’s Office. She is also well known at the state level serving as President of the California Chapter of the National Emergency Number Association (CALNENA) and she is a member of the State 9-1-1 Advisory Board.

She tells us more about her experience and expectations.

Q. How did you decide to go into the emergency communications field?

A. Very few kids say, “I want to be a 9-1-1 Dispatcher” when I grow up. More often, it’s “I want to be a police officer or firefighter.”

When I was 16 years old, I had the opportunity to join my home town cadet program which taught me about law enforcement. While planning to pursue a law enforcement career, I was recruited into the local dispatch center. I spent four years at my home town agency before relocating to Northern California.

Within the 9-1-1 profession, I have been Dispatcher, Supervisor, Assistant Manager, Manager and now Director. Along the way, I also completed my education receiving a B.A. Degree in Management and M.A. Degree in Leadership.

I learn something new in each role and my goal is to advocate for the 9-1-1 profession.
Q. **You have been in this field for 23 years. How has emergency communication changed?**

A. Back in 1996, not everyone had a cell phone and most calls were from landlines. Now, 80% of our 9-1-1 calls are from cell phones, although texting 9-1-1 is still not available at all centers. Most families used to have one phone in a home; now each family member has a cell phone and other devices that can contact 9-1-1.

The public expects 9-1-1 technology to be as good as or better than a ride sharing or pizza app. 9-1-1 is getting there with Next Generation 9-1-1, but we are not there yet. We have improved mutual aid and automatic aid policies to send resources to emergencies and local alerting technology.

Q. **What was your most challenging emergency situation?**

A. I was involved as an Incident Dispatcher at the Santana Row fire in 2002 in San Jose. It was an 11-acre structure fire.

As a new member of the Incident Dispatch Team (IDT), the duty was to respond to the scene of large incidents and when off duty, to assist with radio coordination at the incident. As a dispatcher, one spends a majority of their career in the Communications Center. Seeing a fire of that magnitude and focusing on the radio tasks at hand was definitely an experience!

Q. **What do you want others in the County to know about the work dispatchers do?**

A. Our dispatchers are awesome individuals! They are on the job 24/7, 365 days a year, working 12-hour shifts. This includes evenings, weekends and holidays to keep everyone one safe. Dispatchers use six monitors, three keyboards and four mice to do their daily job. They also wear headsets that allow them to listen to the radio in one ear and the phone in the other. It takes a unique person to be a Dispatcher, a high level of commitment, training and passion is required.

Around the state and here in Monterey County there is a shortage of dispatchers, which means they are forced to work many hours of overtime. I would like to find a way to become fully staffed so that our dispatchers can enjoy their days off without needing to work extra shifts. **We are hiring if anyone is interested!**

Q. **How do you see the department evolving under your leadership?**

A. As the Director, I advocate for the profession and to provide the highest level of service to the community and first responders. Next Generation 9-1-1 is here and along with the management team, we will bring improved methods.
Milestone Celebrations

This month, the County celebrated employee service milestones.

This week, the Department of Social Services honored Alice White for 23 years of service, all of it serving the residents of Monterey County.

Director Lori Medina presented White with a resolution before the Board of Supervisors, describing her as a champion for direct services. Medina thanked White for the energy and compassion she brought to the job not only for her clients in the Family and Children Services Division but in support of her colleagues.

White says she came to the County as an intern in 1995 and never left and that it has been an honor to serve the community.

Also, in another recognition event, various divisions within the CAO’s office gathered last Friday for a potluck at the Turn 3 building at Laguna Seca.

Staff enjoyed a barbeque and many delicious side dishes and desserts while getting to know colleagues who are in various county offices. Part of the lunchtime event was the presentation of service pins. Congratulations to these employees who were honored for their years of service:

**Housing and Economic Development**
- Darby Marshall - 20 years

**Workforce Development Board**
- Jerry Hernandez - 20 years
- Vanessa Kor - 5 years
- Faustino Orejel - 20 years

**CAO**
- Rocio Quezada - 10 years

**Contracts/Purchasing**
- Jessica Rodriguez - 30 years
- Walter Skinner - 5 years

Alice White (right) shares a happy moment after the resolution presentation with her supervisor Christine Lerable (left).

Happy service pin recipients.
Records Retention
Ethan Dupris - 10 years
Frank Navarette - 10 years

Mail
Edward Cain - 15 years
Jaramillo Felicidad - 30 years

Intergovernmental and Legislative Affairs
Annette D'Adamo - 15 years
Teresa Meister - 25 years

Fleet
Armelita Mabul - 10 years
Sylvia Puzon - 5 years
Gregory Ray - 5 years
Michael Rodriguez - 5 years

The barbecue chefs hard at work (above). Service pin recipients especially enjoyed shaking hands with County Administrative Officer Lew Bauman who is retiring next month (below left). Notes of appreciation were scattered throughout the pot luck tables (below right).