Parsons Retires Badge, Not Passion for Service, Youth

County leaders and colleagues honored retiring Probation Chief Marcia Parsons for her incredible 30-year career.

Besides the ‘firsts’ she earned in Monterey County - its first armed female probation officer and Probation Chief - her tenure and tenacity to start, restart and sustain her career at a time when the glass ceiling for women was much higher, gives us an even greater appreciation for her achievements.
She shares with us some thoughts and highlights about her extraordinary personal and professional journey.

**Q. Why did you choose to pursue a career in Probation?**

A. To be totally honest, I entered my junior year in college neglecting to declare a major, probably because I was having way too much fun. My counselor suggested I try Economics or Sociology. I chose Sociology and took a class in Probation and Parole. I was hooked.

I worked as a part time group counselor in the Santa Clara County Juvenile Hall during my Junior and Senior years and did an internship with the Santa Clara County Juvenile Probation Department. This internship opened my eyes to the variety of experiences the field of probation offered and eventually resulted in my appointment as a Deputy Probation Officer with the County of Santa Clara.

**Q. You took a break from the workforce. Why?**

A. During my break in service, my now ex-husband and I raised our daughter, which was not an easy task. I also attended and graduated from Monterey College of Law. These experiences were invaluable and after twenty years, I returned to the only profession I knew, Probation.
I was extremely fortunate to be welcomed back and am grateful for my long and satisfying career.

**Q.** You became Monterey County’s first armed female probation officer in the 90s and in 2014, the County’s first female Chief Probation Officer. Did you feel at the time you were paving the way for others?

**A.** At the time, no. At no time in my career, did I ever feel less than, dis-empowered or discriminated against in any way because of my gender. The men in this profession, as well as the women, were welcoming and became my mentors. I was honored to stand on the firing line with the guys and felt no different because I was a woman.

When I became Chief, I knew I was the first female Chief Probation Officer in County’s history. I was, and remain, humbled and honored. If I have somehow paved the way for others, I am thankful.

**Q.** You have stayed in the field and working a lot longer than many. What kept you here?

**A.** We are in the business of assisting clients to change their lives; is there a more rewarding
profession? We wear two hats: the ‘social worker’ and the ‘police officer’ and interchange those hats several times a day. I find these responsibilities, to change lives and protect the public, extremely satisfying.

Q. Any words of advice, wisdom for those entering the field?

A. During the swearing-in ceremony for new hires, I always tell our new employees to work hard, be honest, don’t complain and ALWAYS DO THE RIGHT THING.

A tremendous amount of responsibility comes with wearing the badge and having the powers of arrest, search and seizure and it is our job to maintain the trust of the community we serve. Probation is the beacon for public safety and the expert in community corrections.

To have worked alongside employees of the best Probation Department in the State has been a truly humbling and gratifying experience. Thank you to all!

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Along with Parsons, three other members of the Probation staff were honored this month for their years of service as they retire. Pictured at right, Assistant Chief of Probation Todd Keating did the honors, presenting resolutions to retirees Juvenile Institutions Supervisor James Munoz (45 years), Senior Departmental Information System Coordinator Jonathan Westfall (22 years) and Juvenile Institution Supervisor II Miguel Herrera (33 years).
Ebby Johnson: Four Decades of County Service

When you have been at the County as long as Ebby Johnson, it’s a bit like that insurance commercial - you’ve ‘seen a thing or two.’

Johnson started as a front desk Typist Clerk 1 for the Planning and Building Inspections Department in July of 1979 and never looked back, moving to Natividad in 1990 and the Administrative Office in 2001 where she supported the Budget and Analysis Division before being promoted to Executive Assistant to County Administrative Officer Lew Bauman and now Charles McKee.

Since her first day on the job, there have been many changes.

“When we got computers in 1980, they were as large as the desk with a screen size of 6” x 6” – an OS system 6, then there were the mag cards and the display writers,” she recalls. “The first mobile phones the County purchased were these huge phones, but portable. Anyone who had one was elite; it makes me laugh now knowing how common cell phones have become.”

Johnson can recall when the Old Jail (in front of the Administration Building on Alisal Street) was fully staffed, construction of the new Sheriff’s Administration Office and Natividad Hospital and the transition of the Courts from the County to the State.

“The County delivers such diverse services and makes such a positive impact to our community and being part of that goes beyond a paycheck,” she says. “This has been my second home for over 40 years and I am grateful for the many friends I have made through the years and proud to have served the citizens of Monterey County.”

Johnson enjoys a retirement party (l) and posing with three of her bosses: Dewayne Woods, Charles McKee and Lew Bauman (r).
Other Notable Retirements

Jody Holtzworth, Director, Child Support Services

Holtzworth has led the Child Support Services Department since 2015 but had been its Deputy Director and joined the department 18 years ago.

Holtzworth chose a career in child support, believing such programs help keep children and families out of poverty through the collection of child support and enforcement of orders.

Her career has spanned nearly 49 years. Before joining Monterey County, she worked for 31 years for the West Virginia Department of Employment Security, the West Virginia Bureau of Families and Children and the West Virginia Bureau of Child Support Enforcement.

Daniel Marien, Weights and Measures Inspector III, Agricultural Commissioner’s Office

You might say Daniel Marien has been a consumer superhero.

Marien spent 17 years in the Weights and Measures section of the Agricultural Commissioner’s Office. In this work, Marien protected residents from consumer fraud – making sure they got what they paid for by making sure machines that weigh or dispense by volume give the buyer exactly what they pay for. He also used his expertise to investigate many consumer fraud cases.

Maria Gomes, Finance Manager II, Treasurer-Tax Collector’s Office

Maria Gomes began her career in public service in 1978 with the Treasurer-Tax Collector’s Office in Merced County just after California’s famed Proposition 13 was enacted 41 years ago.

She came to Monterey County 20 years ago to overseeing the Tax Collector’s Division. She has spent two decades as an integral part of the Department and is renowned statewide for her expertise in local property taxation and systems.
Adrian Cornelis Vrolyks, Deputy Sheriff Bailiff, Sheriff’s Office

During his 19 year career with the Sheriff’s Office, Vrolyks has held a wide variety of duties including Corrections Deputy, Corrections Facility Training Officer, Corrections Emergency Response Team leader, Department Firearms Instructor, Transportation Deputy, Patrol Deputy who has worked all shifts and stations, SWAT sniper, Tactical Flight Officer and most recently, Bailiff Deputy.

Vrolyks earned a Meritorious Achievement Award for exceptional performance when a bus carrying French and Canadian tourists flipped and fell from a freeway overpass onto Highway 101 near Soledad in 2009.

Other Retirees Honored But Not Pictured
Bernie Cabanilla, Building Maintenance Worker, Resource Management Agency – 44 years
Warren Robinson, Software Programmer Analyst III, Information Technology Department - 20 years

Reminder

The County’s Winter Recess is December 26th to 31st. Many departments are closed or have shortened hours. Check the Department Open/Closed List for details.

Happy Holidays