



## Captain Steven Valenzuela: *Fighting Media Fires*



Captain Valenzuela proudly accepts his scroll of commendation from Board Chair Gloria Molina.

Being on the front line as a firefighter is one of the toughest jobs on the County payroll. But while County firefighters are on the scene risking their lives to save others' lives and property, there's one fire captain who is putting out a different sort of fire: media fires. Perhaps nowhere in the nation is the media more frenzied than Los Angeles, the capital of glitz and media hype. With more camera crews readily available to be on the scene, the Los Angeles media is a force to contend with, something most public figures want to avoid. But not Fire Captain Steven Valenzuela.

A 19-year veteran of the County Fire Department, Valenzuela's face is well known to millions of Angelenos who follow the almost nightly breaking news stories about fires throughout the County. As Community Relations/Public Information Officer for the department, he serves as spokesman, coordinating all media relations and public information activities. He also over-

sees film industry activities within the department's jurisdiction.

Valenzuela's outstanding performance was formally recognized on March 21, 1995, when the Board of Supervisors named him as March County Employee of the Month, an honor he jubilantly shared in the Boardroom with his family and fellow

firefighters. Many high-ranking officers from the department turned out for the occasion, including County Fire Chief P. Michael Freeman, who called Valenzuela an "energy source" to his coworkers.

This commendation represents the third time in his career that Valenzuela

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## FIRST WOMAN CHIEF: Helena Ashby

The first woman, who also happens to be African American, has become the first in the history of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department to be promoted to the rank of chief.

Helena Ashby, 53, a 31-year veteran of the Sheriff's Department, was recently elevated from the rank of commander to chief, as announced by Sheriff Sherman Block.



Chief Helena Ashby

Being first isn't a new experience for Ashby while in the department, as she was also the first African American woman to become captain and then commander, before her rise to chief.

Chief Ashby began her new duties last month as the new head of the department's Detective Division, which is responsible for the investigation of crimes, identification and apprehension of criminals, recovery of property, and the preparation of cases for court.

During her career, Chief Ashby has served as a deputy in Custody, Detective and Administrative divisions. She is a graduate of Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, as well as the Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Academy in Quantico, Virginia.

Chief Ashby resides in Rolling Hills Estates with her husband of 32 years, Verne Sr. Their son, Verne Jr., is a Marine Sargeant stationed in Camp Le Jeune.

## Virginia Tuttle: The Easter Basket Lady

Marshmallow chicks, foil-wrapped chocolate eggs, and snugly stuffed rabbits all conjure up thoughts of Easter baskets from childhoods long ago. But for Internal Services employee Virginia Tuttle, the memories come alive each year as she embarks on her annual Easter Basket Project to benefit almost 1,000 patients at Los Angeles County+USC Medical Center's General Hospital and 5P21 Rand Schrader HIV/AIDS Clinic.

When patients are served breakfast on Easter morning, their trays are colorfully adorned with a small cherry tomato basket filled with Easter goodies resting on a bed of traditional green Easter grass. Tuttle and her corps of ISD employees volunteer their time to the effort. Each year, bake sales and boutiques are held to raise money to purchase the goodies and supplies needed to assemble the baskets.

"Virginia is an angel sent from heaven, a very kind person who just like the feeling she gets from doing it," says Marjorie Dolinski, General Hospital's director of volunteer services. "Each year since 1987, she and fellow ISD employees have prepared more than 700 baskets for our adult inpatients. It's so special."

For Tuttle, who spends her workday in ISD's Purchasing and Central Services Fixed Assets section, it's truly a labor of love.

"It's a lot of work, but we all feel very good about the fact that they're going directly to the patients. With so many other charities, you just don't know where your money is going," she explains.

Last year, the group expanded their annual project and also made 160 larger baskets for children with AIDS who are being treated at the Medical Center's HIV/AIDS Clinic.

*"If we don't do it, who else is going to do it? There are just too many people out there doing nothing to help others", says Virginia.*

*All wrapped and ready to go, this fun-filled Easter basket produced by Tuttle's volunteer group is ready to make its holiday journey to the 5P21 Rand Schrader HIV/AIDS Clinic at LAC+USC Medical Center, where it will bring a smile to a child suffering from HIV disease.*



## Valenzuela

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has received a five-signature scroll from the Board. Twice in 1991, he received the honor; once for performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and saving the life of a fellow Chief Administrative Office employee, during his special three-year assignment in the CAO's Office of Emergency Management, and once for being the project manager for Disaster Response '91, the nation's largest disaster exercise on record, involving all 88 cities and over 85,000 people Countywide.

Valenzuela's media relations efforts have brought him into the limelight on many occasions, having appeared on ABC-TV's "Nightline," "The Home Show," and all of the local media outlets, especially during the 1992 civil disturbance, the 1992 floods, the 1993 firestorm and last year's Northridge earthquake. The Radio and Television News Association of Southern California recognized Valenzuela's media coordination efforts during the 1993 firestorm by presenting the Fire Department with a "Special Golden Mike Award."

Valenzuela began his County career as a firefighter in 1976, and also served as a certified paramedic for 13 years.

"This commendation is an honor which should be shared with my entire family and the coworkers who have provided outstanding support to me throughout my career," says Valenzuela.

# This Month's Retirees

Congratulations to the following employees who have joined the ranks of the retired, after 30 years of service to the people of Los Angeles County:

**Assessor:** Gary V. Gillan, Roy R. Sharman

**Children's and Family Services:** Charles R. Brett, Philip L. Kunde

**County Counsel:** Martin E. Weekes

**District Attorney:** Edmund M. Aleks

**Fire:** George M. Ban, Roland K. Krumm, Charles T. Orr, Jr., Gary D. Poole, George L. Verkamp, Gene M. White

**Health Services:** Robert Blackwell, Elnora Coulter, George C. Emmanouilide, Earl C. Harrison, Hallie I. Johnson, Ann Pope, Grace Price, Winfield F. Riley, Jr., Lloyd Smith

**Internal Services:** Robert L. Harvey, Tommy Wong

**Municipal Courts:** James R. Simpson

**Parks and Recreation:** Arthur D. Fraijo, John A. Lindsey

**Probation:** Yuker Cassell, Jr., Rollan W. Wittkopf

**Public Social Services:** M.T. Cortez

**Public Works:** Bernie T. Acuna, Leon E. Barnes, Hugo F. Carlos, Henry Cooks, Jr., Delbert L. Ford, Ramon Gonzalez, John M. Stivers, Shogo Tabata, Louis O. Vasquez, James C. Wall, Robert Woo

**Sheriff:** David T. Ane, Daniel J. Bollinger, Dennis E. Carroll, Jesse D. Donardt, James Gilpin, Joseph F. Hellmold, Richard E. Howard, Douglas W. McClure, William P. McComas, Michael B. Moore, Dennis L. Ryzow, Cyrus H. Schmidt, Alvin L. Shrader

Congratulations to the following employees who served the County for 25 years:

**Children's and Family Services:** Daniel W. Gray, Martha J. Walker

**Community and Senior Citizens Services:** Leopold Borodovsky

**District Attorney:** Mike H. Jewell, Ralph Mayer

**Fire:** David Phillips, Wayne Ottoson

**Health Services:** Oliver Brown, Jr., Helen J. Darrington, Virginia Guntalilib, Margaret P. Harvey, Ida B. Jackson, Doris Johnson, Hazel Kawasaki,

Wilfreda D. Layos, Isabelle Ozuna, Anna P. Thompson, Zenaida P. Villanueva

**Internal Services:** Linda L. Kamara Kay, William Magill, Francis A. Oshiro, Sherman Perryman, Shoukry G. Saad, Vernroy M. Watanabe, Burton A. Wertz

**Mental Health:** Inez Edwards, Joyce J. Reed-Pratt, Esther Costello San

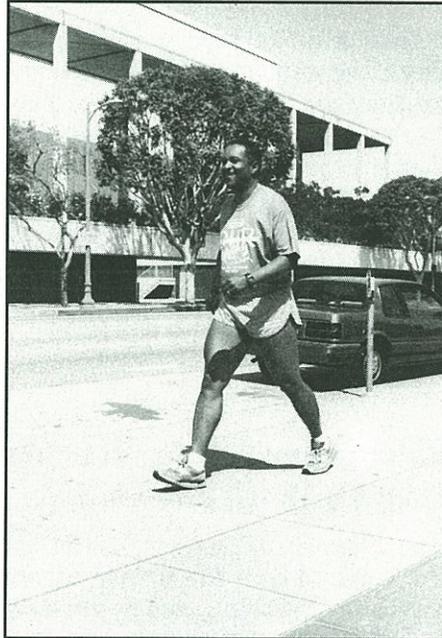
**Municipal Courts:** Arlene W. Hiatt, Edward M. Kritzman

**Probation:** Beatrice A. Baray, Mary A. Hollenbach, Joe Hood, Colleen R. Vogel

**Public Defender:** Stuart R. Rappaport, H.R. Webb

**Public Library:** Linda B. Green

## MARCH WITH MIKE



*Mike Henry, the County's new Director of Personnel, will lead the new Department of Human Resources in the upcoming March of Dimes Walk America on Saturday, April 29, at Griffith Park. The 6.3 mile walk is being staged at 10 Southern California locations to raise money to help fight birth defects. Other walks are set for May 6 and 7 in the Conejo Valley/Thousand Oaks and Ventura areas. For more information and a sponsor form, contact your departmental personnel officer or call 1-800-924-WALK.*

**Public Social Services:** Vicky L. Pion, Jo A. Smith

**Public Works:** William A. Hall, Jr., Thomas J. Irvine, Yag D. Sarin, Ronald D. Thompson

**Sheriff:** Michael D. Anderson, Joel L. Blumenthal, Cecilia A. Kovalcik, Michael S. Kennard, Richard W. Kroll, Warren H. Wright

**Superior Court:** Mavis R. DeVecchio, Jerry F. Moore, J.D. Mraz, Naomi L. Thornton

### Volunteer Opportunity:

## Operation Super Sweep

The Agricultural Commissioner/Weights and Measures is seeking 1,000 volunteers to participate in this year's Operation Super Sweep, the department's litter-cleaning project, which will be held on Saturday, June 3, 1995. This environmental volunteer project is held each year on the Saturday following Memorial Day weekend, when more than 20,000 campers and hikers are expected to escape the city to enjoy the natural environs of the San Gabriel Canyon.

The clean-up effort will concentrate on the 55 miles of roadside and hiking trails along Highway 39, better known as Azusa Canyon, located at the foot of the canyon leading up to Crystal Lake.

Volunteers are asked to register between 7:30-9:00 a.m. at the staging area across the street from the Rincon Fire Station, located on Highway 39 (Azusa Boulevard), north of Sierra Madre Boulevard. Participants should bring their own gardening gloves, hats, sensible shoes and wear brightly-colored shirts for safety.

For more information, call Marie Lopez, project coordinator, at (818) 575-5488.

**MAKE A SPLASH:  
FREE SWIM  
FITNESS  
SEMINAR**

Looking for something fun to do on Friday nights? Take a free "Swim for Fitness" seminar at Carson's Victoria Park Pool, featuring a unique adult swim fitness program. The free workshop is offered every Friday night through May 1995 by the Southern California Masters Swim Club. Arranged by the Burke Aquatic Foundation, the Club will help residents (including County employees!) learn more about swimming, the safest aerobic exercise around! The Club also hosts swims at Echo Park Pool in downtown Los Angeles and four West Los Angeles pools. To reserve a spot, or for more information, call **(310) 451-6666**.



**It's A Natural:  
Join the History Museum Club**

The County's Museum of Natural History is now offering a 20 percent discount to County employees on all levels of membership. Through May 25, 1995, County employees can join the largest natural history and American history museum in the Western United States year-round. Membership also includes admission to four other County Museums, including the Petersen Automotive Museum, the George C. Page Museum of La Brea Discoveries, the William S. Hart Museum in Newhall and the County's satellite museum in Burbank.

Discount memberships are:  
Active: \$32 (reg. \$40)  
Family: \$40 (reg. \$50)  
Contributing: \$80 (reg. \$100)  
Patron: \$120 (reg. \$150)  
Supporting: \$200 (reg. \$250)  
Sponsoring: \$400 (reg. \$500)

For more information, call the Membership Department at **(213) 744-3426**.

**Getting SASsy:  
ISD's Internet Demo**

Take a break from computing on May 2 and wander on over to the Internal Services Department to see how they're using SAS, the integrated software information system. Prototypes of interesting applications and financial business solutions will be exhibited at their Advanced Technology Laboratory from 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. To R.S.V.P., call Diana Pang at **(310) 940-2283**.

**Bike Helmet Sale Benefits  
Sheriff's Youth Foundation**

For each \$17 or \$18 bicycle helmet sold to County employees by the Safe American Foundation, one dollar will be donated to the Sheriff's Youth Foundation to purchase helmets and safety equipment for children of low-income families. The helmets are available from toddler to adult sizes. To obtain an order form, call **1-800-393-8356**. Remember...bicycle helmets greatly reduce the chance of serious or fatal head injuries. Protect yourself and your children, while helping others!

**Take Our Daughters To Work;  
Take Our Sons To Work**

On April 27, 1995, millions of parents will give their daughters an inside view of how America works — in small towns and big cities — on the third annual "Take Our Daughters To Work" Day. From Boston to Los Angeles and Miami to Anchorage, girls will have the chance to spend a day on the job alongside mothers, fathers, aunts, neighbors and family friends. Last year, over 500,000 girls participated in California and over three million worldwide. The County is joining this effort on April 27 by inviting employees to bring their daughters age 9-16 to work with them for the day.

This event is sponsored by the Ms. Foundation for Women, in partnership on the West Coast with the Hollywood Policy Center.

**COMING UP THIS SUMMER:**

**BRING YOUR SON TO WORK** — At the March 21 meeting of the Board of Supervisors, it was also decided to proclaim July 20, 1995, as "Take Our Sons To Work" Day in the County of Los Angeles. Stay tuned for more details in the DIGEST.

**County DIGEST**

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