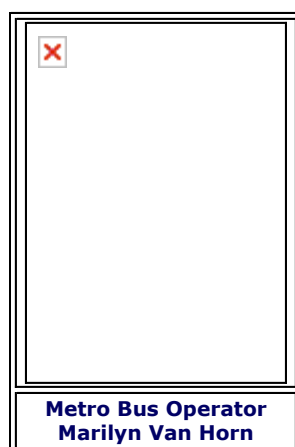


LAPD Commends Operator Van Horn's Quick Actions Following Fatal Bus Crash



By Bill Heard, Editor

(Jan. 20) Metro Bus Operator Marilyn Van Horn watched in horror, Dec. 14, as the Dash bus just ahead of her hit a car, plowed into two vans and went airborne before smashing down on one of them. The crash killed a van driver and threw his 12-year-old son into the street.

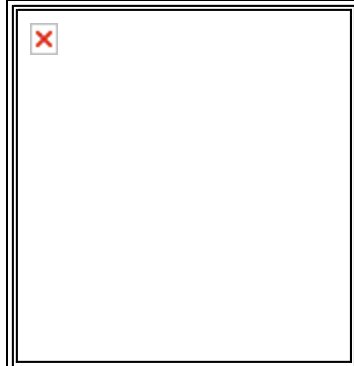
"It was scary," said Van Horn but, without hesitation, she angled her Line 204 bus across all three southbound lanes of Vermont Avenue near Sunset to block traffic and prevent cars from hitting the unconscious boy.

Youngster died of injuries

An ambulance quickly arrived and paramedics began treating the boy and the dozen passengers aboard the Dash bus. None of the 10 passengers aboard Van Horn's bus was injured, so she secured her bus and escorted them to the sidewalk. The youngster died of his injuries en route to the hospital.

"Her quick thinking and presence of mind prevented further injuries and loss of life," reads an LAPD commendation presented to Van Horn during an MTA Board committee meeting on Wednesday. Her action contributed "to the expediency and success of the high-profile investigation" and "were above and beyond the scope" of her duties.

LAPD Cmdr. Garrett Zimmon described for the committee how the operator's actions protected the accident scene. Police and emergency personnel used the bus as a command post to interview witnesses and treat some of the injured. The accident drew extensive media coverage.

Joined MTA in 1989

**CEO Julian Burke
congratulates Operator Van
Horn.**

Marilyn Van Horn joined the MTA in August, 1989, as a part-time operator at Division 15. She was made full-time in February, 1990, and has since moved to Division 3. The Lancaster resident is married to Timothy Van Horn, also a Division 3 operator.

Van Horn's grandfather, Denver D. Campbell, started in 1942 as a train operator on the old Pacific Electric Red Cars, later becoming a bus operator at Division 1. He died in 1973 while operating a bus, only six months short of retiring with 32

years' service.

Van Horn's mother, Shirley McKenzie, began working at the SCRTD in 1962 as a computer key punch operator and later became a schedule maker supervisor. She retired from the MTA in 1997 with 35 years' service.

[Back to MTA Report](#)