



Division 18 Manager A.J. Taylor, center, bears proud witness to perfect record top operators Robert Clincy, left, and Gene Freeman, right, at "Best of the Best" awards banquet.

## 'Best of the Best' Metro Bus Operators Honored for Perfect Safety Records, Outstanding Customer Relations

**An amazing 45 of the MTA's 4,200 bus operators are hailed as unsung heroes for logging five years without accidents, customer complaints or workplace injuries.**

By GAYLE ANDERSON, Associate Editor

(March 6) "I guess I'm just lucky," says Gene Freeman, a 20-year veteran Metro Bus operator who drives Line 117 out of South Bay to LAX. The diligence and professionalism required to maintain a perfect driving and safety "is just part of the job," he says.

The Division 18 operator, who has logged hundreds of thousands of miles in his 20 years behind the wheel, has been accident-free during his entire career as a bus operator.

### GALLERY

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HOSTS WITH THE MOST: From left, Dick Brumbaugh, Dan Ibarra, Paul Lennon, Allan Lipsky, Deborah Guy and Tom Conner.



Professional Pride Committee: from left, Cynthia Robinson, Kelly Tran, Matt Barrett, Pamela Engelke, Sylvia Pantoja, Lucille van der Heyden, and Robert Torres. Not pictured: Marie Kim.

### Gala awards banquet

Freeman was one of 45 top operators honored by the MTA for perfect five-year safety records at a gala awards banquet at the TransAmerica Tower Penthouse, March 4. Transit Operations, Risk Management and the Office of System Safety and Security co-hosted the event.

"You've made my job easy," Deborah Guy, managing director, Risk Management, told the honorees. "When you're on the road, I don't have anything to worry about."

The top operators' perfect driving records earned them engraved plaques and jackets emblazoned with a bright badge declaring the wearers "Best of the Best."

"It's a fitting tribute," noted Paul Lennon, managing director, Systems Safety and Security, "that demonstrates the positive momentum of this agency, both in terms of service and safety."



Division 1 manager Dana Coffey enjoys evening with daughter Dana.



'Best' operator Margaret Sifuentes with Division 3 manager Dan Frawley and Dan Ibarra.



Division 7 manager Sonia Owens congratulates 'Best' operator Pete Avila.

The operators' good deeds and daily diligence were the subject of praise from proud bus rider Allan Lipsky, Deputy CEO and Chief Operating Officer.

### An incredible accomplishment

"Five years of performance like this is an incredible accomplishment," said Lipsky. "This level of service has an amazing effect on how we all do our jobs and how the MTA is perceived as a transportation agency in Washington." Lipsky is scheduled to testify before a Congressional subcommittee, March 8.

"The awards illustrate the bus improvement program currently underway," said Tom Conner, executive officer, Transit Operations. "Performance is at an all-time high, with the highest number of perfect roll-outs and lowest amount of lost service. This is ample evidence of the turnaround experienced by the MTA in the last two years."

"The MTA is on a roll," Conner continued, "with 500 new buses gearing up, the Metro Blue Line's 10th anniversary later this year, the start-up of the Metro Rapid Bus program, and the opening of the Metro Red Line to North Hollywood this summer."

At the conclusion of the evening, Dan Ibarra, deputy executive officer, Bus Operations, christened the awards program a turning point for the MTA. "The 'Best of the Best' program emphasizes positive accomplishments and brings out the best in a transportation agency that's considered the one of the best in the nation," he said.



**Division 1:** Timothy L. Nelson and Oscar A. Reynoso; **Division 2:** Julio C. Garcia and Ben G. Flores; **Division 3:** Robert A. Wageman, Deelmer G. Briscoe, Margaret J. Sifuentes, Ernesto R. Cueva, Delfino C. Rodrigues, Diane K. O'Neal, Anderes J. Padilla, Rosalia Medina and Eric H. Arciniega; **Division 5:** John R. Mitchell; **Division 6:** Johnny M. Hardwick; **Division 7:** Pete Avila and Rudolfo U. Cortez; **Division 8:** Steven Kushner, Michael A. Guity and Parmjit S. Grewal; **Division 9:** Pedro L. Perez, Mario H. Villegas, David I. Singer, Richard A. Lopez and Albert R. Gallardo; **Division 10:** Encarnacion P. Cabrera, Brian Walker, Winfred S. Eckley, Sergio F. Chavez, Daniel B. Saldana and Richard S. Munoz; **Division 15:** Alfonso J. Gonzalez and Stephen W. Glaser; **Division 18:** Edward D. Tanner, Gene E. Freeman, Wilfred L. Batiste, Robert L. Clincy, Arthur J. Fontanez, Frank R. Aguilar, Francisco J. Sanabria, Khanh D. Trinh and Teresa S. Gray; **Division 11:** Reginald H. Harris and William R. Jarvis; and **Division 20:** Stephen M. Earl.