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On the Move: Communications Consultant Laura Almeda's Essay "The Sky's the Limit for Women in Transportation" helped her win the Arthur T. Leahy Scholarship.

Two Metro Women Receive Cash for College from Women's Transportation Seminar

By Laura Kloth
Staff Writer

(Dec. 24, 2009) A pair of Metro women were recently awarded scholarships to help keep their transportation careers on track.

Motorist Services Program Administrator Cathy Rosas and Communications Consultant Laura Almeda were happy to receive their award at the 2009 Women's Transportation Seminar (WTS) Orange County Chapter in December.



Upwardly Mobile: Motorist Services Program Administrator Cathy Rosas worked for the California Highway Patrol in various capacities before joining Metro in 2001.

Rosas received \$4,000 toward her undergraduate degree in business management at the University of Phoenix, and Almeda received \$5,000 to help pay for a geography degree at Cal State – Los Angeles.

Receiving her award, Almeda becomes the first recipient of a scholarship named after CEO Arthur T. Leahy.

In an essay she completed as part of her scholarship application, Almeda pointed to the vast opportunities available to women in transportation.

"My work experience has taught me that a woman can be as capable as a man in any job," she said. "That is a proven fact. Women are just as likely to become exceptional bus operators, dispatchers, managers, and directors, as men are," she said adding that only a few decades ago, very few women worked

as bus operators until one African-American woman broke the barrier.

Almeda, a transfer student from Pasadena City College, transferred to CSULA to complete her undergraduate work. Looking to graduate by 2011, Almeda says she plans to pursue a master's degree in urban planning and became interested in transportation after participating in Metro's Transportation Career Academy Program (TCAP) while a student at Franklin High School.

Rosas said she was inspired to seek an undergraduate degree by a co-worker and friend, Senior Administrative Analyst Renee Willis, who she considers a "mentor and compass."

And while she already had her hands full with a full time job and caring for a son with cerebral palsy, Rosas said she believed education would help enhance her skills to create a brighter future.

"I love working here at Metro," she said, adding that she's worked at Metro for eight years following a stint with the California Highway Patrol.

Rosas also plans to seek a master's degree and is actively involved in supporting a group for people stricken with neuromuscular diseases.

WTS was founded in 1977 to help women find opportunity and recognition in transportation through professional activities and networking. It currently has some 4,100 members.

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