

# AWEC NEWS Special Edition

## EACH ONE TEACH ONE

In this special issue of AWEC News, we would like to introduce you to the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors. We asked them each to answer some questions so that you, our members, will get to know who they are and what they bring to AWEC.

Shirley Moore Smeal is the Executive Deputy Secretary of the PADOC, and the current President of AWEC. **How did you come to work for the DOC or other criminal justice agency?** (Did you just fall into it, was it something you planned for?). There are two prisons located within 12 miles of my hometown. I received a survey asking if I was interested in an interview. I accepted the interview and the rest is history! **Out of all the positions you may have held in corrections, what was/is your favorite and why?** My favorite position was Superintendent of SCI Muncy,



SHIRLEY MOORE SMEAL

our maximum security female facility. It provided an opportunity to experience in one facility what others never experienced by working in a male facility, i.e., capital case inmates, SMI inmates, juveniles, dementia, parenting, trauma etc. Staff had to be diverse and flexible in their approach because they never knew what situation they would encounter. I gained enormous respect for the staff and was able to see the positive changes that were being made by the female population. **If you could have ANY job in the world, no matter what it was, what would it be?** Beautician. A beautician has the opportunity to bring out the best in a person both physically and mentally! **What is the greatest advice you ever received?** Just do you. **What advice would you offer to women who are currently in or aspire to be in a senior level leadership position?** Just do you. Be committed to and passionate about what you want to accomplish. Understand that there will be opportunities for you to determine if you are making a choice for success or a sacrifice for job advancement—there's a difference. Be a person of integrity who never compromises ethics and values. Be a positive mentor (there are also negative mentors) and help others to achieve their dreams and goals.

Terri McDonald, Chief Probation Officer for Los Angeles County Probation, is the President Elect of AWEC. **How did you come to work for the DOC or other criminal justice agency?** (Did you just fall into it, was it something you planned for?) I come from a family of public servants and was encouraged to apply with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to eventually work as a correctional counselor, which was in alignment with the work I



TERRI MCDONALD

was doing in mental health treatment but paid better and had better long term benefits. **Out of all the positions you may have held in corrections, what was/is your favorite and why?** I really enjoyed being a correctional captain with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. The job was high enough ranking to affect significant change but still close enough to the officers and inmates to be connected to the work on a daily basis. **If you could have ANY job in the world, no matter what it was, what would it be?** Talk show host. I find people fascinating and love to interview them and learn about them. **What is the greatest advice you ever received?** Honest people make honest mistakes, but there is no such thing as an honest cover-up. That advice served me personally and I have given that advice hundreds of times in various leadership roles to help staff do the right thing, even when they may be afraid to admit a mistake.

Helen Marberry is retired from the Federal Bureau of Prisons and is the Vice President of AWECC. **How did you come to work for the DOC or other criminal justice agency?** (Did you just fall into it, was it something you planned for?) I was intrigued by my mother's stories who worked at a Halfway House. This inspired my interest in receiving my degree and working in Corrections/Criminal Justice. Later, it really was being prepared and being in the right place at the right time. I accomplished much more in my career than I ever planned for myself.

**Out of all the positions you may have held in corrections, what was/is your favorite and why?** I

enjoyed being a Warden because it was just enough power and influence to impact change.

**If you could have ANY job in the world, no matter what it was, what would it be?** Motivational Speaker!

**What is the greatest advice you ever received?** To be true to self and to choose friends and the company you keep wisely!

**What advice would you offer to women who are currently in or aspire to be in a senior level leadership position?** Nothing ventured nothing gained, get out of your comfort zone, and step out on faith!

**Tell me something about yourself that others would be surprised to learn.** I enjoy reading poetry and inspirational quotes. I dabble in writing poetry and have started writing a book.



**HELEN MARBERRY**

Theresa Lantz is the retired Commissioner of the Connecticut DOC and is the immediate Past president of AWECC. **How did you come to work for the DOC or other criminal justice agency?** (Did you just fall into it, was it something you planned for?) -I was interviewed and hired as a correctional officer by the District of Columbia Dept. of Corrections the day after I graduated with BS degree in Criminal Justice (21 years old; 1976) **Out of all the positions you may have held in corrections, what was/is your favorite and why?** -Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Correction for almost 7 years; having the authority to implement programs and services system wide; early retirement

incentive program offered to all state employees; great retirement benefit. **If you could have ANY job in the world, no matter what it was, what would it be?** -

Currently retired; I would not have changed anything in the career I have had... working in corrections has been challenging and rewarding. I also enjoyed

teaching a criminal justice-corrections course each semester at state community college for 20 years. **What is the greatest advice you ever received?** -Be

ethical; treat all with dignity; listen; be inclusive; 'go for it'; stay grounded. **What advice would you offer to women who are currently in or aspire to be in a senior level leadership position?** -Leadership begins within yourself; learn to

manage yourself and set/stick to your goals; treat others, no matter who they are or what they've done, with dignity and respect; try not to lose your 'cool' ;

demonstrate to others who and what you stand for; model your performance expectations; get good sleep, eat healthy, turn off your 'work mind', exercise

daily; strive for balance with work and your family/friends; take vacations; seek out mentor(s) and mentees; nurture your spirituality; plan early for your retirement

and lifestyle



**THERESA LANTZ**

Maureen Buell is a Program Specialist for the National Institute of Corrections and is the Secretary of AVEC. **How did you come to work for the DOC or other criminal justice agency?** (Did you just fall into it, was it something you planned for?) Offered an internship at a probation and parole office, which opened my eyes to the possibility of a career in criminal justice. **Out of all the positions you may have held in corrections, what was/is your favorite and why?** Intensive Supervision Officer with a sex offender caseload. My first foray into how critical research and good correctional practice is in a profession working with a challenging offender group. It also introduced me to the intricacies of working with victims. Everyone has a story and nothing is ever clear cut. The justice involved individual themselves, may have their own history of personal experiences of being victimized; likewise, a victim may have had their own experience of perpetrating what may have been perceived as criminal behavior. This is a difficult and challenging profession and to do it right, you have to be firm, fair, yet compassionate individual and a passionate learner. **If you could have ANY job in the world, no matter what it was, what would it be?** Canines, canines! With nice, cushy funding –



Maureen Buell

run a dog refuge in a setting near water, with palm trees and few spiders, snakes and carnivorous creatures. What is the greatest advice you ever received? Know your values and stand by them. **What advice would you offer to women who are currently in or aspire to be in a senior level leadership position?** “How do you want to be remembered?” **Tell me something about yourself that others would be surprised to learn.** I love being outdoors; hiking, cycling, kayaking, walking the dog...Snowshoeing in the wilds of Minnesota at minus 28 degrees was the highlight of a winter vacation. Stunningly beautiful – but you gotta keep moving!

Marilyn (Lynn) McAuley is the Treasurer of AVEC. **What was your very first job ever?** Setting pins in a bowling alley and caddy for golf club. Before coming to the DOC or other criminal justice agency, did you have any other jobs or were you in the military – please list info. Twenty years management in Manufacturing Companies. **How did you come to work for the DOC or other criminal justice agency?** (Did you just fall into it, was it something you planned for?) Washington Department of Corrections in 1980 was looking for an individual with manufacturing experience to direct the correctional industries department. Out of 96 applications I was only female and only one with manufacturing experience. **Out of all the positions you may have held in corrections, what was/is your favorite and why?** Workforce Development Bureau Chief responsible for Education, Vocational Education and Correctional Industries in the Arizona Department of Corrections because I was able to help inmates in both education and work experience, sometimes these programs are in conflict in some organizations. **If you could have ANY job in the world, no matter what it was, what would it be?** Director of a private business that specializes in hiring and placing inmates when they leave prison and return to their community. **What is the greatest advice you ever received?** Don't take things personally – never wait for things to happen – make them happen through hard work & not giving up. **What advice would you offer to women who are currently in or aspire to be in a senior level leadership position?** When employees really focus on who they are, who they aspire to be and the changes they need to make – then they stand out.



Lynn McAuley

Kellie Wasko is the Deputy Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Corrections. **What was your very first job ever?** Candy stripper in the hospital in 1984. Before coming to the DOC or other criminal justice agency, did



you have any other jobs or were you in the military – please list info. I worked in the hospital for many years, beginning as a candy stripper at 14 years old, then a nurses aide while in nursing school, then a licensed vocational nurse; then a licensed practical nurse and then a Registered Nurse. Have worked many years in acute trauma care and medical/surgical nursing. For the first 15 years of my corrections career, I worked in prisons during the week and as a nurse on the weekends in the local hospital. I did that through my tenure as a warden before realizing I couldn't keep it up! **How did you come to work for the DOC or other criminal justice agency?** (Did you just fall into it, was it something you planned for?) I read about a new prison opening and wanted to see what it was like inside a prison. I originally just worked at the prison on the weekends and then after about 30 days, I went to work full time in the prison as a staff nurse. **Out of all the positions you may have held in corrections, what was/is your favorite and why?** Being a Warden. I loved being a warden because I could spend time with staff and offenders – I could make a difference in peoples lives both professionally and as a role model. I could mentor offenders when I was there in a leadership role consistently. I spent a lot of face time with the staff that were in my institution. It seemed like going to Headquarters and promoting took a lot of time away from staff and I miss that. If you could have ANY job in the world, no matter what it was,

what would it be? I've already had it. **What is the greatest advice you ever received?** As a leader, you set the pace and they will follow at your pace. Don't let them run past you and don't run and leave them behind. Set a safe pace for a good run and stay out in the lead where they can see you. I believe people want leadership and autonomy. If they can see you, they know you support them. **What advice would you offer to women who are currently in or aspire to be in a senior level leadership position?** Ask questions. Identify a mentor or mentors and don't be afraid to bounce thoughts or ideas off that person. But ask a lot of questions. Don't be afraid to challenge the status quo. I have often told many professionals to "find your chocolate." If you aren't sure what the job of your dreams is, then keep searching as you take the journey of lessons. I always knew I would be a Registered Nurse and take care of people – I just didn't think I would be a Registered Nurse who works as a leader of an organization that changes people's lives and "taking care of people" would be mentoring staff and criminal felons.

Leann K Birtsch is the Director of the North Dakota Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. **What was your very first job ever?** I worked road construction for summer employment following high school. I was a legal aid attorney right out of law school. I then became a state court prosecutor, before I was asked to run the DOCR. I served over 21 years in the North Dakota Air and Army National Guard. I served as a Judge Advocate General for my last 10 years in the Guard. I retired in 2007 as a Major. I never planned on working in corrections, but after serving on the Governor's task force on sex offenders as a prosecutor, I was asked by the Governor to be join his cabinet as the Labor Commissioner. I was in that role for 10 months when I was asked to head the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. I have been the Director since July, 2005. **Out of all the positions you may have held in corrections, what was/is your favorite and why?** I have only been the Director while in the field of corrections, but I believe it is probably one of the best jobs, as I have the ability to drive policy change for the entire agency as well as impact policy on criminal justice issues at the state level. **If you could have ANY job in the world, no matter what it was, what would it be?** I would be the owner and chef of a top restaurant. It would be nice to have a job where you make people happy and provide enjoyment. **What is the greatest advice you ever received?** Compassion will cure more than condemnation. Those words seem to apply to the people in our care, custody, and control as well as the many dedicated, but very human individuals we work with. **Tell me something about yourself that others would be surprised to learn.** I love doing crossword puzzles.





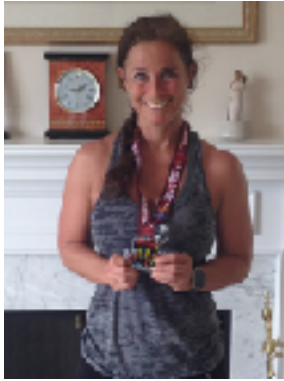
Linda Dodson is retired from the Tennessee Department Of Corrections. **What was your very first job ever?** Shirt Factory...Pressing Shirts. Before coming to the DOC or other criminal justice agency, did you have any other jobs or were you in the military – please list info. Restaurant server, factory making boxes, Records clerk. **How did you come to work for the DOC or other criminal justice agency?** (Did you just fall into it, was it something you planned for?) Accepted a 6 month research analyst position to collect inmate file data for new prison program development. Position was picked up after grant period **Out of all the positions you may have held in corrections, what was/is your favorite and why?** Associate Warden of Administration at a 900 bed male prison **If you could have ANY job in the world, no matter what it was, what would it be?** Administrative Services in a private company. **What is the greatest advice you ever received?** After College I interviewed for a food service manager position and the lady told me she could hire me but I didn't need to work in that field because employees would only walk over you if you fell on the floor. I should find an 8 to 4:30 office job where employees would appreciate the work I did. **What advice would you offer to women who are currently in or aspire to be in a senior level leadership position?** Be true to yourself. Be honest, fair and consistent, and work hard. **Tell me something about yourself that others would be surprised to learn.** I love to gamble.



Ann Scharb is the President of GEO Care: and Vice President of the GEO Group. **What was your very first job ever?** Farm work. Before coming to the DOC or other criminal justice agency, did you have any other jobs or were you in the military – please list info. Odd jobs throughout college such as a nurse aide and physical therapy aide at a nursing home. **How did you come to work for the DOC or other criminal justice agency?** (Did you just fall into it, was it something you planned for?) I did not plan for it – it found me! **Out of all the positions you may have held in corrections, what was/is your favorite and why?** Hmmm.... Probably my first one as a detention officer. That is where I discovered this whole world of corrections that led to a lifelong career. **If you could have ANY job in the world, no matter what it was, what would it be?** I enjoy the challenge of my current role and if I had ANY job outside of this it would probably be connected to working on a horse ranch. **What is the greatest advice you ever received?** Advice that I did NOT take. My college counselor told me to enroll in “back-up” degree classes (nursing or teaching) because if he “had a dollar for every woman who did not make it in other fields...” It made me more determined to be successful in the path I chose. **What advice would you offer to women who are currently in or aspire to be in a senior level leadership position?** Be authentic. If you are passionate about what you do and truly care about the people who work for and with you (and the overall mission of your organization) – this will come across and people will be more willing to trust you and respect your decisions even if they do not always agree with them.



Wendy Gardner is the Senior Director, Talent Acquisition of CoreCivic, Human Resources. **What was your very first job ever?** Server at Bonanza, Corrections – Correctional officer at Metro-Davidson County Correctional Facility in Nashville, TN. **Before coming to the DOC or other criminal justice agency, did you have any other jobs or were you in the military – please list info.** No military. The only jobs before corrections were at Bonanza, Subway, UPS and I had an assistantship in College. **How did you come to work for the DOC or other criminal justice agency?** (Did you just fall into it, was it something you planned for?)



One of my professors toured prisons as part of the penology class and as a result knew CoreCivic (CCA prior) and recommended that I consider working at the corporate office. The corporate office hired someone internally and advised me to consider their local prison. I applied with the intent of working toward a job at Corporate and ultimately loved/preferred working in the prisons (three throughout my career). I have been fortunate to have the opportunity to work in three state corrections facilities as part of private partnership and in several different departments (security, case management, medical, quality assurance, businesses development, operations, HR, OD. Out of all the positions you may have held in corrections, what was/is your favorite and why? I

enjoyed being an Assistant Warden, Programs the most because it gave me the opportunity to impact both the lives of the staff at the facility and the inmates alike through our programs. **If you could have ANY job in the world, no matter what it was, what would it be?** A professional athlete. I love sports and nutrition but I played so many sports, I did not excel at one. I am fortunate to also own a fitness center, Body Shop Fitness, so I can at least enjoy the industry vicariously through our members and through our outreach. **What is the greatest advice you ever received?** "Do you want to win business or do you want to win arguments?" Too often we get caught up in wrangling debates and lose sight of our objectives. Stay focused on the end game. **What advice would you offer to women who are currently in or aspire to be in a senior level leadership position?** This is a known quote but one I still love - "Do not follow where the path may lead – Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail" - Today more than ever is about creating value. How can you better support business partners, inspire and coach your team, motivate and educate the organization, enhance relationships, etc. The only way to create value personally and professionally is to not be complacent. Take risks, made bold moves, do things that are memorable.

Sandy Osteen is the President of Critical Connections Consulting, LLC. **What was your very first job ever?** My first real job was at the NJ Department of Motor Vehicles, Trenton. As a kid, I cleaned houses, mowed lawns, and did whatever I could to earn a dollar or two! **Before coming to the DOC or other criminal justice agency, did you have any other jobs or were you in the military – please list info.** I work for school districts starting as a teacher and advance into administration. **How did you come to work for the DOC or other criminal justice agency?** (Did you just fall into it, was it something you planned for?)



When the tourists were killed at a road rest in FL, the Governor had to act swiftly because tourism is the main source of revenue for the state. He created the Department of Juvenile Justice. The first juvenile justice level ten facility was built in our county and I was the only one credentialed to create and implement the education and treatment programs. Level ten facilities housed the murders, rapists, and arsonists. Back then they were called "super predators"—the worst of the worst. **Out of all the positions you may have held in corrections, what was/is your favorite and why?** My favorite

position was working with the juveniles and making a difference in their lives and future. **If you could have ANY job in the world, no matter what it was, what would it be?** Prevention and intervention services—coordinating communities to work together to keep kids off the streets and out of jails and prisons. **What is the greatest advice you ever received?** With regard to career advice, my mentor, an AWEC member, advised me to start my own consulting company. My company is almost 11 years strong. **What advice would you offer to women who are currently in or aspire to be in a senior level leadership position?** Be true to yourself.

Tammy Ferguson is a Superintendent for the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections. I am a veteran of the United States Air Force. After serving 5 years of active duty in the United States Air Force, I



returned to my hometown. The Veteran's representative at my local unemployment office gave me information on the test for a Corrections Officer Trainee. 22 years later.... I'm still here! **My favorite position** was undoubtedly a Corrections Officer 1. This was the position that allowed me to mold my wings; the one where I learned to embrace my "jail smarts" in the school of Hard Knocks; the one where my personal fortitude was tested on a routine basis; the one where the value of determination and perseverance was solidified; and the one that fueled my passion and drive to carve out my professional journey. **My dream job....hmm....** I'm going to go with the assistant to Jeff Bezos. I would love to get inside his mind, see what makes him tick, spend just one day inside that board room, and absorb some of the knowledge of undeniably one of the greatest visionaries in corporate America. I wonder if I could work out a lifetime Amazon Prime Membership in my contract! The time is always right to do the right thing! The road we travel in reaching our goals is full of scenic views and some dangerous curves. We are going to experience the highs and lows;

and a lot of success and failure. We have to remember to stay focused, because when we are clear on what direction we are headed, we have conquered half the battle. The roadblocks, detours, and constant rerouting of the GPS, they are just as important to our journey as the days that we are riding along without a care in the world. Just remain cautious and never forget where our journeys began because there will come a day when the car doesn't start and we have to resort back to how the journey all started, with our walking feet. Those are the days that we learn the greatest lessons about ourselves; those are the days when our legs are tired and weary and we question the purpose in our journey, but I attest that whatever obstacles are impeding our movement forward can be cleared from our path. The ETA to our destination may have taken longer than expected, there were certainly more stops along the way than we initially anticipated, and the soles on our shoes are going to be a little more worn and dirty, but we will arrive! Oh, and that dirt that is imbedded in the soles of our shoes from the trek across the unforged path - embrace it, DON'T wipe it off! That dirt is a reflection of OUR journey and symbolic of OUR GRIT! Buckle up, it's going to be a hell of a ride!

Pelicia Hall is the Commissioner of the Mississippi Department of Corrections. **What was your very first job ever?**

Law Clerk for James L. Henley, Jr. while attending law school. **Before coming to the DOC or other criminal justice agency, did you have any other jobs or were you in the military** – please list info. Law Clerk for the Honorable Tomie T. Green, 2000-2000,



Associate Attorney with Page, Kruger & Holland, P.A., 2002-2008, Special Asst. Attorney General at Office of MS Attorney General, 2008-2011, Chief Counsel for the MS Bureau of Narcotics, 2011-2015. **How did you come to work for the DOC or other criminal justice agency?** (Did you just fall into it, was it something you planned for?) I had no plans to work for the DOC but was given an amazing opportunity to advance my career when I was asked to serve as the Chief of Staff for new Commissioner Marshall Fisher. I accepted the position with no hesitance, and serving as Chief of Staff positioned me for the appointment to Commissioner two years later. **Out of all the positions you may have held in corrections, what was/is your favorite and why?** By far, the Commissioner position. Serving in this role gives me the ability to see the agency in a different light and to be an agent of positive change/reforms. For every position I have held in my career, I always say, "I want to leave a place better than I found it." **If you could have ANY job in the world, no matter what it was, what would it be?** To own and operate my own law practice.

**What is the greatest advice you ever received?** My grandmother always told me "when you don't know what to do, don't do anything." I have learned over time what she really meant, and that is not to make rash decisions but make decisions based on rational thinking. **What advice would you offer to women who are currently in or aspire to be in a senior level leadership position?** Always protect your reputation. Guard your reputation. Your reputation is one of the most important things you can carry with you. Guard it closely because opportunities presented to you can have a lot to do with your reputation. Too often in my current job I see a lot of young people whose reputation has been tarnished, preventing them from being considered for employment. Also, don't let fear consume you. Don't miss out on an opportunity because you are afraid to take that chance. We have just as much a right to be at the table as our male counterparts. Believe in yourself and the abilities that you bring to the table. Have a mentor. I know the success that I have had in my career is because I had strong mentors in my life. Have a strong network of people that you can call upon.

Wendy Williams is the Deputy Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Corrections. **What was your very first job ever?** Correctional Officer with the Alabama Department of Corrections. **Before coming to the DOC or other criminal justice agency, did you have any other jobs or were you in the military –**



please list info. I had a good friend growing up that worked for the Tennessee Department of Corrections as a counselor. She is older than me, but she was like a big sister who mentored me early in life. I visited the community service center in Knoxville where she worked often, and became interested in the work she performed. I was the Director of Training for nearly 12 years, and education and training are at the heart of my passion. That was probably my favorite position until I was appointed the position I now hold as Deputy Commissioner for Women's Services. Overseeing the women's facilities and working with women offenders has been an awesome experience and I can't imagine my career having ended without this opportunity. We are making significant reforms in our women's facilities and I feel honored and blessed to have had the opportunity to be part of the paradigm shift. **If you could have ANY job in the world, no matter what it was, what would it be?** I love to educate and teach others, so my 'dream' job would be a full-time professor at a college or university. **What is the greatest advice you ever received?** To always believe I am

capable of being and doing whatever I want, but the most important thing I will ever do is make contributions that are worthy of a legacy by making a difference. I dedicate myself to making a difference every day by mentoring those I work with and giving them the support they need to succeed. I want to make a difference in people's lives. **What advice would you offer to women who are currently in or aspire to be in a senior level leadership position?** "People do not remember us for what we do for ourselves, they remember us for what we do for them" (Kouzes & Posner, 2006). If you aspire to be a senior level leader, you should be prepared to serve those you lead, and follow them at times. Passionate leaders must be willing to suffer, because leadership is hard work.

Colette S. Peters is the Director of the Oregon Department of Corrections. **What was your very first job ever?**



I started working at Bill's SuperValu, a local grocery store, at just 13 years old. Because I was so young, my employer held all my hours and I received my first paycheck at 14. Talk about work ethic! Before coming to the DOC or other criminal justice agency, did you have any other jobs or were you in the military – please list info. My previous employers include Hardee's, Gas-n-Grub, and Saint Benedict's IT department and cafeteria. I also worked for the Headmaster at Breck Prep School and as a bartender at the Midi. Between undergrad and grad school, I worked for Youth Homes of Mid-America in a juvenile correctional facility, and during grad school I worked for the Denver Police Department Victims Assistance Unit. **How did you come to work for the DOC or other criminal justice agency?** I always knew I wanted to work in a 'helping field'—even when I was very young. Later my passion connected through to the field of psychology and criminal justice. I loved all my jobs working in corrections. Serving as Director of the DOC is particularly an honor—getting to oversee 4,700 people in a progressive organization with innovative employees who are changing lives every day is something not everyone gets to do; I'm grateful for the opportunity to make a meaningful impact every day. **If you could have ANY job in the world, no matter what it**

**was, what would it be?** I would be the Communications Director for the Vatican. **What is the greatest advice you ever received?** My mother always, always told me, "Don't cut corners. Anything worth doing is worth doing well". **What advice would you offer to women who are currently in or aspire to be in a senior level leadership position?** I feel wholeheartedly about this: women should feel confident to lead with their heart.

Also members of the Board of Directors are:

Evelyn Bush, Correctional Program Specialist, National Institute of Corrections

Maria Gutierrez, Chief, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, Court Services Division