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'I went from nightsticks to lipsticks'

Story by Mike Peters'



Ann Blush sits on her Harley-Davidson motorcycle, which was recently painted pink. Blush began selling Mary Kay cosmetics after leaving her job as a Greeley police officer.

Jay Quadracci

female deputy. She came to Greeley in 1981 and was with the Weld County Sheriff's Office for 10 years. From 1991-1997, she was a Greeley police officer.

Now she's selling Mary Kay products.

It wasn't a change she was expecting. Actually, she went to college in her home state of Illinois to become a teacher, but she drifted into law enforcement and thought she'd stay.

Then, one autumn in 1996, she was on patrol and received a radio call: "We have a request to assist other agency — UNC police," the police dispatcher said. "There's a man with a gun in a dorm room, and he may be threatening others."

That was part of Blush's patrol area and she was on her way when Officer Joe Tymkowych called in that he was in the area and would take the call at the University of Northern Colorado. Blush went on to another call in her area.

The UNC call turned out to be very dangerous. Joe Gallegos, 25, had already killed three people at his home in southwestern Colorado, then drove to Greeley to "talk" to his ex-girlfriend — a UNC student.

Ann and Greeley Officer Jim Blush were already married at that time,

She has a mantra she repeats whenever anyone asks about her change of professions:

"I went from nightsticks to lipsticks
Tough to fluff Mace to your face
And bullets to blush."

Ann Blush was a cop for 18 years; now she's a lady. A Mary Kay lady, that is.

In 1979, she began as a jail officer in McLean County, Ill., and in 1980 became the McLean Department's first

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and Jim went to the dormitory as a member of the SWAT Team. The event ended with a Greeley police sniper killing Gallegos as he threatened to kill the women.

Ann worried about Jim all day. She was unable to concentrate and she couldn't eat. That night, when it was all over, she told her husband about her feelings.

"He told me 'That's how I worry about you all the time,' " she said. "I never knew he worried about me like that."

About that time, Mary Kay came along.

"It's a more positive organization than police work," Ann said. "As a cop, you see everybody at their worst, whether they're the victim of a crime or a criminal. Now I see people when they're friendly, happy."

She also noted several large differences in the two occupations:

- "I never had a Mary Kay client throw up on my shoes."
- "No Mary Kay customer has ever pulled a gun on me."
- "I haven't had to use handcuffs on any of my customers."
- "People I've met in this business actually like me when we meet on the street."
- "When I'm on the job for Mary Kay, I'm not pulling drunks over at two in the morning."

The new job also pays more, and the money she makes is tied to how long and hard she wants to work. She makes good money now, as a senior sales director, with 50 women in her unit.

She just has a few hours to finish a degree at UNC in elementary education and bilingual education. Being bilingual has helped Ann in both occupations. Both she and Jim have motorcycles and like to go biking on vacations — they've even gone to Sturgis, S.D., to attend the renowned bike rally.

And last week, the final break came in Ann's connection with the rougher world of police and biking.

With the help of a friend, she had her "construction yellow" 1995 Harley-Davidson repainted — to Mary Kay "Cadillac pink."

Mary Kay sales reps have become noted for the pink Cadillacs they can win for their selling abilities, and Ann decided she could make a statement with a pink Harley.

It isn't a bright pink, but the pink that has become a trademark with Mary Kay, almost a light lavender color, and a deep pearl-like appearance. The friend donated the labor for the project, but the paint for two fenders and a gas tank cost \$262.

"When I had the yellow bike, nobody even noticed," Ann said. "But when I go by on a pink Harley, they look." In addition to the pink color, she's added some lipstick lip prints on the tank and windshield.



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She isn't sure how other Harley owners will react but admits it could be interesting. The next time she pulls up in a group of grizzly, tough bikers, with names like "Skull" and "Crusher" and "Snake," and they see her ride up on a pink Harley ... She might need a cop.

Staff writer Mike Peters' column about Weld County people appears Mondays in the Greeley Tribune. His humor column, the Gnarly Trombone, appears Saturdays.

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