

MPO LAHOMA NELSON

YEARS OF SERVICE | 1972-1988

This month, we take a moment to look back and honor Norman Police Department Master Police Officer Lahoma Nelson. One of the department's first female officers, Lahoma is a true law enforcement pioneer.

LAHOMA NELSON'S TENURE WITH NPD

Lahoma Nelson was the Norman Police Department's first female civilian employee. She began working for NPD in the 1960s as a clerk. In 1972, she became one of the department's first female officers after graduating from the police academy. Lahoma would go on to attend training at the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) National Headquarters in Quantico, Virginia to further the department's efforts in crisis intervention and community relations. Two areas she dedicated great time and energy into as an NPD officer.

Lahoma retired from NPD in 1988 at the rank of master police officer and head of the department's Police Community Relations Unit. Following her retirement, Lahoma went on to continue her career in public service with the Cleveland County Sheriff's Office for 19 years. She retired in 2007.

NELSON'S LONGSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS

Lahoma is best known for her work in community outreach and public safety education. A founder of Safety Town, Lahoma worked closely with Sooner Mall to establish and create the curriculum for Safety Town. Safety Town has taught generations of children biking and pedestrian safety since its enactment in 1977. Today, more than 44 years later, Safety Town remains a staple in the community educating hundreds of children each June. A true labor of love, Lahoma remained an active part of Safety Town for more than 30 years and continued as a volunteer even after her retirement.

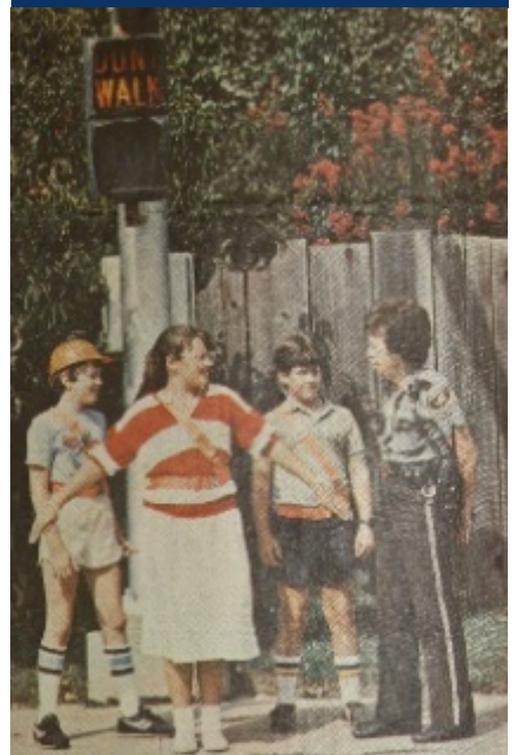
A fixture in the classroom, Lahoma also taught safety classes in schools and daycares across Norman and in Little Axe.

Community education and outreach remains a priority in Norman due to Lahoma's efforts nearly five decades ago.



"SHE WAS A LEGEND."

- Jennifer Newell, Retired NPD Sergeant

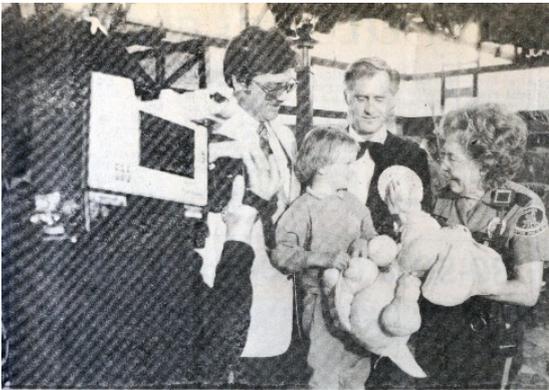


WORDS FROM THOSE WHO WORKED ALONGSIDE LAHOMA

RETIRED NORMAN POLICE SERGEANT | JENNIFER NEWELL

Lahoma would always come out and teach at least one session per week. It was amazing to watch her. You couldn't help but notice how much she loved the kiddos attending and the volunteers. Her methods were a bit different than mine, but you never doubted her love for what she was doing. The fact that she would come out during the hot summer days to work with the Safety Town students said it all. She still carried her whistle and used it a lot. I will say it was very loud when she blew it in the small school house if the students weren't paying attention.

She created the curriculum for the program and I really didn't deviate much from what she taught because it was the classic. I had parents who brought their kids to Safety Town because they had attended when they were young. Lahoma was the one who taught them and they felt very lucky to have her teach their kids. She was a legend, and I loved that I got to follow in her footsteps.



4-17-88 *Kidvids made*

Four-year-old Lensey Butler is entertained by Norman Officer Lahoma Nelson while Susan Scull-Mathes of Norman Cable TV gets it all on camera for a "Sooner Kidvids" video ID tape in a repeat project this year by NCTV, Norman police and Sooner Fashion Mall, host of the project. Looking on are NCTV manager Leon Pfeiffer and magician David Emerson, who entertained the families and youth that turned out for a total of 44 ID tapes made. (Transcript Photo by Janice Higgins Blunck)



KEY INNOVATIONS

SAFETY TOWN | COMMUNITY-ORIENTED POLICING | PUBLIC SAFETY EDUCATION