

McElary-Downer top female police officer in province

By Henry Bury *Hotel p.1*
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The world's finest female police officer is now also Ontario's top woman cop.

Belleville native Robin McElary-Downer was named 'officer of the year' for 1999 by the Ontario Women in Law Enforcement Association at its banquet Friday in Mississauga.

As well, she was also presented with its mentoring award at the banquet.

Earlier this year, the 39-year-old was named this year's top female police officer by the International Women's Police Association.



Robin McElary-Downer

McElary-Downer said Sunday she's especially proud of her latest honour.

"I was overwhelmed because I already received the international award...but to receive something at the home front was very personal," she said in a telephone interview.

"It's very humbling. It's also a tremendous honour to be recognized by your peers in your own province," she added.

McElary-Downer said she feels it's her privilege "being an influence on other women.

"I am so proud to be associated with the accomplishments of female officers in this province."

The provincial mentoring award recognized McElary-Downer's 18 years of helping both male and female officers with their self-development and achievement of personal and career goals.

The daughter of retired Sgt. Laurie McElary of Quinte OPP and his wife, Beverly, McElary-Downer is now an inspector and manager of the OPP's Ontario First Nations policing program. She works out of general headquarters in Orillia.

She graduated from Centennial Secondary School in 1978 and then took the two-year law and security program at Loyalist College. She joined the OPP in March of 1981 with her first position in Pembroke. She went from there to Port Credit and then into surveillance and later anti-rackets.

In 1992, she was posted back to Port Credit as the OPP's first detachment commander.

McElary-Downer worked through the ranks, from constable to sergeant to staff-sergeant to inspector.