



Rebecca Lewis

'03 B.A. criminal justice
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A natural leader, she also excelled in javelin competition as an Eagle track and field athlete. In the spring of her senior year, Becky faced a daunting trifecta – the end-of-college crush preparing to graduate, studying to pass the rigorous two-day Police Training Academy screening and getting ready for the Big Sky Conference Championship javelin competition in Bozeman, Mont.

After competing in Bozeman, she rushed back in the middle of the night for the first day of the screening. She aced the written test and oral interviews before a tough panel. In fact, the panelists later reported that Becky's was the best interview ever.

Continuing to excel, she graduated in March 2003 from the Police Training Academy with the top honors in her class, compiling the all-around highest score for academics, firearms, physical fitness and defensive tactics. Her achievement yielded a \$30,000 scholarship/reimbursement for police corps training.

She was hired that month as a deputy for the Snohomish County Sheriff's Office on Washington's west side. While she shies away from tooting her own horn, Becky will tell you – with great conviction – that on the job, she likes feeling that she can help people – even criminals – in her jurisdiction.

"We see people at their worst and they're often lying to us," she acknowledged. "But sometimes, people just need a wake-up call and *need* to be arrested to help them understand that they need to make better choices in their lives. People need to realize that they make their own choices."

Having made her own choice to work in a fulfilling, service-oriented job, Becky returned to Eastern last spring to tell criminal justice students about her career. She told them that she believes patrol work, being constantly on the road, is the "nuts and bolts" of the sheriff's department.

That first test drive as a student put her on the road to Eastern and, both literally and figuratively, into the right career for her. About 15 to 20 percent of students in criminal justice at Eastern also seek careers as traditional police officers. Others choose juvenile justice, a psychology degree with an emphasis in criminal justice or careers in investigation, criminal justice, the court system, federal law enforcement (FBI or CIA) or forensics.

It's just a matter of what drives them.

Becky Lewis was literally "driven" to her career choice when, while she was attending Western Washington University, an officer friend from her hometown of Ferndale, Wash., took her for a ride in his cruiser.

"It wasn't that the ride was anything too exciting," she remembered, "but I really liked it. I loved the idea of a hands-on job where every day is different and you're not in an office all day."

She was hooked. She wanted to be a cop. Since Western didn't offer a criminal justice degree, Becky transferred to Eastern in her junior year and was pleased to find the EWU Criminal Justice Program all she had hoped for.

