

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JANUARY 29, 2003**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT
MARK MAZZAFERRO (707) 649-5462**

CAVANAUGH FIRST FEMALE FIREFIGHTER PROMOTED TO ENGINEER

VALLEJO – The Vallejo Fire Department held promotional ceremonies on Wednesday afternoon, which included the first-ever promotion of a female firefighter to the position of engineer.

Ann Cavanaugh, the City's newest engineer, is a graduate of UC Berkeley and was hired in February 1998 as an apprentice firefighter. Since coming to Vallejo she has been involved in community cleanups, is a volunteer at Mare Island Elementary School and has been heavily involved in the Fire Explorer program.

"It's a huge thrill," a beaming Cavanaugh said of her promotion, adding that her gender wasn't a concern for her. "That really didn't make a whole lot of difference. It's good for the department."

Vallejo Fire Chief Donald Parker was proud of Cavanaugh's accomplishment, but not surprised.

"It's a difficult job to attain," Parker said. "It's clear that she's a high achiever based on her resume."

Women are a part of today's fire department, Parker said.

"It's not unusual to see women in all levels of the fire department," Parker said. "We no longer have the debate as to whether or not women can be firefighters. That question was answered a long time ago. The challenge is to get the message out to young women that this job is available to them."

One woman who got the message is Michelle Cardenas. Hired as an apprentice firefighter in 1998, Cardenas was officially promoted to firefighter on Wednesday. A Cal grad with a degree in sociology and a master's degree in communications from the University of Michigan, she decided to become a firefighter after graduating from Cal.

"I decided in between my BA and my MBA," Cardenas said. "I had a fellowship to go to Michigan, and I figured it wouldn't hurt me to go."

Others who participated in Wednesday's ceremonies included Timothy Drennen, Kevin Hickey, Michael Humphrey Matthew Fenzl and John Ha, all promoted from apprentice to firefighter; Leina Morris, promoted from Code Enforcement Officer to Senior Code Enforcement Officer; Sean Fields, from firefighter to engineer; and Patrick Walsh, from firefighter to engineer.

