

# Queen of the Road Awards



presented by

**REAL**  
Women  
IN Trucking

# Welcome to the Fifth Annual "Queen of the Road" Awards

Presented by the  
**REAL Women in Trucking, Inc.**  
a 501 (c)(6) Driver Membership Organization



August 2021

## MILESTONES

We are being heard and have been given a seat at the table. 2020 was a challenging year with the Pandemic creating utter chaos worldwide and substantial loss of life. Truck drivers were finally recognized as essential workers in words, but in action, they found themselves working under suspended hours of service with less access to showers, food, parking, and PPE in the early months.

We were able to salvage our annual awards event by moving them to Las Vegas and following strict social distancing guidelines. The event was such a success, we are returning for 2021.

Despite cancellation of most in-person events, the rise of virtual meetings helped our organization be recognized.

The REAL Women in Trucking were the 1st organization to be granted a meeting with the new FMCSA administrator Meera Joshi on the 1st day of Women's History Month, March 2021.

Since then, RWIT has been invited to take a seat at the table with Department of Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg and Department of Labor Secretary Martin Walsh to introduce our organization mission, and our ideas to improve retention in trucking.

RWIT President Desiree Wood and RWIT Member Debbie Desiderato have also been appointed to the new FMCSA Driver Motor Carrier Safety Advisory Subcommittee.

This comes on the heels of a landmark \$5 million settlement in the sexual assault case Jane Doe v CRST Expedited, in which RWIT President Desiree Wood acted as an expert witness for the Plaintiff.

It has been over a decade since our organization was formed and we are delighted that we are finally being asked to join the discussion on how to improve this industry for all drivers.

Thank you for your support!



[www.realwomenintrucking.org](http://www.realwomenintrucking.org)

### **ORGANIZATION MISSION:**

To Deliver Highway Safety Through Leadership, Mentorship, Education, and Advocacy

# QUEEN OF THE ROAD AWARDS

Saturday, August 14th  
at 6:30 p.m.



Join us for an evening of delicious hors d'oeuvre's and delightful beverages as we celebrate the remarkable women who work as truck drivers during the 5th Annual Queen of the Road and Trucking Industry Trailblazer Award Ceremony.

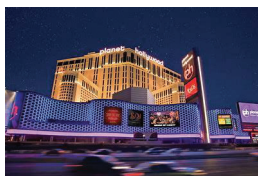
**RSVP is required**

Location: Cafe Hollywood  
3667 S LAS VEGAS BLVD LAS VEGAS, NV 89109

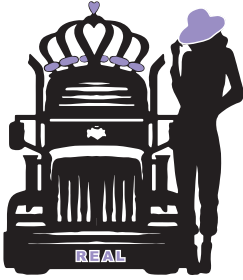
*Located on the main casino floor of  
Planet Hollywood Resort & Casino*

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*The event will also be live streamed on the  
REAL Women in Trucking Facebook page.*



# QUEEN OF THE ROAD AWARDS

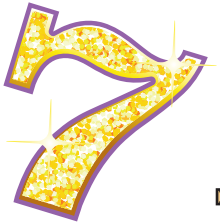


## Purpose

*To create a dignified recognition award for women who work as truck drivers that have overcome personal challenges and demonstrate a "Pay it Forward" approach to help others with gratitude.*

Must be either a past or present Commercial Driver's License holder. Must have hands-on experience to operate a tractor-trailer without assistance and ability to deliver freight. Must fit the R.E.A.L. criteria.

- R. Reaching Out
- E. Encouraging Others
- A. Achieving Personal Success
- L. Leadership



## TRUCKING INDUSTRY TRAILBLAZER AWARD



*President's Choice Award to recognize outstanding individuals that have served the trucking industry with distinction, dedication and professionalism.*



FAMILY OF BRANDS



Saturday, August 14th, from 6:30 PM to 9 PM at  
Cafe Hollywood  
3667 S LAS VEGAS BLVD LAS VEGAS, NV 89109

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# 2017 QUEEN OF THE ROAD AWARD WINNERS



**Adriesue  
"Bitzy" Gomez**



**Dee  
Sova**

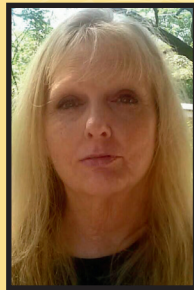


**Daisy  
Delaney**

## NOTABLE NOMINEE'S



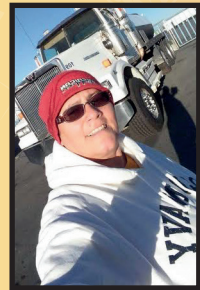
**Alison  
Morris**



**Janet  
Steverson**



**Candace  
Marley**

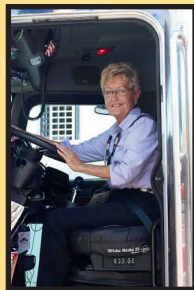


**Naza  
Silva**

## TRUCKING INDUSTRY TRAILBLAZER AWARD WINNERS



**Idella  
Hansen**



**Sandi  
Talbott**



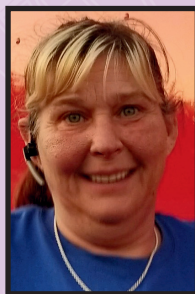
# 2018 QUEEN OF THE ROAD AWARD WINNERS



**Cheryl Lynn  
Ibane-Bean**



**Sandy  
Long**



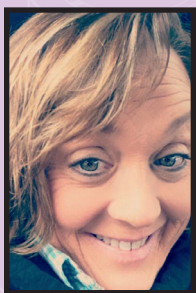
**Carolyn  
"Reanee" Swiger**

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## NOTABLE NOMINEE'S



**Kimberly  
Bali**



**Ingrid  
Brown**



**Jacinda  
Duran**



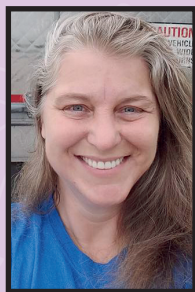
**Connie  
Miller**



**Joyce  
Brenny**



**Ramona  
Buentello  
Sexton**



**Shelle  
Litchi**



**Sonja  
Tucci**

# 2018 TRUCKING INDUSTRY TRAILBLAZER AWARD WINNERS



Tracy  
Ellis



Tracy  
Livingston

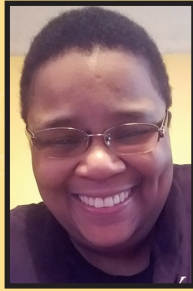




# 2019 QUEEN OF THE ROAD AWARD WINNERS



**Ramona  
Hogue**



**Audrey  
White**



**Michelle  
Scolari**



**Elizabeth  
Sweet**

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## HONORABLE MENTIONS



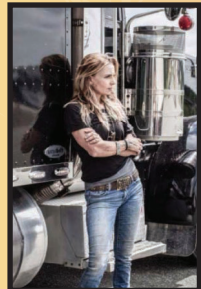
**Michelle  
Corson**



**Jessica  
Graham**



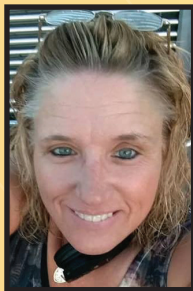
**Tamara  
Brock**



**Rebekah  
Meadows**

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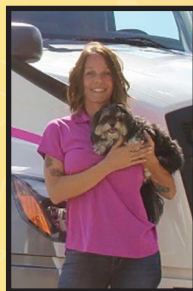
## NOTABLE NOMINEE'S



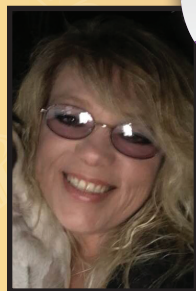
**Molly  
Walker  
Bulger**



**Natalie  
Jassopadilla**



**Shannon  
"Shay"  
Palmer**



**Phylisia  
Compton**





# NOTABLE NOMINEE'S



**Ikea  
Coley**

**Teri  
Nycum**

**Candy  
Bass**

**Kristy  
Mathews**

**Brita  
Nowak**



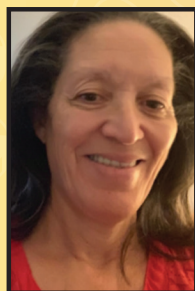
## 2019 TRUCKING INDUSTRY TRAILBLAZER AWARD WINNERS



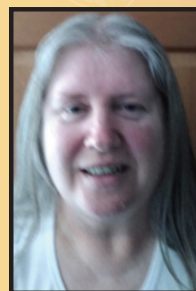
**Michelle  
Kitchen**



**Alta  
Brown**



**Karen  
Shank**



**Julie  
Hedglin**



**Ronihazel  
Sherman**



**Sharae  
Moore**

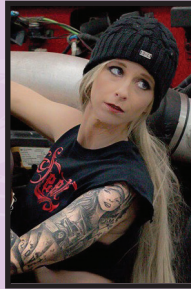




# 2020 QUEEN OF THE ROAD AWARD WINNERS



**Edwina  
Webb**



**Kristy  
Mathews**

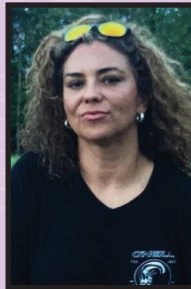


**Vonnie  
Whitemaggie**

## 2020 HONORABLE MENTIONS



**Cheryl  
Pollard**



**Jacinda  
Duran**



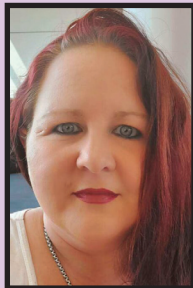
**Shundora  
Bell**



## 2020 NOTABLE NOMINEE'S



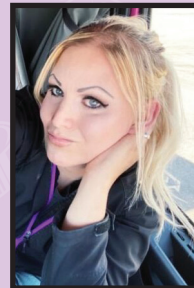
**Rebekah  
Meadows**



**Michelle  
Braithwood**

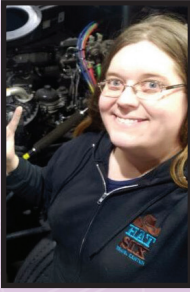


**Donna  
Sleasman**

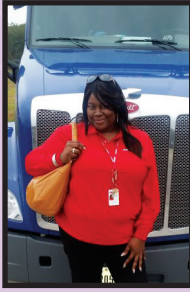


**Brittany  
Richardson**

# NOTABLE NOMINEE'S



**Ellie  
O'Daire**



**Nickie  
Pointer**



**Shelly  
Burton**



**Kandy  
Qualls**



**Dale  
Estwick**

## 2020 TRUCKING INDUSTRY TRAILBLAZER AWARD WINNERS



**Deb  
Desiderato**



**Tamara  
Brock**



# 2021 QUEEN OF THE ROAD AWARD WINNERS

## Darnise Harris



As a black woman, she has struggled to overcome impediments for most of her life. It was not until she decided to enter the predominantly male industry of transportation that she would meet her greatest challenge yet.

In 2006 she attended All State Trade School in the day, while working nights at a local hospital. She quickly realized that she would have to overcome prejudice in the workplace. She would have to prove herself to an industry led and operated by men. She jumped in with full force, working long exhausting hours as an OTR driver nearly three years, loading and unloading. After paying her dues she gained the respect of her colleagues. She spent the next 9 years transporting freight regionally for a major food distributor. In April 2019 I would get the opportunity to hire her at Mariner Distribution. She came with a wealth of experience, and I watched as she demonstrated a positive attitude and impeccable work ethic. Even when her day does not go as planned, her unwavering commitment is evident to everyone who meets her.

A team player who soon proved herself as a leader who the company could depend on often referred to as our Rising Star. I since joining Mariner over 2 years ago, she has graduated from Company Driver to Owner Operator.

A true ambassador for the trucking industry. Her ability to lead by example, is a true inspiration. In addition to formally training new drivers, it is her true passion to encourage minorities to the industry. She uses every possible opportunity to promote responsible trucking by sharing how to overcome obstacles and reach goals. It is her ability to connect with people that makes her an asset to us all.



## Angie Baum



She was the oldest in her CDL school class. She started when she was 45 years old. All the trainers were male and treated her like she was too old to finish. It took her 6 months to pass her test due to trainers who did not want to properly train her.

They harassed her and tried to get her to quit. After finally having enough she contacted FedEx who was sponsoring her class. They threatened to never send any further students to that school unless they trained her properly.

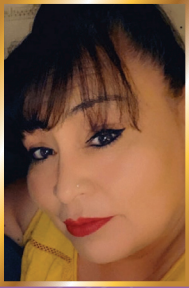
Within a week of that phone call, she passed her CDL exam in Missouri, since then she has gone on to create Trucker's Safety Info providing weather and accident reporting for truck drivers.

She and her husband have a private truckers relief fund and have gifted around 500 meals to truck drivers during the Covid-19 pandemic and sponsored a single mom and her 2 kids for Christmas.

She is one of the most selfless people I know who truly loves her trucking community and wants to make a real difference.



## Mary Gomez



She is always working strange hours and shifts to accommodate her 5 kids and all their busy schedules. Her youngest daughter is a super soccer player, and she makes sure she gets to every game. She has 3 very handsome grandsons that love to go trucking with Nana. She has been a single mom for a long time. Her family was at first against her becoming a truck driver but realized this was her dream. They could not be prouder of her now! She was raised in East Los Angeles but now lives in West Valley City where life is much calmer.

She is always available to help someone and has made it a point to give 'newbies' her contact information if they need help with something or just need to talk. She has a brilliant smile that she shares with all!

She will always get out and help another driver or be a spotter even before they ask, that way, she protects her truck and has a chance to meet a new friend."

I took her on her first trip with this company. Sometimes I was laughing so hard I almost cried. She did not tell me she had acid reflux and unfortunately when we parked, her head was on the downhill side. I felt so bad that I had made her sick and she just smiled a BIG smile and said "This is your truck, and I am only a guest."



# 2021 HONORABLE MENTIONS

## Kenyette Godhigh-Bell



As a cultural immigrant, having recently left the professional sector, she had to find ways to overcome the barriers which present themselves to women drivers who don't conform to the ingrained expectation of what a trucker should be. When told by her instructor in trucking school, that she just needed to give up because she was not getting the hang of things quick enough, she advocated for herself, saying 'I've been around me all my life. This is not insurmountable' and negotiated more instruction time for herself.

She demonstrated the same resilience when, during Q2 of 2020, in the midst of one of the worst downturns in the industry she bought her first truck. It was a gutsy, contrarian move. After a few difficult months, she found her footing, with the help of mentors and her own ability to negotiate with shipping customers.

She comes from a professional and faith culture which, actively incorporates mentoring. Just as she proactively sought mentoring going into trucking, she continues to pass it on, finding ways to help other aspiring owner ops.

She is a personal inspiration to me, mainly because she knows how to focus on the big things without getting tripped up by the noise.



# 2021 HONORABLE MENTIONS

## Cathy Vanderveer



She has been a friend of mine for the past 6 years. She is determined, resourceful and a hard worker in a field dominated with men. She has been a trucker for 27 years, both long haul and short hauls. Currently, she is working as a fuel hauler. Working with her current company, she has commanded respect from the other drivers and is relied on to train and help new drivers find the correct stations and drops. She has earned her respect by always treating everyone fairly, honestly. Most importantly, she never lets a team member down. She works the night shift going to from station to station based out of Louisville, so this means she is driving 12 hours or more. Their schedules have also been 6 days a week for long periods this year. She never gives up. She also gets the job done professionally. I admire her a great deal.

▼ Her company has hired new drivers who came from other industries and she has taken the initiative to be available to the new fuel haulers to answer their questions and help them draw maps for the new stations the company is serving. She is a very giving person who will help anyone who asks.

One of the first conversations I had with her we talked about her choice of profession. She loves her work. She is not sitting at a desk or in a cubicle. She gets to see different sights and people. Every station she visits she has made good friends. She is very competent at her job and takes pride in what she does. After our first conversation, I knew I wanted to be her friend. She is also an example for every woman who thinks the profession is only for men.

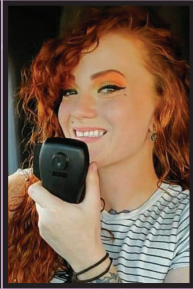




# 2021 NOTABLE NOMINEE'S



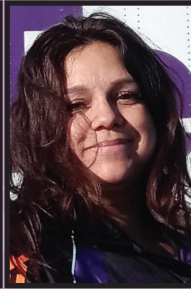
**Linda  
Arnone**



**Chelsey  
Warren**



**Lesa  
Worley**



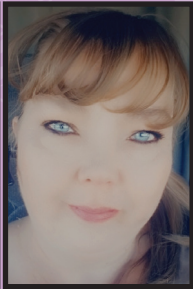
**Christal  
Ruth**



**Nancy  
Brown**



**Tamie  
Cole**



**Amie  
Cochran**



**Robin  
Mills**



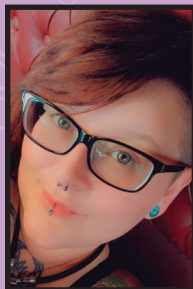
**Veronica  
Twyman**



**Siobhan  
Clark**



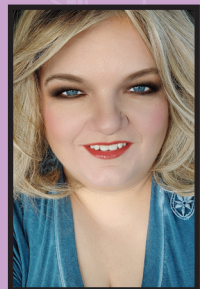
**Constance  
Moseley**



**Rebecka  
Tosh**



**Linda  
Machell  
Provence**



**Kearsey  
Rothlander**



# TRUCKING INDUSTRY TRAILBLAZER AWARD WINNERS

## Brita Nowak



Imagine living in a communist country and living through history as the wall was torn down.

She was born in East Germany, moved throughout her childhood, and calls East Berlin her home. She reached a point in her life that she sought warmer weather, packed 2 suitcases, and moved to Los Angeles. Almost instantly, she made appearances in TV and movie backgrounds. Shortly after her divorce, her nomadic tendency came calling and she decided to drive a truck. She spent the entire 2 years of her training contract planning her move to become an Owner Operator. The minute her 2 years were up, she applied for her LLC, MC#, Authority. She bought a truck and trailer & away she went. She is currently entering her 20th year of driving.

Her goal as an Owner Operator is to assist other women by training them to be confident, successful, innovative, and passionate!

She is on a driver advisory committee and belongs to an advocacy group. She is always available to assist anyone who has questions about our industry. She is currently looking for a qualified Driver candidate to train.



## Jess Graham



When she started out, her daughter travelled with her, and she homeschooled on the truck. She turned to trucking to support herself and her family, and once here, she thrived.

The freedom and financial independence are the main rewards. Her daughter is now in college, and she is continuing to advance through the industry advocating for all women, minority, and LGBTQ truck drivers as she goes.

She never turns way from work that needs to be done.

She is a mentor to many individual women truckers, and a tireless advocate in the industry. If something is controversial or challenging, she is still willing to step up.

She has done policy advocacy work and participated in petition drives. Yet, through it all, she does not take life too seriously -- she takes time out to socialize with other truck drivers and likes to make sure that everybody is included and has fun.

One time, she called me because she was in my town getting her truck serviced, so she had some time. I asked if she wanted to go to my favorite gay bar. Some people avoid gay hangouts, but she was totally game to go, and we had a great time. Lea DeLaria happened to come in for a drink and a few songs, she and I totally made friends with her. That is how open and fun she is. Nobody feels awkward near her, and everybody feels glad they met her.



# *In Memorium*

## **Sandy Long**



Sandy had over 40+ years' experience. She was recognized posthumously with a 2018 Queen of the Road Award. She passed away on 12/21/17. She was known by many in the truck driver community as a passionate and eloquent writer. Many knew her only through social media, though she wrote extensively to help other organizations gain credibility with the drivers. Sadly, some of the very organizations and groups she helped to build have largely have moved on with out honoring her significant contributions to their growth. One

lady driver who was her friend remarked that "it's as if she never existed".

Sandy began her trucking career driving a big truck for the carnivals. She would share stories of how hard it was for women to be respected and to be validated as "legitimate" truckers. When she started in OTR, the lack of respect was (and still is at times) loud and clear. "There were many truck stops that didn't have a women's bathroom, let alone showers!" Sandy gave back countless times over to potential drivers, students and to the seasoned drivers learning to deal with new regulations and new equipment. She was all about helping and mentoring truck drivers. Her last thoughts before she passed, were about truckers.

Many are not aware that Sandy Long was a founder of a women's trucking organization many years ago called the "The National and International Women's Trucking Association", or WTA". The Mission was more closely aligned with the need to address the violence that women truck drivers faced rather than recruiting.

The Mission read:

*"We are the first National & International Women's Trucking Association dedicated to the betterment of Women in the Trucking Industry in North America. The WTA was formed to provide women truck drivers a safe and secure site in order that they can find knowledge to help them become professional drivers, instill in them the professionalism needed to promote the positive aspects of the industry and to give them aid as they need it to combat sexual harassment and/or problems inherent to their jobs and personal lives. Furthermore, we will promote the trucking industry by providing accurate data, statistics, and information to the industry and the general public in regards to women in the trucking industry by internet, personal contact, appearances at seminars, and in contacting industry and governmental leaders."*

Sandy Long was a LADY TRUCKER through and through. A pioneer that paved the way for all of us. Sandy Long was nominated by Deb LaBree. Sandy was named as a TA/Petro Citizen Driver in 2015, the Oak Grove, Missouri location was renamed in her honor. Her award money was donated to the "Truckers Final Mile" organization and a plaque with her named was created and requested to be hung at the TA/Petro location named in her honor. We are unaware if this request was granted.

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## Alta Brown



She overcame a childhood that included incest, sexual assault in addition to racial prejudice, difficulty learning and being publicly ridiculed. As a young woman she battled addiction and later had to learn how to reinvent her life after incarceration. As a woman of color with few resources, she found truck driving like so many other similarly situated women have done. Being vulnerable without much knowledge of the industry, she ended up doing her truck driver training at CRST van expedited but had to abandon the carrier when her trainer told her she would have to have sex with him to pass.

Though she refused him and had to abandon her training, she did not give up trucking. Finally, in 2017 she was able to realize a dream to become an owner operator with Jim Lawrence trucking bringing over a decade of experience as a truck driver. She has overcome many challenges with determination, endurance and grace. However, now she is fighting the battle of her life after taking a load across I-70 through Colorado in the Spring of 2018 where she was affected by the altitude and had to be rushed to the hospital. They found not only fluid in her lungs but also that she had a 6 lb. malignant tumor and needed to come off the road to go through radiation and chemotherapy treatments immediately. Despite her battle with cancer, she always had a big smile on her face and a positive attitude. Alta passed away March 2020.





## Adriesue “Bitzy” Gomez

During the late 1970's Adriesue “Bitzy” Gomez found truck driving as a means to support her three Daughters as a single Mother. Truck driving paid about \$500.00 per week which was good money for a woman managing a one parent family in those days.

Since she lacked family support that could help with her girls, she sought out neighbors and friends to babysit while she was away. The compensation she was able to provide was barely enough to cover their food and laundry while she was gone. Without truck driving, her alternative to provide for her children was to remain in an unhappy relationship or go on welfare, both she said left her feeling degraded.

A common practice she encountered when she entered truck driving when seeking employment was to be told that she would have to have sex with the instructor to pass her road tests.

Rather than walk away from truck driving discouraged she fought back by exposing the “ Sleeper Test” a form of “ Quid Pro Quo” Harassment that still exists today, and that is most commonly reported to be occurring at some of the larger truck driver training fleets that train new students who require team driving as part of the training.

Bitzy often said that women entering trucking must stand up for themselves and adopt to their vernacular the statement that “...co habitation with a man they have no relationship with is not a requirement for employment...”. She began working with other women truckers to file hiring discrimination lawsuits against a number of trucking fleets. These women worked together to identify carriers that would deny employment based on gender and challenge their practices in court.

Bitzy was a founding member of the “Coalition of Women Truckers” that was formed under the NOW organization. She was written about in TIME Magazine, Women's World Magazine and numerous newspaper articles. She was known internationally according to her Daughter Dolores who said that she remembers women truckers from the United Kingdom coming to visit her Mother in California during the late 1970's. The Coalition also pushed for women's restroom facilities at truck stops and they walked picket lines to support other driver causes.

During one of her over the road trips, Bitzy's babysitter's home was raided by welfare investigators who came in the middle of the night. They were suspicious that the babysitting activity was additional unreported income, a

common practice in the late 1970's. As a result of the raid, the children were placed into foster care.

Bitzy returned to California to search for her Daughters and fight the State of California to get them back.

Her job as an over the road truck driver had been deemed unfit for a woman. She lost custody of the children but eventually she was able to afford representation from a young lawyer by the name of Gloria Allred according to Daughter Dolores Gomez.

During their time in foster care the girls were harmed emotionally and sexually. Bitzy was finally able to be reunited with her kids. She later went on to become a truck driver with the teamsters. The Coalition of Women Truck Drivers at one time had international membership and chapters throughout the United States.

It ceased to exist after the custody battle. Today, women truckers rarely recognize the sacrifices that Bitzy Gomez and her three Daughters made on behalf of all of the women who have entered truck driving as single women that had no advocate. Bitzy simply had a deep desire and determination to become a qualified truck driver and to earn a living.

Bitzy loved truck driving. It gave her the financial support and self-confidence to live with a level of dignity despite the other hardships she endured during her life as a child and a single mom. She was once quoted as saying, "...a good truck is what a man ought to be, ... big and strong, and takes you where you want to go..."



# KNOW THE DIFFERENCE

## REAL Women IN Trucking

- R. Reaching out
- E. Encouraging Others
- A. Achieving Personal Success
- L. Leadership

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## REAL DRIVERS, REAL ISSUES

*Driving the Industry Towards Corporate Social Responsibility*



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- Supported by members and sponsors focused on driver issues
- Educational Events to learn about your rights as a truck driver
- Advocacy on sexual misconduct in entry-level driver training fleets
- Annual Recognition Awards Honoring drivers
- Lady Truck Driver Networking Events



### GET REAL

**Be on The Right Side of History! Join Our Movement!**

