

An Alumna Courageously Takes on Drug Dealers



Courage. That's what it takes to succeed as an undercover agent for the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), says June Werdlow Rogers, who earned her Ph.D. from Maryland's Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice in 1997. "You know you're putting your life on the line to do something very important," she says. Rogers describes feeling like two people while undercover: "the law enforcement officer who knows exactly what to do and the person whose image you're projecting because you don't want the drug dealer to know you're a police officer."

As tough as the drug world is, Rogers says the working world has more than its share of challenges. In her book, "Cracking the Double Standard Code," due out in June 2010 through Cable Publishing, Rogers describes the difficulties—and rewards—of working amid what she calls a double standard for men's and women's behavior.

"No one should yell at their subordinates," Rogers says, citing one example. "But men will get away with it and women will pay. Women get double for their trouble." In her book, Rogers gives examples of how the double standard code exists and shows how to navigate the code. "Some more experienced women will feel validated by the

book, and less experienced women will find it to be a valuable resource," she says. As for herself, Rogers says she caught on quickly and calls her 28-year career in a

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male-dominated field an "adventure."

Rogers first worked for the Detroit Police Department and Central Michigan University's Department of Public Safety before joining the DEA in 1983. "The DEA was a good fit for me because its mission matched my passion to rid the country of illegal drugs," she says. She says it also suited her curiosity and her interest in writing. "And there's an actress lying dormant in me, which was perfect for the undercover work."

Rogers first went undercover on the streets of Baltimore, then was sent to Quantico, Va., as an instructor and back to Baltimore as a supervisor. Another promotion, this time to assistant special agent in charge, took her to New York City. Rogers' next promotion was to associate special agent in charge in Houston, advancing her to the Senior Executive Service (SES), the highest division in federal government law enforcement, besides a presidential appointment. She retired in 2008, after six years of overseeing DEA operations in six New England states.

Rogers thinks the biggest drug problem facing our country is pharmaceuticals such as oxycodone and hydrocodone. "There was a trend where the newer generation was sufficiently scared

that they weren't using drugs," says Rogers. "They understood that heroin was bad. But now they're looking at these drugs as pills that everyone has in their medicine cabinets and therefore not particularly dangerous." But, Rogers explains, these painkillers are opiate-based, so there is a physical addiction that requires treatment to break. And, she warns, oxycodone is a gateway drug to other drugs such as heroin, and it can now be purchased from drug dealers and, often, corrupt doctors and pharmacists.

In 2007, Rogers' work led to the nationally recognized "Generations Rx: Children in the Medicine Cabinet," a public awareness campaign designed to reduce pharmaceutical drug abuse. The campaign, piloted in Brockton, Mass., allowed the public to properly dispose of unwanted drugs and learn the identity of any surrendered drug that the participants suspected was being abused by loved ones.

She is afraid drugs have invaded the entirety of the social fabric of our society, from professionals such as corrupt doctors and pharmacists who sell drugs to teens using them, parents who have to drain college funds to get their children treatment, the increased violence as a result of drug activity, and innocent people unwittingly drawn into the battle, such as the mechanic who builds hidden compartments in vehicles to conceal drugs and money.

Since her retirement from the DEA, Rogers has devoted her time to writing "Cracking the Double Standard Code" and articles for numerous outlets. She is a popular guest speaker at national professional conferences, colleges and universities, and at training seminars. And she speaks to community groups with a presentation called "Risky Business: How to Avoid Involvement in the Drug Trade." She's been invited to contribute regularly to the Women in Federal Law Enforcement section of the Police One website, and the local newspaper in her hometown of River Rouge, Mich., has invited her and her husband to write a column for teens discouraging violence. Rayfield Rogers Jr. recently retired from his job as chief of security for the local school district. Rogers says her publisher is also encouraging her to write a sequel to "Cracking the Double Standard Code."