

CALIFORNIA

City Settles LAPD Officer's Lawsuit for \$1.25 Million

By KENNETH REICH
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TIMES STAFF WRITER

A Los Angeles police sergeant who was transferred and demoted after she complained about insulting remarks she said a superior officer made to her has won a \$1.25 million settlement from the city.

The City Council on Wednesday approved the payment to Diane Tostado, 45, on a vote of 10 to 1, on the recommendation of the city attorney's office.

According to Tostado's lawsuit, she had been an officer for nearly 14 years, promoted twice and holding the post of assistant watch commander in the Wilshire Division. She alleged that a newly arrived superior, Lt. Andrew Monsue, told her in 1998 that he was opposed to affirmative action policies, believed that they resulted in undeserved promotions of women of color like her, and that he cared only for the fortunes of white men.

Tostado said in the lawsuit that she complained about the comments to the then commanding officer of the division, Capt. David Powers. Rather than respond, she alleged, he began to criticize her work.

As a result, she alleged, she has suffered emotionally and hasn't worked since 1999.

Monsue has since been transferred and is working in the detectives' branch of the LAPD's Central Division. Powers has retired. Neither was available for comment Wednesday.

But Cheryl Wilson, chief of civil liability management for the city attorney's office, said the city litigators concluded that if the case had gone to trial, Tostado could have won substantially more than \$1.25 million.

"She had received good work performance ratings before these events," Wilson said. "Afterwards, there was an immediate change."

The only council member to vote against the settlement, Nate Holden, said, "It's \$1.25 million to a lady who claimed a guy didn't talk to her nicely."

Tostado's attorney, Dan Stormer, said she is broke and living with her mother.
