

CNPA Judges,

In the months after the George Floyd protests, *Metro Silicon Valley* began tracking social media accounts of local law enforcement to get a better sense of how they viewed proponents of Black Lives Matter and other activists who drove the uprisings against police brutality. We cultivated sources within the San Jose Police Department who helped us pinpoint troubling posts, memes and comments shared online by officers involved in the local protest response.

What we found was shocking. Cops with years on the force took to Facebook to conflate Islam with terrorism. They disparaged Black Lives Matter. They celebrated violence against people who protested police brutality.

In July, we published a story that coincided with an attendant column by an anonymous blogger (a source of ours) that laid out some of the most shocking social media posts by former and active San Jose police officers. The response from local authorities was swift and fierce.

San Jose's mayor and police chief roundly condemned the posts—as did the president of the city's police union. The Santa Clara County DA vowed to investigate cases handled by the officers responsible for the hateful rhetoric.

The reason we're submitting this package for the Public Service category is because of the impact. Ultimately, the DA decided to dismiss a slew of cases that relied on testimony from the officers who exposed their own bias against constitutionally protected groups.

Though the police department failed to meaningfully hold the offending officers accountable, the public now knows their names. And the defendants who were criminalized based on their testimony have a second chance at justice.

We appreciate you considering this submission and are honored to participate in another year of CNPA's journalism contest. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

*Metro Silicon Valley* staff