

Anthony award goes to UNF prison expert

By June D. Bell
Staff writer

Chris Rasche used to carry a .38-caliber revolver and spent a lot of time in prisons. The University of North Florida associate professor of criminal justice has a clean record. It's her extensive research that makes her so familiar with law-breakers.

In her 25 years at UNF, Rasche, director of the master's program in criminal justice, has become a national authority on female criminals.

Rasche's dedication to women and her community contributions earned her the second annual Susan B. Anthony Award from UNF Women's Center. She was honored yesterday on campus with a Susan B. Anthony dollar pendant and a plaque.

The presentation launched Women's History Month, which begins today and will include lectures, plays, concerts and seminars to celebrate women's successes.

Rasche, 48, earned a doctorate in sociology from Washington University in St. Louis. She'd planned to write her thesis on prisoner recidivism, but Missouri prison officials wouldn't let her into men's prisons. So she turned to a women's prison, where inmates had been all but ignored by criminologists. Women still account for just 5 percent of prisoners nationwide, Rasche said.

"When I started thinking about it, I discovered that here was a whole area in criminology that virtually no



— Bob Self/staff

Chris Rasche, associate professor of criminal justice at UNF, is the winner of this year's Susan B. Anthony Award.

(See UNF'S, Page B-3)

UNF's Rasche award winner

(From Page B-1)

one studied," she said.

At 25, Rasche was hired as an assistant professor of sociology, one of a handful of women among UNF's initial 90 faculty members in 1972.

To better understand the criminal justice system, she spent the summer of 1975 patrolling with Jacksonville police officers and observing the homicide division.

Rasche's knowledge of the criminal justice system has long been in demand. She served on the original advisory board of Hubbard House and on the Mayor's Commission on the Status of Women. She helped create UNF's women's studies program and has served as its director since it began in 1990, said Shirley Webb, Women's Center director.

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