



## Lindgren goes extra mile in court, on bike

### **CYCLING: Long Beach cyclist holds U.S. mark for her age group.**

By Robert Morales, Staff Writer

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LONG BEACH - Laura Lindgren recently sat in a Starbucks in Belmont Shore. Her personality was spirited.

After five minutes, it was easy to see why she is not only a top-notch attorney for a large Los Angeles firm, but a record-holding cyclist despite a late start in the sport.

As an attorney dealing in business litigation, she has done more than her share of legwork preparing for trials. Her leg-work on a bicycle consists of some 200 miles a week.

She does 25 to 30 miles four out of every five mornings before she hits the freeway traffic to her office near Staples Center. One of those jaunts is usually to the Palos Verdes Peninsula, where she can get in some work on hills. Fifty more miles are on tap every Saturday. Sundays she seeks out more hills.

It's a grind, to be sure. But again, Lindgren is a vibrant individual. It is not astonishing to hear that in 2006 she set the U.S. record in the 20-kilometer time trial for her Masters (55-plus) age group, or that she broke it the next year at the same race in Sattley, located in Sierra County.

That record sits at 29 minutes, 12.51 seconds.

This, after not even racing competitively until she was in her late 30s.

"I'm not surprised at all," said Long Beach City Manager Pat West, who belongs to the same Velo Allegro club as Lindgren. "I've trained with Laura for at least 10 years and her drive, her ambition ... she is so motivated and passionate about the sport of cycling, and just as passionate about her private life as an attorney."

Lindgren last month won the state time trial for the third consecutive year. She also has won three state road races, most recently in 2008.

Other than that, this 50-something-year-old can-do person - she won't say her exact age - hasn't accomplished a thing.

Born and raised in the Midwest, Lindgren later moved to San Diego. Three years of law school at UCLA were on tap, and to that point she had nothing more than fun cycling under her belt.

Eventually she hooked up with Velo Allegro after her arrival in Long Beach in 1985.

"I was at a pretty low level when I moved to California," Lindgren said. "I had never done anything. I started running, I started riding. And when I started riding with a social group in Orange County, I started getting faster and faster."

Since many members of Velo Allegro raced, she got the urge to do likewise after joining that team.

"I just started riding with them and training with them and getting stronger and faster," she said. "I started doing it and I never thought I'd do anything because I wasn't an athlete."

Lindgren wasn't an athlete in high school, anyway. But she had become one.

"I started racing and getting better and then all of a sudden I thought, 'Wow, maybe I can be OK at this,' " she said. "And then when I was 45, the first thing I won that was big was the state road race. I won that in my age group and then I just kept racing."

Along the way she has come to realize that in many ways what she does on her bike goes hand-in-hand with what she does at work.

"Racing, especially time trials, is very mental because you really push yourself," Lindgren said. "It's a mental push as much as a physical push. Get up every day, work out hard and just push yourself."

"It's kind of similar to what I do in my cases. At work, you have a trial, you start working on it a couple of years ahead of time and you have to plan everything and you can't get discouraged when things go a little wrong."

"So cycling is similar in that way, but it's also a reprieve from all the mental work that you do being a lawyer. When I'm on my bike I forget about work."

Lindgren is a partner at Hennigan, Bennett & Dorman. So is Dana Hobart. He marvels at the feats of his colleague, both in the courtroom and on her bike.

"I joke with her that the competitiveness that she brings to the practice of law is the same competitiveness that makes her a champion on a bicycle and I really think that is true," Hobart said. "She is a very dedicated lawyer."

"I personally think she goes beyond the extra mile for her clients, so it doesn't surprise me in the least that when she gets out on the bike, she does the same thing."

Hobart said that whether it is a trial or a deposition, Lindgren is very "single-minded" about getting the job done. He said that when one is on a bike, that same mentality is necessary.

"I ride a mountain bike for fun," he said. "I know when you are going up a steep mountain on a bike, at a certain point you say, 'I would certainly like to turn around and go back.'

"And to do it at a competitive level, I think it really requires a focus to put it out of your mind, to put the pain out of your mind, in order to achieve your goal."

Speaking of pain, Lindgren once went down hard on her bike because of a crash in front of her. Her jaw was broken and wired shut for two weeks. But she wasn't about to take time off at work.

"People would call me, my clients, and I didn't want to tell them," Lindgren said. "So I would talk to them kind of funny and they'd go, 'Do you have a bad cold?' And I'd go, 'Yes, I have a bad cold.'"

Lindgren laughed. But she was serious when she said that, as much as she loves cycling, her clients come first. When asked if she had any regrets about not getting into cycling sooner, she didn't hesitate.

"Sometimes, but then I think if I had done that, I probably wouldn't have gone to law school and I wouldn't have a career as a lawyer, which is really my main focus," she said. "The cycling is the fun thing. That's what I do on the side."

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