

## Two Berkeley residents inducted into Women's Hall of Fame

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Two Berkeley women will be inducted later this month into the Alameda County Women's Hall of Fame.

On March 23, Rita Sahai, a renowned musician, and Debra Pryor, former fire chief for the Berkeley Fire Department, will be honored for their unique achievements and giving back to Berkeley and the greater community.

"(The award) is for achievements based over their entire career and how those achievements benefit their community within Alameda County," said Ludmyrna Lopez, administrative analyst for the Hall of Fame.

Pryor will be inducted for the nontraditional careers category while Sahai was inducted for the culture and art category. The induction ceremony later this month will raise funds for local charities, and one young woman in high school will receive a scholarship.

"We are underscoring the need to provide leadership and examples of leadership to younger women," Lopez said. "I think they're both amazing women that add to the diversity of Alameda County that have demonstrated leadership in culture and arts of the region."

[Pryor](#) has a history as a trailblazer within the city of Berkeley. When she began her career in 1985, Pryor was the first female firefighter in the city's history. She would later ascend the ranks to become the city's first ever female fire chief in 2004.

For Sahai, the award came during a difficult time. About two years ago, she was hit by a car and suffered injuries from which she is still recovering. Since then, she also lost both her parents.

"I was dealing with too much, but (this award) was like some relief," Sahai said.

Sahai, who began singing and composing music as a young girl in India, has since made what was a young passion into a lifelong career. She has lived in Berkeley for more than 35 years and has made her mark on the community as a music teacher.

"I am part of the Berkeley community," Sahai said. "I love Berkeley. I don't want to settle anywhere else. I'm a Berkeleyan."

Sahai, now a renowned singer in her own right, has recorded with Grammy award-winning artists and performed around the world. She said she was inspired by other woman singers and has found success by following her dreams.

“Women have to work extra hard to achieve anything,” Sahai said. “Don’t give up. Keep at it, and you will achieve your goals.”

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