The Moocher: Callie Fairley, First Woman Vice Detective in El Paso

By Rachel Murphree

Look out, here comes the Moocher!” The whispers would fly when petite Callie Fairley came around. Well, was it because she carried a heavy pistol in her purse? Was she a vagrant, begging for food money? No, her “mooching” was always on behalf of girls “in trouble,” and it was her quiet, determined demeanor that would make policemen and businessmen alike honor her request. El Paso’s first woman vice detective would ask any policeman she saw for a dollar to help the runaways in El Paso from other areas of the country and women she picked up on charges of prostitution. Businessmen were generous with donations to her superiors, who would see the money was used to help runaway girls.

Callie Fairley retired at age 70, after 27 years of work cleaning up El Paso and bettering the lives of prostitutes. While not the first woman on the police force, she was its first detective and its best known.

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