

## Minneapolis woman wins award for Pandora's Project

Shannon Lambert of Minneapolis was awarded \$25,000 from L'Oréal's Women of Worth program for Pandora's Project.

By **KRISTIN TILLOTSON**, Star Tribune

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After Shannon Lambert was raped by a school acquaintance at age 15, she didn't tell a soul. At age 19, she told the world.

At 30, she's an award winner for Pandora's Project, a website for victims of sexual assault.

Lambert, who lives in Minneapolis, was granted \$25,000 from L'Oréal's annual Women of Worth program for the all-volunteer-run site, affectionately called "Pandys" by the 20,000 registered members who visit its message board and chat rooms. The name is taken from a song by pop star and rape survivor Tori Amos, who founded RAINN (Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network), and whose music helped inspire Lambert to speak out.

New to her small-town South Dakota school when she was assaulted in the mid-1990s, the teenaged Lambert didn't say a word to anyone because "I didn't fully understand what had happened," she said. "I felt a lot of confusion and social pressures, very common with young rape victims. I just pretended it didn't happen."


During her 1998-99 freshman year at the University of Minnesota's campus in Morris, which she calls "very supportive of violence survivors, and women in general," she attended her first "Take Back the Night" event.

"The floodgates opened," she said. "That's when I realized I had to deal with it."


Her first step was to contact RAINN, then let friends and relatives in on her awful secret. The same year, she decided to appear on the TV news program "20/20."


"It went from something I kept to myself for more than three years to a very public thing," she said. "I felt like I'd been silenced for so long and this was a powerful way to end that, a way to expand on what Tori has done for other survivors by talking about it."


To coincide with the "20/20" spotlight, she started a small online message board, which received thousands of e-mails.

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### RESOURCES

- Pandora's Project: [www.pandys.org](http://www.pandys.org)
- L'Oréal Women of Worth: [www.womenofworth.com](http://www.womenofworth.com)
- RAINN: [www.rainn.org](http://www.rainn.org)

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