

## CHICAGO POLICE DEPARTMENT

# PAX 501

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### GOOD LUCK, GOOD HEALTH AND CONTINUED SAFETY

Thirty-eight years is a long time to be involved in anything. But my 38 years as a police officer seem to have passed with remarkable speed. As attractive as retirement may appear on its surface, after nearly four decades it is still extremely difficult to leave a profession and a Department to which I owe so much, and which I will always feel a part of.

But I recognize that now is the appropriate time for me to move on. My decision is not the result of any one incident or event. Rather, my decision stems from the realization that recent events and circumstances, while each unique and isolated, have slowed us down. They have forced me personally, and the Department as a whole, to spend far too much time looking backward, at a time when we need to be looking ahead to the future.

As I said in the news conference announcing my retirement, no one individual will ever be more important than the work of the 17,000 men and women of our Department. And if one event — or the events associated with one person — begin to stand in the way of progress, then that individual needs to recognize that fact and move on, which I am now doing.

I leave our Department confident that it is the finest major urban law enforcement agency in the nation and proud of whatever contributions I have made to our success. I know first hand that a police career is among the most noble professions in which one can serve. I am proud of my five-and-one-half years as Superintendent, and proud of the changes I set in motion within the Department and in the relationship with our customers — that is, the community.

I came to the job of Superintendent with a vision — a vision that by working together, Chicago police officers and Chicago residents could reduce crime and improve the quality of life in our neighborhoods. I wasn't satisfied with the traditional belief that police departments could only react to crime and that individual police officers were primarily after-the-fact report-takers. As Superintendent, I tried to challenge all of you to think of yourselves as true problem-solvers — as professionals who could, in fact, have a positive impact on crime in our City.

You did not disappoint me or the community. Thanks to your efforts, crime in Chicago has declined each of the past five years, and it appears that crime will decline again this year. What that means in human terms is that there will be nearly 65,000 fewer crimes — and 65,000 fewer crime victims — in 1997 than there were in 1991. During this time, literally hundreds of lives have been saved, and thousands of neighborhood crime problems have been solved, because of your determination to make our City safer and more livable.

I will always remember with great pride the truly outstanding accomplishments of our Department over the last several years. We continued to acquire new, state-of-the-art technology — from ICAM 2 to personal data terminals to our world-renowned Emergency Communications Center. As importantly, 1998 will bring even greater and more sophisticated technological advancements to our Department. We also upgraded the training provided both to our officers and to the community, a process that will continue next year and beyond.

And we handled more major events — and handled them with greater professionalism — than at any time in our Department's history. From the World Cup Soccer, to the Bulls' victory celebrations, to the regular line-up of summer events, to the 1996 Democratic National Convention, we earned the accolades of people from across the City and around the world. We proved, once again, that ours is indeed a world-class police department.

My fondest memory will be of something that we have begun — a part of that "vision" I mentioned earlier — but which we have not yet completed. That, of course, is our CAPS strategy of community policing. When CAPS was first introduced in early 1993, I remember there was a great deal of speculation and doubt as to what this new strategy would mean for our Department. Almost five years later, I see a tremendous amount of support for the direction we have taken — within the Department and in the community.

Thanks again to your extraordinary efforts, our Department is now recognized nationally as a leader in community policing. Even more importantly, we are now working more closely with one another and with the community to reduce crime and build safer neighborhoods. I leave the Department confident that the good, solid relationship we have begun to build with the community will be maintained and improved in the years to come.

I am extremely proud of the men and women of this Department and all that you have done to make community policing work in our City. It is an honor and a privilege for me to have worked with, and had the opportunity to lead, so many outstanding police professionals during the past 38 years. Over the years, I have worked very hard and done my utmost to serve our Department and improve the manner in which we provide police services to the residents of Chicago.

For the future, I wish all Department members good luck, good health and, above all, continued safety. Thank you all.



Matt L. Rodriguez  
Superintendent of Police