



KENTWOOD POLICE DEPARTMENT

RICHARD ROBERTS | CHIEF OF POLICE

PRESS RELEASE

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Kentwood Police Chief Richard Roberts Announces Retirement Following 34-year Career with Department

Kentwood, Michigan – After a distinguished law enforcement career spanning more than three decades, Kentwood Police Chief Richard Roberts has announced his retirement, effective Dec. 10.

Roberts joined the Kentwood Police Department in 1987 as a police paramedic. During his more than 30 years with the City of Kentwood, Roberts has served in many different roles, including 24 years in supervisory and management positions.

As chief, Roberts has led a team of nearly 95 personnel, including 70 sworn police officers, who serve and protect the community with excellence, focusing on reducing serious crime and increasing traffic safety.

“Chief Roberts has been a vital team player for our Police Department and our entire community for more than three decades,” Kentwood Mayor Stephen Kepley said. “He has played an integral role in fulfilling the department’s mission to protect our residents and implementing new technology to better serve our community. While we are sad to see him go, we wish him the best as he moves into retirement and thank him for his dedicated service throughout the years.”

During his tenure, Roberts instituted a body camera program to enhance accountability and transparency, including the training and outfitting of all officers with the new technology. He also implemented the Data-Driven Approach to Crime and Traffic Safety program, which integrates location-based crime and traffic data to establish effective and efficient methods for deploying law enforcement and other resources. This has led to a reduction in crime, crashes and traffic violations.

Roberts also prioritized the start of the Michigan Law Enforcement Accreditation Program through the Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police. This accreditation requires the voluntary adoption of professional standards and analysis to ensure

department operations meet these standards. It is anticipated the department will receive accreditation in late 2022.

Roberts was the first in the Kentwood Police Department to move through the ranks from patrol officer to police chief. In addition to his paramedic experience, he also served as a detective, field training officer, field training supervisor, road patrol supervisor, Staff Services Bureau supervisor and Detective Bureau supervisor. He also served on the crisis negotiating team.

Roberts was promoted to captain of the Patrol Division in December 2012, deputy police chief in August 2017 and then to chief in November 2019.

Prior to joining the Kentwood Police Department, he served as deputy corrections officer at the Kent County Sheriff's Office and as a police officer with the City of Roosevelt Park.

"For 34 years, I have had the tremendous honor and privilege of serving this community," Roberts said. "I am grateful to have helped guide and develop the dedicated team of the Kentwood Police Department and work with great people throughout the City.

"I am proud of the department's accomplishments around technology and programs that enhance accountability and transparency and fulfill the department's vision."

Mayor Kepley is recommending the appointment of Deputy Chief Bryan Litwin to the City Commission for confirmation to fill the police chief position. The City Commission will consider the appointment during its Dec. 7 meeting.

"I have the utmost confidence in the next generation of leadership within the department," Roberts said. "We have always made internal leadership development a priority. I have no doubt the department is well-prepared to continue to serve the community with excellence and bring the organization to new heights."

In retirement, Roberts and his wife, Maria, plan to travel and spend more time with family.

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