



NEWS RELEASE

HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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Police Chief Gary L. Gardner announces retirement

After a 35-year career with the Howard County Police Department, Police Chief Gary L. Gardner is announcing his retirement. His final work day will be Dec. 31.

“It has truly been an honor and pleasure working with so many wonderful people over the past 35 years. I have been blessed to serve alongside the finest men and women in law enforcement, as well as an exceptional civilian and volunteer staff,” said Chief Gardner. “While this was a challenging decision, I look forward to the future and spending more time with family. I am proud of what we have accomplished over the past four and a half years, and I know the agency will continue to build upon a foundation of excellence.”

During Chief Gardner’s tenure, Howard County saw significant reductions in crime and is on pace to report record lows in some categories in 2018. Chief Gardner also created and expanded a new Community Outreach Division; expanded the Mental Health Unit, which includes a state-licensed counselor; established new youth programs, like the Youth Advisory Council and Teen Court, and assigned a full-time youth liaison officer; launched a Pathway Patrol unit to put officers on bikes throughout the extensive trail system in Columbia; added a full-time officer as a police liaison for the county’s growing Asian community; expanded partnerships through the faith community and various multi-cultural and specialty-needs groups; and implemented training in the areas of Fair and Impartial Policing, De-escalation Techniques and Customer Service.

“For over three decades, Howard County Police Chief Gary L. Gardner has dedicated his professional life to his sworn brothers and sisters of the Howard County Police Department while risking his safety and sacrificing time away from his family in order to protect us,” said Howard County Executive Calvin Ball. “He was a pillar of great character in our community. We appreciate him and his family for their unwavering commitment to our safety and security. I thank Chief Gardner for 35 years of service to the residents of Howard County and wish him well in his future endeavors.”

Throughout his career, Gardner has served in nearly every component of the police department, including as the deputy chief for administration, commander of the criminal investigations bureau, chief of staff, commander in the patrol division and public information officer.

Gardner’s contributions and accomplishments over three decades have included crime-fighting and public safety strategies to address the county’s evolving population and changing needs. He oversaw the realignment of patrol beats for improved response services; implementation of a crime analysis-driven system for better allocating resources in patrol operations; development of the James N. Robey Public Safety Training Center as the head of the police planning team; and creation of the department’s Police Memorial Courtyard and Garden at headquarters.

Gardner has a Master’s degree from Eastern Kentucky University and is a graduate of the F.B.I.’s National Academy. He is the immediate past-president of the Maryland Chiefs of Police Association and is a member of the International Chiefs of Police Association and the F.B.I. National Academy Associates. Gardner is an active supporter of Maryland Special Olympics and other law enforcement-related charities. He is also a graduate of Leadership Howard County, class of 2006.

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