

ABLE Clears Way For Hiring Police Class, Riser Says

Blade March 17, 1984

The city has reached an agreement with Advocates for Basic Legal Equality that should allow the hiring of another police class in three to four months, according to C.E. Riser, city safety director.

Mr. Riser said the law-reform group has certified the use of an existing eligibility list from which the city plans to hire recruits. The list was established last year after extensive testing and interviewing. It was used to hire 120 recruits who graduated from the police academy Jan. 13.

Police Chief John Mason said that if the city were not able to use the existing list, new tests would have had to be given, and it could take up to 10 months to establish a new list.

Mr. Riser said he expects the hiring of 30 to 35 recruits. If that many are hired, he said, about 6 will be black to comply with federal court orders on the racial makeup of the police division.

The police division's authorized strength is 725 officers, and a new class will be needed to maintain that level because of attrition, Mr. Riser said.

Joanne Gall, attorney for Advocates for Basic Legal Equality, said a few details of the agreement remain to be made final before it is presented to Judge Don J. Young of U.S. District Court for his approval. She said the judge will probably get the agreement next week.

The police division is required to comply with federal court mandates on racial and sexual composition of police classes, and the city has strived to make the police force reflective of the racial composition of the city — 17.3 per cent black and 3 per cent Hispanic, according to Robert Young, a staff attorney for the city law department.

The city was directed by Judge Young to work with ABLE on the development of eligibility lists. Certification from the advocate law group of eligible black candidates on the existing recruit list was needed before approval could be sought from Judge Young, the city attorney said.

The existing list, he added, was originally broken down into three bands based on test scores. All black candidates in the first two bands were hired for the last police class, so certification of those in the third group was required.

"In hiring the last class, we pretty much exhausted all the minorities in the first two bands," Mr. Young said. "In order to be able to certify more minorities, we felt the court would have to act again and certify the third band."

He said the city is close to its goal of having 17.4 per cent black officers, and the next class should bring the division above that goal. The division now exceeds its goal for Hispanics, he added.

Mason Appointed Chief Of City Police Division

MAY 14 1980

Blade

Deputy Is Known For No-Nonsense Approach To Job

By MIKE JONES

Blade Staff Writer

Deputy Chief John Mason today was named Toledo's police chief, effective June 1. He will receive a salary of \$37,360, about \$2,000 more a year than the rank of deputy chief.

The appointment, announced by City Manager J. Michael Porter at a morning news conference, came after City Council Tuesday passed legislation that will allow a police chief to return to his former rank if he leaves the office for reasons other than wrongdoing.

Chief Mason, 40, was selected from 10 applicants to replace Chief Walter Scoble who earlier had announced his decision to retire no later than July 1.

Though Chief Mason generally is popular among members of the division, he has made it clear in the past that he takes a no-nonsense attitude toward police work, and some officers expect discipline to be tougher toward those found guilty of misdeeds.

Some Services Cuts Possible

He said that "maintaining essential police services may be the best we can do" until the general economy improves and the city's financial picture brightens.

He acknowledged that cutting some community services is often unpopular, but such moves may be necessary for the police to continue to provide essential police services.

One specific change that the chief mentioned is a certain degree of re-allocation of duties among some of the higher command.

"I'm not talking about anything drastic, but it's no secret that some work harder than others. That's not a criticism of anyone, I just think that some duties need to be defined a little better," the chief said.

Chief Mason also said that he would like to have the division a little more open to the public, that it would be valuable to the public and to the division if the public is more aware of some of the internal support systems necessary to provide service to the community.

Chief Mason, appointed to the division in October, 1963, was promoted to sergeant in 1970. He was named a lieutenant in 1973 and captain in 1976. He reached the rank of deputy chief in February.

He received an associate degree from the University of Toledo in 1974 and a bachelor of arts degree in 1976. He also has attended various professional courses and seminars.

The first four years of his career were spent in the uniformed branch before he was assigned to the detective bureau. In 1974, he was named administrative assistant to Chief Corrin McGrath.

Retained Duties

He has for the most part retained those duties, even after taking over the technical services section after his February promotion.

Though he will have to hold interviews, it is likely that he will promote Capt. Richard McAtee to deputy chief, because Captain McAtee is first on the list for promotion based on a civil service examination.

A resident of South Toledo, Chief Mason is married and the father of three children.



-Blade Photo

JOHN MASON

With police force since 1963

Microfilmed
1980

John Mason, Police Chief 7 Years, To Retire June 1; To Take Disability Pension

BLADE

MAY 1 1 1987

John Mason, Toledo's police chief for the last seven years, announced this morning that he will be retiring June 1.

Chief Mason, who will be 48 July 3, said he will be retiring on a partial disability pension, as a result of chronic back problems.

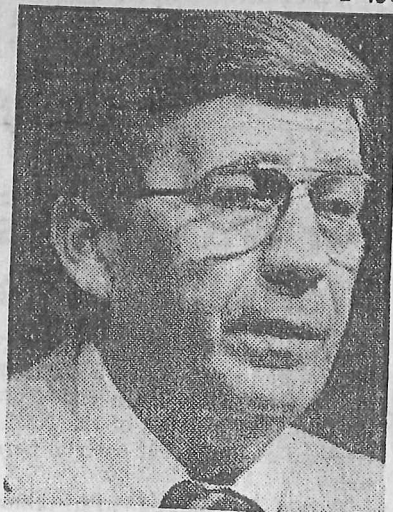
The chief said he applied for the disability retirement to the Police and Fire Disability Pension Fund in Columbus about four months ago, and received word that the application had been approved Wednesday. He notified the city manager of his decision this morning.

Under the pension, Chief Mason will receive \$32,962 annually. His current salary is \$55,322.

Chief Mason said he decided to seek disability retirement after being hospitalized last November for treatment of his back problems.

He said he has no future plans.

Under his leadership, the division began the Crime Stopper program which offers rewards to anonymous callers whose tips lead to the arrest and conviction of criminals.



— Blade Photo

John Mason

The city's mounted patrol also was begun during his tenure as were directed patrols, a system by which crews concentrate on areas of high crime rather than specific assigned districts.

The Safety Building, which houses police offices, also was renovated

during his tenure, and the chief also did much to enhance computerization of the police division.

Recently, he had made several promotions to sergeant, lieutenant, and deputy chief ranks as part of a reorganization of the police command structure.

A veteran of the police division, he was appointed to the division in 1963 and promoted to sergeant in 1970. He had worked for the city streets, bridges, and harbor division from 1960 to 1963.

He was named a lieutenant in 1973 and a captain in 1976 and reached the rank of deputy chief in 1980.

Chief Mason was named Toledo's 30th police chief at the age of 40 in 1980, succeeding Walter Scoble.

Chief Mason received an associate degree from the University of Toledo in 1974 and a bachelor of arts degree in 1976.

The first four years of his career were spent in the uniformed branch before he was assigned to the detective bureau.

June 1 87

Health Cut Short Progress Under Police Chief Mason

POLICE DIVISION

By MIKE BARTELL
Blade Staff Writer



— Blade Photo

Chief John Mason announces his retirement May 11

division's 741 officers joined the force while he was chief.

Expanded, Created Programs

Beyond that, Chief Mason's imprint can be found on virtually every facet of division operations.

Shortly after becoming chief, he ordered a general reorganization of the command structure to increase efficiency and distribute responsibilities more equally.

And over the years he expanded or created programs.

He directed that police academy classes receive more training than is required by state law and also expanded the division's annual in-service training programs for veteran officers.

He participated in the establishment of the Crime Stopper and Block Watch programs, both aimed at getting citizens more involved in fighting crime.

He dramatically expanded the division's use of computer equipment, and he directed formation of a successful crime analysis unit to pinpoint crime trends and provide crews with computer-generated information.

He oversaw the formation of the division's mounted patrol and directed patrol units concentrated in high-crime areas.

He oversaw the renovation of the Safety Building and recently began planning for a joint indoor firing range and training facility.

25 More Officers

Each year as chief, he requested that Council increase the division's authorized strength and that addi-

His office in the northeast corner of the Safety Building's fourth floor was for many years the site of Toledo's women's jail.

And although the decor has changed from primitive cellblock to contemporary office, the man who has sat in the chief of police's chair for seven years may have felt at times a bit like an inmate himself.

John Mason, 47, Toledo's top cop, retires today on a partial disability pension as a result of a chronic back problem that his doctors said was aggravated by job-related stress.

In 1983, as part of the city's health fair for its employees, the chief emerged from a stress test and admitted that his score "was very close to being too high, and I even lied a little bit to try to keep it down."

Ironically, when he took charge as the city's 30th and youngest police chief on June 1, 1980, Chief Mason said his priorities were "family, health, and then the job."

He had hoped to delay retirement until his 52nd birthday, but his medical problems intensified recently and, after all, health was ahead of job on his priorities list.

'Killer' Job

He has described the chief's job as "a killer. You have to sit in this chair to appreciate the differing pressures. You don't take this job to be popular. From the first day, you encounter differing levels of resistance."

But he also said that his 24-year police career has been "a rewarding challenge from the first day to the last."

And, somewhat tongue-in-cheek, he added that he has had a lot of help.

"City Council, other elected officials, the city administration, the police unions, the news media, and some legitimate and some not so legitimate so-called community leaders all have told me over the years how I should be doing my job," he said.

Probably the greatest legacy Chief Mason leaves is a police division in his image.

Almost half of the division's command officers were either promoted or appointed to the force during Chief Mason's tenure. He promoted to their current ranks 3 of the 4 deputy chiefs, 13 of the 17 captains, 22 of the 32 lieutenants, and 51 of the 99 sergeants. About 250 of the

tional officers be hired. When he became chief, the authorized strength was 725. Today, it is 750.

But he dismisses requests to talk about his tenure, particularly his accomplishments, with a polite reply: "That would be self-serving."

About a year after becoming chief, he was asked how he measured success in his job.

"It's difficult for a person to render judgment on his achievements. When I'm retired, I'll ask myself, in terms of accomplishments, how effective was I?"

As he is about to enter retirement, he was asked the same question.

"From what I wanted to accomplish originally, I would say that I was about 90 per cent effective, particularly in getting the department more involved with public concerns.

"I think we have a hell of a lot more support from the public than we did seven or eight years ago.

"And I think I did the best I could with the resources I had," he said.

Asked what he views as his greatest accomplishment, he said he cannot think of any one thing, "except the overall improvement in the police division."

More Officers Needed

But he is much more specific on his greatest regret: not being able to get the division's strength to where he believes it should be.

"A city of the size of Toledo needs 850 to 900 police officers in order to provide a full-range of services to the public," he said.

He also thinks the division needs more civilian employees.

He said his most difficult time as chief came last fall, when the division investigated what later were found to be unfounded allegations that police officers beat a man in City Park.

"It was trying because of the overreaction of some people who were totally wrong in their assessment but who weren't willing to give the division time to conduct the investigation," he said. "I'm not talking just about community leaders but also elected and administration officials."

And he said that disciplining police officers is the most distasteful part of the job.

"A chief must take very, very stern action against people who put self above the law or the rules of the division," he said.

Chief Mason was appointed to

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— Photo Courtesy of Toledo Police Division



— Blade Photo

Top, Chief Mason, far left, joined force in 1963. Above, James Churchill, former clerk of council, swears in chief in 1980

the division in 1963 and was promoted to sergeant seven years later. In rapid succession, three predecessors promoted him to lieutenant in 1973, captain in 1976, and deputy chief in March, 1980. He was named chief three months later.

His career covered virtually every aspect of police work.

J. Michael Porter, who as city manager chose John Mason as chief, said some time later: "If there's one thing I'm proud of, it's the fact that I appointed John Mason. It's absolutely the finest ap-

pointment I ever made. He's creative and is always looking for better ways to do the job."

Philip Hawkey, the current city manager, called Chief Mason "an excellent chief of police. Toledo was fortunate to have had a man of his caliber. He was a good administrator, and his leadership style gave confidence to those who worked for him."

His supporters within the division say he will be missed. His detractors admit he will be a tough act to follow