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*** **PRESS RELEASE** ***

Jersey City Police Chief Michael Kelly Announces Retirement after 34 Years of Service

JERSEY CITY –Mayor **Steven M. Fulop** joins **Public Safety Director James Shea**, and **Police Director Tawana Moody** to announce **Chief Michael Kelly’s** retirement from the Jersey City Police Department, effective February 1, 2021. Chief Kelly joined the JCPD in 1988, rising through the ranks to become the leader of the department in 2018.

“Chief Kelly has had a decorated career, and as I have said before, I credit his leadership for getting us through the December 10th mass shooting last year that had the potential to cause much greater devastation within our community,” said **Mayor Fulop**. “It’s his effective leadership that has led to historic downward trends in crime in recent years and kept us from seeing the spikes in violence that most other cities have experienced throughout the pandemic. I’m grateful for Chief Kelly’s leadership and his 34 years serving our community. I wish him the best of luck in his retirement.”

Chief Kelly, 59, began his career on the Jersey City Police Department working midnight patrol in the North District. He credits his work as a homicide detective for exposing him to the aspects of police work that intrigue him most, cracking cases and pursuing criminals.

“I always had assignments in my career that were exciting. Working in narcotics gave me a look at the underbelly of the narcotics trade and an awful lot of arrests. Then I was a Homicide Detective for a number of years, then Executive Officer in Investigations. I really got to a chance to see all sides of the police department,” said **Chief Kelly**. “From there, I got the job that I wanted the most which was Chief of Detectives. Detective work has always been a fascination for me and the pursuit of bad guys was always an intriguing part of why I like police work. I thought I was done until I was honored with the chance to be Chief of Police.”

Throughout his 34 year career, Chief Kelly acquired numerous accolades for his accomplishments, including numerous Excellent Police Service Awards, Commendations, a Combat Cross, and Honorable Mention Valor Award. Below is an outline of Chief Kelly’s career:

1987 – North District Patrol
1989 – Narcotics Division
1991 – East District Detective
1995 - Homicide Detective
2000 – Warrant Squad

2003 – Sergeant of Operations, West District
2004 – Lieutenant, Night Detective Commander; Major Case Commander
2011 – Captain, Patrol & Investigations Executive Officer
2013 - West District Commanding Officer
2017 – Deputy Chief, Chief of Detectives
2018 – Chief of Police

“Being Chief of one of the largest municipal police departments in the state comes with its share of challenges, but Chief Kelly has done an excellent job of leading our 920-plus officers to further establish a quality police department committed to law enforcement, crime prevention and suppression, and community relations. We’re very thankful for his service,” said **Director Shea**.

Chief Kelly says as he’s emotional about preparing for retirement as it has him reflecting on his career, and how he started off as a stockbroker in the 1980s before making the life changing decision to follow in his father’s footsteps.

“My dad had such an impression on me. He loved being a Jersey City cop. So, when my career as a stockbroker wasn’t going so well, I decided to join the police department I had heard so much about from him,” concluded Chief Kelly. “From there, what has always been the driving factor for me to be a better cop is the unfortunate line of duty deaths of so many police officers. I think that has always been in the background of my career, and I’m grateful for all of the great men and women, past and present, that I have had the honor to work with in serving the Jersey City community.”

All media inquiries should be directed to Kimberly Scalcione at kscalcione@jcnj.org.