



PAX 501

RICHARD J. BRZECZEK

SUPERINTENDENT



VOLUME 83

25 March 1983

NUMBER 2

Historically, public safety, crime and the Police Department have been issues in local elections. This is not unique to Chicago but is a political phenomenon in virtually every municipality in the United States.

Currently, the Chicago Police Department is enjoying the reputation of a modern, efficient and professional agency both locally and nationally. This reputation exists despite the ever-presence of a small group of critics and the fact that events occur occasionally which tend to detract from its professional image.

The good reputation of the Department is not earned by the Superintendent alone or by any individual effort. It is earned collectively by the efforts of every member of the Department. It is also lost collectively if the Department, or large segments of it, engage in a course of conduct which may be looked upon by the public as unprofessional, distasteful or in any way detracting from what is perceived to be proper or acceptable behavior.

The pre-primary and post-primary issues were heated and caused people, including police officers, to take positions on all sides of the political spectrum. I have responded to some of the attacks made against the Department and me personally. My response was highly criticized by some. However, considering the substance of some of the allegations and their sources, I felt that the reputation of the Department, my professional reputation as a Chicago Police Officer and the dignity of my family name had to be defended. I addressed those issues and they are now behind us.

We are now entering the final weeks of the mayoral campaign before the general election. The public, including the media and other critics, will be scrupulously observing the conduct of the Department. Police officers, as citizens, do not surrender any rights under the First Amendment because of their occupational status. They retain their rights, among others, to discuss political issues and support a candidate of their choice. However, in order to maintain the political impartiality of the Department, the wearing of campaign buttons on duty or the posting of campaign literature in Department facilities is prohibited. Furthermore, the mere circulation of scurrilous or vile materials degrading any candidate detracts from the high professional standards to which you adhere and subverts the enthusiasm that you may have for the candidate of your choice.

The Police Department is a great organization only because of the people in it. It has had to confront many serious issues throughout its history and it has survived. Whatever issues have been or will be raised during this campaign will not undermine the Department. We will continue to be strong, proud and professional. Differences of political opinion should not fracture the solidarity we enjoy as police officers. The Department's future depends only on us.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Richard J. Brzezcek'.

Superintendent of Police