



Fresno County Sheriff's Department
Richard Pierce, Sheriff
News Release

January 3, 2006

Assistant Sheriff Margaret Mims
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Sheriff Richard Pierce Will Not Seek a Third Term

Sheriff Richard Pierce announced today that after 40 years in law enforcement, the last seven-and-a-half years as Sheriff, he will not seek a third term as Sheriff of Fresno County in the June 2006 election. He is issuing the following statement:

“This decision was not an easy one, reached this holiday season only after much prayer and long discussions with my family. The Office of the Sheriff requires a 24 hour, seven day a week commitment of time. It is a very challenging and difficult position with what can only be described as the awesome responsibilities of combating crime, ensuring the efficiency and security of the county jail system with over 3,100 people in custody, and providing for the safety and security of the Superior Courts while effectively administering a large department in county government.

It takes a very patient and understanding family to go through the sacrifices that are at stake. To my family, I say thank you for your continuing support. To the voters, I say thank you for putting your confidence in me. But the time has come for change.

It was a proud and memorable day in my life in 1966 when I was sworn in and put on the badge of a deputy sheriff. There were many highlights in between, but it was an equally proud event for my family and I when the voters of Fresno County elected me Sheriff and I took the oath of office in 1998 and again in 2002.

When I first announced my candidacy, I made a commitment to the voters to be your Sheriff and be able to say that, yes; I made a difference in the safety

of our families and loved ones. Were the things I would have done differently? Of course, but at the end of the day I can say we succeeded in our mission.

We recorded many accomplishments. But there were two appointments that were especially noteworthy, made to make my executive team even stronger and the best in any law enforcement agency anywhere.

In May 2004 I promoted Margaret Mims, a 21 year veteran of the Department to Captain and subsequently to Assistant Sheriff becoming the first woman in the department's 148 year history to hold either position. And last year, I appointed Steve Forker to a newly created civilian oversight position with a wide range of responsibility.

The department has come a long way during the 40 years I have served, operating in one of the fastest growing areas in the state and implementing many innovative crime-fighting programs. When I first took office, the Department had a budget of \$72 million and about 1,000 employees. Today, there are more than 1,100 employees and an operating budget of \$130 million.

There is still a lot of work that has to be accomplished in the remaining months of my administration. Consolidation of law enforcement services remains priority. And while we have made great strides to combat them, we cannot allow gangs and all the wrong they represent, to take over our neighborhoods where decent people live, work and go to school.

I can only wish my successor well, whoever it may be.

I cannot issue this statement without acknowledging the valuable work of the dedicated members of this Department. They played an essential part in making it one of the finest law enforcement organizations in California. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

I also want to thank former Sheriffs Steve Magarian and Hal McKinney for their friendship and support in helping to make a very challenging job a little easier.”

SHERIFF PIERCE IS NOT AVAILABLE TODAY FOR COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS.