



Chief Kathy Lester

Chief Kathy Lester joined the Sacramento Police Department in 1994 as a dispatcher, became a community service officer in 1995, and a sworn police officer in 1996. She has worked Patrol, Traffic, Recruiting, Internal Affairs, Criminal Intelligence, as an Executive Lieutenant, and oversaw police services for the Sacramento City Unified School District. She has led the Contracts Services Division, Personnel and Fiscal Division, the Downtown Patrol Command, and the Division of Outreach and Engagement. As a Deputy Chief, she has also led the Office of Specialized Services and the Office of Operations.

Kathy enlisted in the Army at 17. She attended the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, CA where she became fluent in Russian, and served as a military interpreter, combat medic and range master. She has received multiple awards and recognitions including the Army Lifesaving Medal and a Unit Citation for her contributions to support the opening of the Golden One Center.

Kathy has been an instructor in Crowd Control, First Aid, Community Relations, Gender Awareness, and Implicit Bias. She is a graduate of the Sherman Block Supervisor Leadership Institute, the Senior Management Institute for Police, the POST Management Course, the Advanced POST Instructor Course and the Police Executive Leadership Institute. She is also adjunct faculty for the Los Rios Community College District.

Kathy earned a Bachelor of Arts degree at CSU, Sacramento in Government and International Relations and a Master of Science Degree from Mississippi State University in Geosciences. She has been a Cub Scout leader and served as a volunteer for SacPAL, the Buddy Werner Youth Ski League and serves on the board of the Sacramento Police Foundation.

As the 46th Chief of Police for the City of Sacramento, she launched a Violent Crime Reduction Strategy which led to a reduction of 30% fewer shooting victims in the first year, incorporated

the Office of Violence Prevention into the Police Department which funds and supports numerous Community Based Organizations, and adopted innovative strategies such as the “Gun Buy Back” event which resulted in the forfeiture of over 400 firearms. As a Bureau of Justice Assistance Public Safety Partnership grantee, SPD is currently focusing on new technology, improved crime analysis, and best practices to address the root causes of violent crime. Additional initiatives include improved service delivery through employee customer service training, community-based surveys and feedback, robust transparency efforts to share data and metrics, collaborative approaches to addressing homelessness, and internal employee development and engagement.

She also serves on the Metro Chamber of Commerce Cap to Cap Public Safety Committee, as the co-chair of the Major Cities Chiefs Association Legislative Committee, as a board member for the Salvation Army and as a board member for the Sacramento Family Justice Center.

Kathy joined SPD because of its reputation for community-based policing. She is proud to serve the great people of the Sacramento community. She is married with three children and loves to cook, garden, and fly fish.

