

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY IS GETTING NEW COMMISSIONER, 2 ARE NAMED STATE PATROL'S FIRST EVER FEMALE CAPTAINS

Matt Canham

The Deseret News. Salt Lake City, Utah: January 14, 2001

Copyright The Deseret News January 14, 2001

The Utah Department of Public Safety received a new commissioner and its first-ever female captains Friday.

During a ceremony at the Peace Officer Standards and Training gymnasium, 4501 S. 2700 West, Robert Flowers became commissioner of the department he previously served for 14 years. He left the department as a section commander in 1997 to become the St. George police chief. Flowers received his appointment from Gov. Mike Leavitt after commissioner Craig Dearden retired.

"I liked his leadership style," Leavitt said. "I wanted someone who already had credibility in the ranks."

Alan Workman, who was promoted to captain, also spoke highly of Flowers.

"He will lead us captains into a new era of positive change," Workman said. "You will see some exciting things in the Department of Public Safety."

Workman expects Flowers to invigorate the approximately 600 troopers, who he described as "stagnate."

"People just thought this job was the same thing year after year," he said. "New leadership will re-energize the department."

Flowers does not officially hold the position until the Utah Senate confirms his appointment during the 2001 Legislature, but Flowers has not waited to compile his core staff.

Flowers selected Col. Earl Morris as his deputy commissioner and Lt. Col. Scott Duncan as superintendent of the Utah Highway Patrol. He also appointed 11 new captains, four lieutenants and two bureau chiefs, all of whom were sworn in Friday.

Among the new captains are Kathy Slagowski and Judy Hamaker-Mann, the first two women promoted to the rank of captain in the department's 66-year history.

"This is long overdue for a force of over 600 law enforcement officers," Leavitt said. "And they are two able women."

Flowers, along with both captains, downplayed the importance of gender in the appointments.

"It was not something I considered when I made the promotions. That would be an insult to them personally if they were promoted because of their gender," Flowers said. "They were the most qualified for their new positions. Their gender was just icing on the cake."

Slagowski said being one of the first female captains "makes me very proud, because the department only recognizes people who are talented and work hard. I was not recognized because I am a woman."

Even though she began working at the department in 1978, Slagowski said she did not expect the promotion so early in her career.

Starting as a file clerk in the Driver License Division, Slagowski jumped from job to job before she took a secretary position in the Highway Patrol and the Division of Safety Inspection.

Her close work with troopers cemented her love of law enforcement and she soon joined their ranks. She has now been a trooper for 12 1/2 years.

Her appointment places her in charge of the Salt Lake County patrol and statewide trooper training.

Hamaker-Mann has patrolled Carbon County for the past 11 years and she takes tremendous enjoyment from her job.

"There is a lot of satisfaction in seeing a problem on the highway and being able to stop it, being able to help people," she said.

When she joined the department 11 years ago her goal was to reach the rank of captain. With that goal now complete, Hamaker-Mann will focus "on being as efficient as I can, to make a difference and change driving behavior."

Slagowski and Hamaker-Mann are two of the department's 18 captains.