



TOWN OF VERNON

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Vernon Police Chief James Kenny Honored at Ceremony for 40-year Career in Law Enforcement

(VERNON, Connecticut) – Town leaders, a congressman, friends, family and Vernon police officers honored retiring Police Chief James Kenny at a ceremony Thursday evening at Vernon Center Middle School.

Chief Kenny, 61, spent the final 15 years of his 40-year career in Vernon. He served first as captain, the department's second in command, then ascended to chief six months later, when Chief Rudolf Rossmly retired.

He is leaving a police department that Mayor Dan Champagne said is one that all Vernon residents can be proud of. The mayor served 22 years as a Vernon police officer, some of that under Chief Kenny.

"The Vernon Police Department is an excellent group of men and women who serve our community with distinction," Mayor Champagne said. "I think it's one of the best in the nation and it keeps getting better and better. And the chief is a big part of that."

Town Administrator Michael Purcaro commended and also ribbed Chief Kenny a bit, recounting some highlights of Chief Kenny's time in Vernon, describing him as honest, full of good ideas and a chief who led from the front.

"It's been said that a career in law enforcement is not about self-enrichment as measured in a paycheck, but rather about self-fulfillment as measured in one's soul," Purcaro said. "To be successful like you Jim, you have to be committed to the community and its residents. It's also been said that 'only a life lived in service to others is worth living.' I couldn't agree more and this is the essence of your soul and what your legacy is here in Vernon – service to others."

Chief Kenny's daughters offered another side of his life as a cop, describing life with a police officer dad and wishing him a quiet retirement.

The chief's oldest daughter, Lexie Attebery, described how as a boy her dad stood up to a bully, marking the beginning of his devotion to service and protecting others.

“As you step into retirement, we can only hope to be surrounded by ‘happy chief,’ day in and day out, said daughter Jacqueline Kenny. “In retirement we hope you find rest and tranquility, even if it’s just for a little while before you go running into a burning house ... again.”

Jamie Kenny joked that their plan was to roast their father and show YouTube videos by some of his fans, but their mother told them “no way.”



Retiring Vernon Police Chief James Kenny stands with his family. Left to right, son-in-law Alex Attebery, daughter Lexie Attebery, wife Theresa Kenny, Chief Kenny, and daughters Jacqueline Kenny and Jamie Kenny.

Congressman Joe Courtney, a Vernon resident, thanked the chief for his guidance and advice on policies and legislation related to policing. Congressman Courtney read details of Chief Kenny’s career into the Congressional Record and gave Chief Kenny a copy of that statement. “The Jim Kenny story is now part of the Congressional Record which is part of America’s story,” Congressman Courtney said.

Son-in-in law, Alex Attebery, said it was also appropriate to honor Theresa Kenny, the chief’s wife.

“Chief, you have been able to reach this position of leadership because of your hard work and dedication, but also because of the support and encouragement of your wife,” he said. “Theresa, you’ve sacrificed just as much, if not more. Thank you both for your sacrifice, your service and your love for each other.”

Without the support of family and friends, Chief Kenny said he does not think he would have made it 40 years.

“The biggest thanks goes to my family,” Chief Kenney said. “They put up with a tremendous amount from me.”

He also thanked the mayor, town administrator and town council for their support and said “through team work and partnership with our residents, we were able to get through trying times and make this a community we can be proud of.”

As for the men and women he will lead until his last day on Friday, Chief Kenny said, “I was surrounded by good people who made me look good [and that] it’s been an honor to serve this department and this community as chief.”

Captain John Kelley presented the chief with a shadow box of badges, rank insignia and the handcuffs the chief carried his whole career. “It truly has been an honor and a pleasure serving as a sergeant, a lieutenant and then as your second in command,” Kelley said. “And I am going to miss you immensely.”

About the Town of Vernon

The Town of Vernon is a celebrated place to live, work and visit. From its beautiful parks and lakes, to its vast trails and historic homes and buildings, Vernon is a resilient and thriving community that promotes the health and wellbeing of its residents and values the natural environment. With a resident population of approximately 30,000 and occupying 18.03 square miles, Vernon combines a balanced appreciation of history, and a strong economic base for growth, both residential and commercial. Located 15 minutes east of the Connecticut capital of Hartford, and 25 miles from the City of Springfield, Massachusetts, the Town of Vernon is strategically located in “New England's Knowledge Corridor” with close proximity to some of the top colleges and universities in the country.

Recently designated as a certified Sustainable Community, the Town of Vernon offers a wide range of benefits and services to its residents. The Town of Vernon is a full-service municipality that practices a management philosophy of continuous quality improvement. To learn more about the Town of Vernon, please call (860) 870-3670 or visit www.vernon-ct.gov.

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