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Kelley Warner named new chief of police at HPD

The Abington Township PD Deputy Chief brings 32 years of experience to The Friendly City

HARRISONBURG, Va. – It all started when her sister recommended watching *Cagney and Lacey* back in high school. Now, Kelley Warner is the next chief of the Harrisonburg Police Department.

Of course, that would be selling the story short. There's 32 years of police and leadership experience, extensive training, a bachelor's and master's in criminal justice, a stint at the FBI National Academy, and so much more that's gotten Warner to where she is today.

Currently the Deputy Chief of Police for the Abington Township Police Department, Warner will officially arrive in The Friendly City this summer – bringing her dedication to community relations and 21st Century Policing with her.

"I am excited to work with such a great group of individuals, where we can learn from each other and together take HPD even further," Warner said. "I've spoken to police professionals from around the Commonwealth, and the Harrisonburg Police Department has an excellent reputation."

For Harrisonburg City Manager Eric Campbell, the decision to select Warner from amongst an impressive pool of talented applicants came down to her combination of extensive leadership and education experiences and her dedication to policing values cherished by HPD.

"The chief of police of the Harrisonburg Police Department isn't solely a law enforcement officer – they must be able to inspire, to mentor, to serve as a community leader and be looked up to as a role model all at the same time," Campbell said. "Chief Warner checks all those boxes, and so much more. After asking our HPD officers and community members what they envision the traits and values of the next leader of our police department to be, I know Kelley Warner embodies all of those."

Now, Warner is eager to learn more about the department and what she can do to support officers and the Harrisonburg community. She's already excited about the progressive nature of HPD, its state accreditation, and its commitment to community outreach and programming.

"I really need to focus in my first few months on getting to know the department and the proud men and women who serve the City," she said. "And I need to listen. I have a bit of a learning curve ahead of me, so I will be spending a lot of time not only getting to know HPD and City employees but also getting to know community members and the vital organizations that make this town tick."



New HPD Chief Kelley Warner

She's already ahead of the curve in that regard. Warner arrived early in Harrisonburg before her interview to learn more about the City and to speak with the president of the local NAACP and other community leaders about matters crucial to them. She observed the friendliness of The Friendly City firsthand and was impressed with how many people and organizations are committed to making the city a better place for all.

"That says a lot about the fabric of Harrisonburg," she added.

Warner has run the gamut of ranks in Abington, culminating with the position of Deputy Chief for the past three years. Along the way she has served as Patrol Officer, Juvenile Detective, Patrol Sergeant, Patrol Lieutenant and Division Commander of Community Policing, building a wealth of experience that has shaped her leadership abilities and prepared her for how to best put officers in a position to succeed.

Community policing is an integral part of Warner's DNA, and one of her proudest accomplishments in law enforcement is establishing that focus in her department, especially as it relates to Abington's schools. Mentoring new leaders in the police department to follow in these footsteps is always at the forefront of Warner's efforts.

There's also the Abington HUB – a community policing model Warner helped bring to fruition that centralizes services and connects citizens in risk or crisis to care and support from the appropriate community agencies. That program won the 2016 International Association of Chiefs of Police's Community Police Award.

During her three decades in Abington, Warner has dedicated herself to professional development, and in addition to the FBI National Academy Warner has attended the FBI Law Enforcement Executive Development Seminar and the School of Police Staff and Command in Philadelphia. She is a member of the Mid-Atlantic Association of Women in Law Enforcement, serving as president, among numerous other affiliations, professional memberships and instructor roles.

But, before all that, there was *Cagney and Lacey*.

"Truthfully, it was my sister who told me to watch a TV show, *Cagney and Lacey*, which was a crime drama about two female NYPD cops," Warner said when asked why she chose to pursue a career in law enforcement. "I was a sophomore in high school, and I never looked back."

It's a decision she's glad she made.

"Today, well, it could not be more challenging to be a police officer," Warner said. "But, I am reminded that if you do this job right, there is nothing more noble. I feel like on most days, I never *work*. I love being a cop, and I could not imagine doing anything else."

Warner is married with three children. A swearing-in ceremony will be held at a later date.

The City of Harrisonburg is centrally located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. It is home to almost 55,000 people. More information about the City of Harrisonburg is online at www.HarrisonburgVA.gov.



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