



J. Dent-Fitzpatrick
Assistant Chief

Columbus Police Department

P.O. Box 1866 – 510 Tenth Street
Columbus, Georgia 31902-1866

Stoney Mathis
Chief of Police



D. Kennedy
Assistant Chief

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 20, 2025

Media Contact: **Brittany Santiago**
706-225-4462

Assistant Chief Debra Kennedy Retires from CPD, Named New Chief of CSU Police

After 33 years of service to the Columbus Police Department, Assistant Chief Debra Kennedy is retiring from CPD—but not from law enforcement. Kennedy has been selected as the next Chief of Police for Columbus State University.

She will begin her new role with the CSU Police Department on June 1, 2025.

Assistant Chief Kennedy began her career at CPD in April 1992 as an officer. She has held nearly every rank in the department: Sergeant in 2000, Lieutenant in 2011, Captain in 2017, and Assistant Chief in 2021. Over the years, she has served in Patrol, Investigative Services, Special Operations, the Juvenile Diversion Program, and the Metro Narcotics Task Force, where she built a strong reputation as a narcotics investigator.

“I’ve spent my entire professional life with CPD, and I’m grateful for the journey,” Kennedy said. “It’s been a privilege to serve this city alongside some of the most dedicated officers you’ll ever meet. Now, I’m honored to bring that experience to Columbus State University.”

Kennedy holds three degrees from Columbus State University: an Associate of Science (1992), a Bachelor of Science (1993), and a Master’s in Public Administration (1996). She’s also a graduate of the Northwestern University School of Police Staff & Command and has taught as an adjunct instructor. Her certifications include specialized training in prescription drug investigations, high-risk warrant execution, and narcotics investigations. Her accolades include being named Woman of the Year by the American Business Women’s Association in 1997 and CPD’s Officer of the Month in 2008.

Chief Stoney Mathis said, “After 33 years, it’s hard to imagine this department without Debra Kennedy. I’m proud of everything she’s accomplished and thankful for the leadership she brought to CPD. I’m even more thankful she’s staying close. Our partnership with CSU Police is important, and having someone like her in that role will only make it stronger.”

A walk-through retirement celebration will be held in Kennedy’s honor on Wednesday, May 28, 2025, from 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. in the Community Room of the Public Safety Building (510 10th Street).

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