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MAYOR EMANUEL ANNOUNCES COPA LEADERSHIP PLAN

Interim Chief Administrator announced, community advisory panel to select next permanent leader

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today announced the succession plans for the newly-launched Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA). The new interim Chief Administrator will be retired Judge Patricia Banks, former presiding judge of the Elder Law & Miscellaneous Remedies Division. In addition, the Mayor has announced the creation of a Chief Administrator Selection Advisory Panel to search and select a permanent replacement and today named the two co-chairs.

“As Chief Administrator, Sharon Fairley led efforts to create a new police accountability agency that was meaningful mile-marker on the road to police reform, accountability and transparency,” said Mayor Emanuel. “With the support of a robust interdisciplinary advisory committee, COPA’s next leader will be selected for the tough job of putting these plans into practice. In the interim, I am grateful to Judge Patricia Banks for taking these reigns and supporting the city as it continues down the road to reform. With decades of legal experience in labor and employment litigation, and more than 20 years as a judge, she brings critical and practical experience to the City as we implement the latest police reform measures.”

Judge Banks began her career as a labor attorney with the United States Department of Labor, Office of the Solicitor following her graduation from the University of Wisconsin Law School. Later, she worked for a civil rights organization that litigated housing discrimination cases in the Federal District Court and the Corporate Law Department of Sears, Roebuck and Company handling labor and advertising matters. Following, she opened her own law office where she practiced civil law for 14 years. Judge Banks was elected judge of the Circuit Court of Cook County in 1994, where she was assigned to the Domestic Relations Division and later to the Law Division presiding over complex litigation matters. She is the retired presiding judge of the Elder Law & Miscellaneous Remedies Division.

The Chief Administrator Selection Advisory Panel will support the Mayor in selecting a new permanent Chief Administrator of COPA, which will then be approved by City Council. The co-chairs of COPA Chief Administrator Selection Advisory Panel will be Paula Wolff, Director of the Illinois Justice Project, and Alderman Ariel Reboyras, Chairman of the City Council Committee on Public Safety. Members of the Chief Administrator Selection Advisory Panel are will be finalized in the coming weeks.

In October of last year, the City Council enacted Mayor Emanuel's ordinance establishing both the Civilian Office of Police Accountability and the Public Safety Inspector General. During the launch event last month, Mayor Emanuel joined city officials, community members and public safety reform advocates to announce the opening of COPA as part of the next step in Chicago's public safety reform efforts. Throughout the past year, COPA has built a new infrastructure for the agency's operations to provide quality and timely police misconduct investigations. All investigators and attorneys have completed COPA Academy, a six-week civilian oversight training program.

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