

# Clinton Township names first female police chief

Caringi brings 26 years of law enforcement experience to job

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Dina Caringi has been named as the new chief of the Clinton Township Police Department. She becomes the highest-ranking law enforcer in Macomb County. MITCH HOTTS — THE MACOMB DAILY

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Clinton Township has named a captain with 26 years of law enforcement experience as the first female police chief in the department's history.

Capt. Dina Caringi will be sworn in as chief of police of the 94-officer department on Nov. 4. She succeeds Bruce Wade as the department's sixth chief.

Caringi, who grew up in the township and attended Chippewa Valley Schools, said Tuesday she is thrilled by her promotion and looks forward to leading a relatively young police force.

"I am so honored to be among the women who were trailblazers before me, who were able to reach the top of a police department," Caringi said.

"To anyone who might be skeptical of my abilities, all I can say is, I've always maintained a foundation of integrity, honesty and openness. I've owned my mistakes, learned from them and continued to move on in a positive direction."



Capt. Dina Caringi PHOTO — CLINTON TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT

The veteran officer brings experience to the job, including 21 years with the Clinton Township Police Department and five years with the Detroit Police Department.

Township Supervisor Bob Cannon said he had talked with the late Chief Fred Posavetz about selecting a police chief for the future, as much of the command staff was nearing retirement.

“Dina was at the top of the list every time,” he said. “All eyes are going to be on her being the first female chief. I know she is going to shine.”

There are currently 12 female chiefs in the state, according to the Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police.

Despite her being a new chief, Caringi has a wealth of experience in police work. She has previously worked in the undercover drug unit, road patrol, and as the Township’s first female lieutenant of the detective bureau. In addition, she has 10 years of experience as a use-of-force and firearms instructor, 13 years with the crisis negotiation unit, and has spent the last five years as a unit commander.

Caringi, 47, started her career patrolling the streets of Detroit in DPD’s 9th precinct in the mid-90s before moving on to her hometown department. She credits the mentors and officers who helped her along the way with advice and recognition that she had the experience to advance.

Although not technically the chief yet, Caringi is working with township officials on next year’s budget for the police department.

She said enhancing the leadership capabilities of her young command staff is a top priority and wants to see command officers take part in command schools and executive leadership classes.

Another priority she has is using social media more frequently and establishing quality community relations.

“We’ve been discussing having a COVID-friendly open house at the police department next year. I’d like to get that planned over the next six to eight months,” she said. “It would be good to open our doors and invite the public in to get to know the new administration and our officers.”

Caringi grew up in Clinton Township, living with her parents and sisters in a home her father — a now-retired architect — designed and built off Moravian Drive in 1976. She attended nearby Ottawa Elementary, where her mother directed the school library for 25 years. At Chippewa Valley High School she excelled as an athlete, playing soccer and basketball.

After graduating in 1992, she struggled with finding place in life. She initially went to Western Michigan University, and although she completed a few core classes, she returned home after a semester after deciding it wasn’t for her. That winter, she enrolled at Macomb Community College.

Her brother-in-law was attending the Detroit Police Academy at the time. He encouraged her to apply there in June 1995 at the age of 19. A year later, she became a Detroit officer.

As her career advanced, Caringi went back to college to complete her bachelor’s degree. In 2017, after attending Northwestern University’s School of Police Staff and Command, she applied and was accepted to Madonna University. She graduated two years later with a degree in criminal justice. Currently, she is working towards a master’s degree at Madonna in criminal justice leadership.

The new chief said she didn’t feel like a role model at first, but adds: “I’m beginning to.”

“I’ve met women like firefighters and other male-dominated businesses who say they are so happy to see a woman rising to the top of a police agency, and they wish me well, give me advice. I say you have to challenge yourself, learn how to set small goals, continue to train and educate yourself,” she said. “Learning never ends.”

Last spring, Caringi was promoted to captain, the first woman to reach that rank with Clinton Township Police Department. The promotion followed Posavetz’s unexpected death from COVID-19 complications two months prior.

Wade was appointed police chief after Posavetz’s death. He expects Caringi will serve the department well.

“We’ve worked together a long time,” Wade said. “She has been in a decision-making role for a while and has done well. I don’t see why that wouldn’t be continued at the next level.”

Wade said Oct. 29 is his last day on the job. He will name Caringi as interim chief at that time, a title she will hold until the Nov. 4 ceremony.