

Tampa names Jane Castor first female police chief

By [JOSH POLTILOVE](#) | The Tampa Tribune

Jane Castor, a 25-year veteran of the Tampa Police Department, was named this morning as the city's first female police chief.

Mayor Pam Iorio appointed Castor to succeed Steve Hogue, who is retiring this month after six years as chief and 29 years with the department.

"She really is a born leader in her demeanor," Iorio said.

As one of two assistant chiefs, Castor was commander of police operations and responsible for about 750 employees and three districts. Now she will lead a department with about 1,300 employees, including nearly 1,000 sworn officers, and an annual budget of about \$120 million.

The 49-year-old Chamberlain High School graduate said she plans to streamline operations and use new technology. A tough economy is forcing departments to tighten their belts, and Castor said "It's imperative that we work more efficiently."

The honor of being the city's first female chief isn't lost on her, but Castor said she would "rather be known as a good chief than the first female."

Hogue said that won't be a problem.

He predicted that when Castor's tenure is complete, she "is going to be recognized as the best police chief this city has ever had."

Castor began her career with the department in February 1984. She has worked in narcotics, street anticrime, and sex crimes and child abuse units as well as the Criminal Intelligence Bureau.

She helped lead the Department of Homeland Security's Tampa Bay Urban Area Security Initiative, and worked to secure a grant to implement the department's new radio system. She also is the department's liaison to the gay and lesbian community.

Castor is on the board of the Hillsborough House of Hope, which provides temporary housing to women who were incarcerated in Hillsborough County. She also is a Big Sister through Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Tampa Bay.

Last month, she was named Law Enforcement Executive of the Year by the National Association of Women Law Enforcement Executives.

"She kind of typifies the type of law enforcement executive that we all strive to be," said the agency's president, Susan Rockett, who is chief of public safety for Mexico, Mo.

Hogue called Castor one of "the architects" of the department's crime-fighting strategy. In April, police announced that the city's crime rate had plummeted 46 percent from 2003 to 2008, a decrease not seen

since the 1970s.

"You've seen the results of that over the years and a lot of the credit goes to Jane and her efforts," Hogue said.

A Tampa native, Castor is one of five children. She attended the University of Tampa on a basketball and volleyball scholarship and was inducted into the school's Athletic Hall of Fame in 2006. She has a master's in public administration from Troy State University in Alabama and graduated in 2001 from the Federal Bureau of Investigations National Academy.

Castor, a mother of two who has been an assistant chief since August 2005, is not related to U.S. Rep. Kathy Castor, D-Tampa, or Betty Castor, a former politician and University of South Florida president.

Of the almost 300 police departments statewide, fewer than a dozen have female chiefs, said Amy Mercer, executive director of the Florida Police Chiefs Association.

The state's first female police chief, Susan Hogan of Minneola, was sworn in Aug. 21, 1979.

Castor won't be the only woman in charge of a Tampa Bay area law enforcement agency. Dorene Thomas has led the Pinellas Park Police Department since 2000 and in June was named the first female president of the Florida Police Chiefs Association.

"Gender doesn't matter," Thomas said. "It just matters who is the best leader for the place, and they certainly have a good one. Now, [females] are more than tolerated. We're celebrated in positions of leadership."

Hillsborough County Sheriff David Gee called Castor a strong leader.

"I don't think the mayor could have made a better choice," he said.

Hogue was hired as chief in 2003 after a nationwide search; Castor was one of the top eight candidates.

There was no search this time.

"I don't see the need for a nationwide search when we have the best police department in the nation right here," Iorio said.

The Tampa City Council will vote Oct. 1 to approve Castor's appointment.

Last month, council Chairman Tom Scott said he hoped the city would conduct a nationwide search for a new chief if Hogue retired during Iorio's tenure, even if a local successor ultimately was chosen.

But at today's announcement, Scott said he supports the Castor's appointment.

As does Councilman Charlie Miranda.

"She's been groomed for this position for a long time," Miranda said. "I think she'll do a wonderful job."

He doesn't have a problem with the lack of a nationwide search.

"How are you going to find someone with more institutional knowledge than Jane Castor?" he said. "It's not going to happen."

The department's other assistant chief, Bob Guidara, is retiring Friday, and Castor this morning announced replacements for herself and Guidara: Marc Hamlin and John Bennett, who are both majors with the department.

"These two individuals, I think, can take our crime reduction to next level," she said.

TAMPA POLICE CHIEFS

James G. Littleton (1967-74)

Charles Otero (1974-79)

Robert Smith (1979-85)

Don Newburger (1985-87)

A.C. McLane (1987-92)

Eduardo Gonzalez (1992-93)

Bennie Holder (1993-2003)

Steve Hogue (2003-present)