

**TESTIMONY OF VICE PRESIDENT FOR PUBLIC SAFETY, SUPERINTENDENT OF PENN  
POLICE**

**Maureen S. Rush, M.S., CPP**

**DELIVERED TO THE PENN PUBLIC SAFETY REVIEW AND OUTREACH INITIATIVE**

**August 13, 2020**

I want to thank the Quattrone Center, Executive Director John Holloway and Academic Director Paul Heaton, as well as Presidential Advisers, Penn Law Professor Dorothy Roberts and Vice President for Social Equity and Community Chaz Howard for all of their efforts in leading the Penn Public Safety Review and Outreach Initiative.

I want to first acknowledge the hurt, rage and pain we are feeling around policing and race. I was horrified, and deeply sadden at the deaths of Mr. George Floyd and Ms. Breonna Taylor at the hands of police. I am a police officer, and I have dedicated forty-four (44) years of my life providing safety and security to communities. The actions of these police officers tarnish the reputation of all law enforcement officers.

George Floyd and Breonna Taylor's deaths, and the deaths of numerous people of color, were and are preventable. There were numerous points of failure. Best practices in policing dictate that police officers must be well trained, receive discipline when they violate state and federal laws or when they disregard their department's policies and procedures. Furthermore, there must be checks and balances to ensure that every officer is abiding by these practices and held accountable when they are not.

In the Division of Public Safety at Penn we do this within a context of structural racism that exists at every level in our society. Every day when we come to work, we endeavor to provide an environment in which every community member feels physically and emotionally safe and welcome, and is treated with dignity and respect at all times in ways that prioritize and promote racial equality and justice.

When I entered Law Enforcement in 1976, I was a 22-year-old closeted lesbian. I was hired by the Philadelphia Police Department as one of the first 100 women to work street patrol. Then Mayor Frank Rizzo fought the Department of Justice, but finally was forced under a court decree to hire 100 women for a two (2) year Pilot Program.

I learned a lot about prejudice, racism, sexism, and homophobia, as a targeted and unwelcomed minority police officer. I also witnessed extreme racism directed at my black colleagues, both on and off duty. I was deeply affected by watching the overt racism that my friends and colleagues endured. This informed my ideas about how to supervise and lead in a police department. My last three years there I was a Lieutenant and trainer in the PPD Advanced Training Bureau. I became deeply committed to the value of training in creating best practices, and I brought this love of training to our Penn Police Department.

~~So, allow me to give you an overview of the Penn Division of Public Safety. Policing is one~~

aspect of our Division, and we have six (6) other departments who work 24x7, 365 days a year, to promote safety in our community. These include Special Services, our Victim advocacy program, Fire and Emergency Preparedness, PennComm Emergency Communications Center, Information and Security Technology, Security Services Department, which manages our Allied Universal Security Officer program, and the Finance and Administration Department.

Let me share the Mission Statement of the Division of Public Safety.

*The Mission of the University of Pennsylvania's Division of Public Safety is to enhance the quality of life, safety, and security of our community. The Division accomplishes its mission through the delivery of a comprehensive and integrated safety and security program, in partnership with the community that we serve.*

*The members of the Division of Public Safety reflect the diversity of our community. We pledge to deliver professional safety and security services that value and respect the rights and differences of all members of the Division, as well as those of the University of Pennsylvania and the University City communities that we all proudly serve.*

*We are committed to the professional and personal development of all members of the Division of Public Safety, and in turn we expect all of our employees to be models of excellence. Ultimately, we strive each and every day to earn the trust, confidence, and respect of our community.*

We live our Mission Statement. Diversity is hugely important to us, and in partnership with the Division of Human Resources and the Office of Affirmative Action, I am proud to report that almost 40% of Penn Police officers identify as minorities, and 48% of our entire division identify as minorities. 10% of Public Safety members live in West Philadelphia. Our goal for inclusion extends to our safety partner Allied Universal. 47% of security officers on the Penn account live in six (6) West Philadelphia zip codes.

We make every effort to partner with our Penn and West Philadelphia Communities. We have many outreach programs. These programs match Penn Police Supervisors, Special Services advocates, Detectives, Fire and Emergency Preparedness specialist with Cultural Center Directors and College House Directors at Penn. We also attend monthly West Philadelphia Community Meetings, such as First Thursday, Spruce Hill, Garden Court, Cedar Park Neighbors, and Walnut Hill Community Association, and we are on a first name basis with OUR community members.

Our motto, which is embraced throughout our Division, is “*It’s all about relationships.*” This philosophy became my mantra back in 1976, as I walked foot beats and learned the value of relationships within the community I served. This philosophy enables us to partner and serve with our Penn and West Philadelphia Communities. I am enormously proud of the members of our Division, and for the relationships we have built with these communities.

I look forward to responding to your questions.