

Darren P. White

Biography

Darren P. White was appointed Albuquerque's Public Safety Director in December 2009 by Mayor Richard J. Berry. White was serving his second term as Bernalillo County's Sheriff when he was appointed to the position.

As the Public Safety Director, White oversees Albuquerque's police and fire departments, the Emergency Management Office and the Safe City Strike Force.

Director White is a lifetime public servant. Originally, from Upstate New York, White is the son of a World War II veteran. After high school, White attended a small Texas college on a baseball scholarship. White followed in his father's footsteps and enlisted in the United States Army where he became a member of the elite 82nd Airborne. Following his military career, White eventually joined the Houston Police Department and discovered a love for public safety that is with him today.

In 1987, White moved to New Mexico and joined the Albuquerque Police Department Academy where he graduated with honors. White was assigned to the department's Field Services Bureau, Motorcycle Patrol Unit and Crimes Against Children Unit. He reached the rank of Sergeant and joined a department rock band The Force, which performed to school children warning them about the dangers of abusing drugs.

Gov. Gary Johnson appointed White to head the New Mexico Department of Public Safety in 1995. At 31, White was the youngest state public safety director in the country. White also chaired Johnson's cabinet council on crime and corrections and drafted proposals that led to the passage of a bill that established limits on "good time" for prison inmates. Additionally, he lobbied for a law to strengthen public disclosure of critical sex offender information. After five years with the Johnson Administration, White resigned when the then-governor publicly announced he supported the legalization of drugs.

White took a unique direction with his career and joined the news staff at KRQE-TV, Albuquerque's CBS affiliate. White was a crime reporter at the station for two years when he left journalism in 2002 to run for sheriff.

As Sheriff, White quickly developed a reputation for being tough on crime. He publicly denounced repeat offenders, called for the State Legislature to pass a harsher "Three Strikes Law" and cracked down on sexual predators who violate the state's sex offender registry law. White developed a public web site that lists criminals with outstanding warrants and the addresses of sex offenders. He also created the Sheriff's Department's DWI Unit and a special sex offender monitoring Unit made up of reserve deputies.

Just days after Hurricane Katrina, White was asked by the National Sheriffs Association to respond to New Orleans. White personally led a group of 43 deputies and firefighters to Louisiana where they set up base just blocks from the Ninth Ward. White's team was credited for saving more than 200 people from flood waters.

In 2006, following an eight-month search involving input from more than 1,400 business, political, and civic leaders, the Aspen Institute recognized White as one of the nation's top 24 young elected officials and selected him for a new fellowship program honoring public leaders who have been identified as "the true rising stars" of American politics.

Director White has been honored for his work to eliminate animal cruelty. He adopted a six week old pit-bull in 2007 after learning that two men had cut off the puppy's ears.

White holds a B.A. in Management from the University of Phoenix. White has one son, Darren II.