

chief of a police department. And the Largo department he wanted to lead had seen one chief forced out because he interfered in a criminal investigation of his 15-year-old son, and another chief retired after a scandal involving sexual activity between Largo police officers and girls in the department's Explorers post.

But Aradi took the risk. Almost 10 years later, the department and city are better for his having been here.

Whatever people needed from Aradi, he seemed able to deliver it. While his officers were careful to toe the line, they also knew their chief as a man concerned about them, their career advancement and their families. To the community, he was warm, approachable, respectful and always looking for ways to connect with them, whether it was through his Coffee with the Chief series, his community walks or his visits to their neighborhood meetings. Local nonprofits knew him as a compassionate person who helped others, especially children and the elderly.

His bosses in City Hall were grateful because he ran a good department and kept it free of scandal. Other chiefs in Pinellas County admired Aradi for his eagerness to try new techniques and his high ethical standards.

Aradi admits to being tired and ready to retire to some place serene, perhaps to a plot of land in the mountains where he can ride horses and spend long, leisurely hours with his family. It is no surprise that in making his decision to leave his job, he also was thinking of the man he trained to be ready to take over, Deputy Chief John Carroll. Staying longer would be selfish, Aradi said, and would deny Carroll an opportunity he deserves.

So Aradi is making a change, again. But in Largo, he will be remembered and he will be missed.

[From the St. Petersburg Times, May 2, 2010]

DEPARTING LARGO POLICE CHIEF LESTER
ARADI LEAVES LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP

(By Lorri Helfand)

After 36 years in law enforcement, police Chief Lester Aradi is ready to move on.

Aradi, 58, wants to give his second-in-command, John Carroll, a chance to lead. And he wants to spend more time with his wife, Diane, and family.

If Aradi stuck around, it would be for selfish reasons, he said.

"It would deny (Carroll) an opportunity to become police chief and deny someone else an opportunity to be deputy chief," said Aradi, who announced Wednesday he will leave at the end of May.

City Manager Mac Craig, who has lived in the community since 1983, said he's never seen another police chief contribute so much.

He praised Aradi for having coffee sit-downs with residents, for having a major hand in the state's Silver Alert program and for working with numerous nonprofits.

"And he did all that while running a great department," Craig said.

Aradi's law enforcement career began during the Nixon administration. He came to Largo in 2001, after 25 years in the Buffalo Grove Police Department in Illinois, where he worked his way up to deputy chief.

As Largo's chief, he earned a reputation as a warm-hearted, approachable leader.

Joseph Stefko, who lives and works in downtown Largo, said the chief attended Old Northwest neighborhood meetings and was always willing to listen to his concerns.

"You can go right up to him and talk to him," Stefko said.

He credits the chief with helping clean up his neighborhood.

"He definitely changed the crime rate," Stefko said. "When I lived here 15 years ago it was pretty bad."

But Aradi said his accessibility, coupled with his responsibilities, came with some drawbacks.

"No matter where I am, the BlackBerry is constantly going off day and night," Aradi said.

Messages range from residents telling him that their cars were stolen to announcements about the community garden getting manure.

Other law enforcement leaders say they've enjoyed working with Aradi and consider him a friend.

"It's clear Lester is a man of integrity and maintains high ethical standards," said Pinellas County Sheriff Jim Coats. "That is reflected in the staff that works underneath him."

"Lester's always been on the cutting edge," said recently retired Clearwater police Chief Sid Klein. "He's not afraid to take chances. He's just a real top-notch professional."

When Aradi came to the department, its image had been tarnished by a sexual misconduct scandal involving officers. There were tensions between the former city manager and the officers.

"I think he brought the community and the Police Department closer together by being visible himself, by being conscious of the officers, and by being respectful and doing good customer service," Mayor Pat Gerard said.

Last year, Craig ran into friction with the chief over Aradi's choice to suspend, rather than fire, an officer who fixed a ticket. Some have speculated that Craig's decision to suspend Aradi led to his departure.

"I'm not surprised because of the incident a year ago where he was publicly reprimanded by the manager," said former Mayor Bob Jackson.

But Aradi adamantly denies that.

"That's water so far under the bridge it's out there in the Caribbean Sea," Aradi said.

There were no major controversies in the department during Aradi's tenure. But that's not to say that Aradi avoided controversial issues.

Three years ago, he received flak for his support of former City Manager Steve Stanton's personal choice to become a woman. Some called for an investigation of Aradi and all officials who knew of Stanton's choice but didn't make that information public.

He tackled the issue head-on, choosing to talk about it at a local Rotary meeting.

He also took strong positions, defending his officers even when his opinions clashed with city administrators.

Last year, during budget talks, he told Craig and other city leaders he couldn't agree to furloughs, which would remove more officers from the streets.

Aradi's influence also extended beyond the community.

Last year, Aradi was recognized by the Area Agency on Aging for his efforts that helped create the statewide Silver Alert program.

Aradi says he's done with law enforcement and is not sure what he'll do down the road.

"I want to go fly-fishing again," Aradi said. "I want to ride my horse."

He's ready to live on 10 acres of land in the Blue Ridge Mountains, visit his children and new grandson, and take a permanent vacation from his BlackBerry.

About a year ago, Aradi and his wife adopted a former racehorse, Haggis Hanover, who had been neglected. They hope to adopt one or two more and move to Tennessee, Georgia or North Carolina, where one of his daughters lives.

"We've made good friends here," Aradi said. "I'm going to miss the people of this community."

But he'll be fine not being chief, anymore. "I don't need the title," Aradi said. "My family is much more important."

HONORING SUSIE SNEDDEN

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 24, 2010

Mr. RADANOVICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend and congratulate Susie Snedden upon being named as a 2010 Common Threads honoree. Mrs. Snedden will be honored by California State University, Fresno at the 2010 Common Threads Award luncheon to be held on Friday, April 16, 2010.

Mrs. Susie Snedden grew up on the family farm in Maricopa, California. She graduated from the University of California, Los Angeles with a Bachelors Degree in political science. While in school, she interned for then-Congressman William Ketchum in his Washington, DC, office, the Republican State Central Committee and was the first intern for the California Cattleman's Association in Sacramento. As a young adult she returned to the family cow-calf operation that she now co-owns with her husband, Richard.

Mrs. Snedden is very active in the Kern County community. She has served as president and director for the Kern County CattleWomen and as a state director for the Kern County Cattlemen's Association. She and her husband served as state membership co-chairs for R-CALF, USA, a national cattle producer's organization. Mrs. Snedden operates an educational booth at, and assists with, the annual Farm Day in the City, has been involved at Maricopa School on the School Site Council and School Bond Committee. She often gives presentations about beef, its by-products and the cattle ranching business to classrooms and organizations.

Mr. and Mrs. Snedden have hosted visitors from around the world, providing them with a taste of ranch life. Mrs. Snedden is active member of her church, where she has led mission trips to Mexico, and has opened her home to Vacation Bible Schools and women's retreats. For her efforts, Mrs. Snedden was named "Kern County Cattle Princess" in 1972 and "Kern County CattleWoman of the Year" in 2001.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend and congratulate Susie Snedden upon her achievements. I invite my colleagues to join me in wishing Mrs. Snedden many years of continued success.

IN HONOR OF WILLIAM AND
MARTHA MANNING

HON. MICHAEL N. CASTLE

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 24, 2010

Mr. CASTLE. Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to pay tribute to William and Martha Manning, two individuals who have been major advocates for education in my home State of Delaware.

Bill was born and raised in Wilmington and is currently the co-managing partner of the Wilmington office of Saul Ewing LLP. He and his wife, Martha, herself a former public school teacher, are known in Delaware for their passionate support of education. In 1988, Bill was elected to the Red Clay School District board, where, serving as board president for 13 years, he led the effort for supporting school choice options. Bill currently serves on the boards of the Delaware Charter Schools Network and the MOT Charter School.

Martha Manning was instrumental in the founding of the Cab Calloway School of the Arts, a choice school located in Delaware's Red Clay School District. She served on its Advisory Board for 11 years, and, as a founder of the Delaware Charter Schools Network, Martha has been vital in the efforts to advocate for and expand the reach of charter schools in our State. She served as the Network's first Executive Director, and currently serves on local foundation and non-profit boards, all of which are related to education.

This year, Bill and Martha are being honored by the Delaware Charter Schools Network with the 2010 Catalyst in Education Award, given to individuals who have proven to be true agents for change in our public education community. Charter schools play a critical and significant role in the public education community of Delaware, and I applaud and support the Network's choice to honor Bill and Martha; this award is a testament to their ceaseless dedication and longtime commitment in championing improvements in education in our State.

It is because of the efforts and strong advocacy of individuals like Bill and Martha Manning that our schools are able to grow and our children are able to flourish. I am proud not only to call them two of Delaware's most active education advocates but to also call them my friends, and I am happy to have the opportunity to recognize and honor them today for their tireless efforts and immeasurable contributions.

HONORING JUSTICE STEVEN
VARTABEDIAN

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 24, 2010

Mr. RADANOVICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Justice Steven Vartabedian upon his retirement from the California Fifth District Court of Appeal. After serving for twenty-nine years as a judge, Justice Vartabedian will officially retire on May 31, 2010.

Justice Steven Vartabedian is a native of the San Joaquin Valley. He attended, and graduated with honors, from California State University, Fresno in 1972. Upon graduation he studied at Santa Clara University, School of Law, where he graduated magna cum laude in 1975. He passed both the state and federal bar in 1975. Early in his career, Justice Vartabedian returned to the Valley to practice family law and real estate litigation with, now former State Senator, and current justice on the Fifth District Court, Charles Poochigian.

Justice Vartabedian began serving on the Sanger Justice Court in 1981 and moved to

the Fresno Municipal Court in 1983, where he served for four years, two of which he was a presiding judge. He joined the Fresno County Superior Court in 1987, serving as presiding criminal judge. In September 1989, Justice Vartabedian was appointed as an associate justice of the Court of Appeal by Governor George Deukmejian. While serving on the state judiciary, he participated on the planning committee of the Appellate Justice Institute and on a committee studying weighted case-loads. Justice Vartabedian's most recent participation was with the Appellate Court Legacy Project Committee. He has authored articles on the topics of sentencing, court delays and sex abuse cases, all of which have been published in the Pacific Law Journal and the Judges' Journal.

While busy with his practice and serving with the various courts, Justice Vartabedian found time to teach. He taught business law at California State University, Fresno from 1976 to 1981. In 1992 he was a symposium speaker and panelist at the University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law, for the "Victims Rights in California" program. In 1995, Justice Vartabedian moderated a state bar program entitled "To Appeal or Not to Appeal," and has lectured on the subject of the appellate process to county bar associations and community groups on numerous occasions.

Justice Vartabedian and his wife, Marilyn, have three adult daughters, all engaged in careers in law. The family is active in symphonic activities, as his daughters are all musicians. He has served in the community as a past founding member of the local board of directors of World Impact, an organization that focuses on inner-city youth ministry. He is a former trustee of the Armenian Community School of Fresno and is an elder and bass soloist in his church. For his service, Justice Vartabedian received Sanger Unified School District's Outstanding Contribution to Education Award in 1982 and the Armenian Community School Outstanding Service Award in 2004.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend and congratulate Justice Steven Vartabedian upon his retirement from the Fifth District Court of Appeal. I invite my colleagues to join me in wishing Justice Vartabedian many years of continued success.

REMARKS ON CHIPS BARRY

HON. DIANA DeGETTE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 24, 2010

Ms. DeGETTE. Madam Speaker, Hamlet "Chips" Barry, the nearly 20-year head of Denver Water, was a dynamic man and a true visionary for Denver and the West. Throughout his tenure at Denver Water, he not only transformed the agency but taught legions of legislators, myself included, the elements of water law and its fundamental importance to Denver and the West.

Chips grew up in the Montclair section of east Denver and attended Denver Public Schools. In 1966, he graduated cum laude from Yale College, where he majored in American Studies and was a member of the tennis team. In 1969, he earned a law degree from Columbia University Law School.

After law school, Chips worked as a VISTA volunteer lawyer in rural Alaska, served as a law clerk to Judge Robert McWilliams on the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals in Denver, and was a legal services lawyer in Micronesia.

Upon his return to Colorado, he became heavily involved in civic activities, including work on the first statewide water plan under Governor Dick Lamm and serving as a member of the Board of Governors for the Colorado Bar Association. He then served as the Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Natural Resources for Governor Roy Romer from 1987 to 1990, after which he was named manager of Denver Water in January 1991.

At Denver Water, Chips' open-door policy made him accessible to employees throughout the organization. He was well respected for his willingness to negotiate and his ability to avoid conflict. Through his personal efforts, Denver Water also improved relationships with many entities on Colorado's Western Slope.

During his tenure at Denver Water, the utility implemented a conservation program that is nationally and internationally recognized as a model of success. He built a recycled water distribution system, invested millions of dollars in treatment facility improvements, monitored recovery from several devastating wildfires in Denver Water's watershed, and was the leader in the recovery work from one of the worst droughts in the city's history. His "Use Only What You Need" campaign has helped Denver residents cut their use of water by 33 percent, easily below the national average.

Chips was the creator and founder of the Western Urban Water Coalition, which represents all the major water utilities in the semi-arid West and has become a respected voice in Washington on such issues as endangered species and federal regulation of water. In 2009, he won the President's Award from the Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies for his leadership on local and national levels regarding the drinking water industry.

Chips owned a macadamia nut farm in Hawaii and planned to retire and work his farm. He enjoyed tennis, squash, skiing, and golf. He collected old Saabs, foreign paper money, and books about Micronesia and Alaska. Chips was famous for his boundless sense of humor and never-ending joke supply, and his bushy moustache. He occasionally dressed as Teddy Roosevelt to entertain friends. His immense personality and remarkable vision for Western water will be deeply missed, but never forgotten.

CONGRATULATING JEREMY R.
STEVENS

HON. ADRIAN SMITH

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 24, 2010

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Jeremy Stevens of Sidney, Nebraska on becoming a member of USA TODAY's All-USA Community College Academic Team.

The All-USA Academic Team honors a prestigious group of 20 community college students from across the nation for outstanding intellectual achievement and leadership.

Jeremy, an Army Veteran of the 82nd Airborne Division, attended Western Nebraska