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*For Immediate Release ...*

## **Town of Berlin Announces the Retirement of Chief of Police Arnold Downing After Decades of Distinguished Service**

Berlin, MD – The Town of Berlin announces the upcoming retirement of Chief of Police Arnold Downing after over three decades of service to the Berlin community. Chief Downing began his career with the Berlin Police Department (BPD) on August 26, 1991, and was appointed Acting Chief of Police on February 17, 2000. He was officially appointed Chief of Police on December 1, 2002, becoming both the first African American administrator and the first African American Chief of Police in the department's history.

Throughout his career, Chief Downing championed the development of specialized units within the BPD. Under his leadership, the department strengthened its operational capacity through SWAT, which assisted with the Baltimore riots in April 2015 and completed more than fifty successful missions. In addition, during Chief Downing's tenure, the department added a traffic reconstruction unit, five K9 units, a drone Unit, a Defensive Tactics Instruction Team, a Firearms Training Unit, expanded peer support and wellness initiatives, and implemented a speed camera program. Chief Downing also advocated for enhanced officer benefits, including enrollment in the Law Enforcement Officer Pension System (LEOPS), the Take-Home Car Program, specialized pay for technical and investigative roles, and additional pay incentives such as shift differential, inclement weather pay, special holiday pay, and compensation for fluency in Spanish. One of the most significant accomplishments during his administration was the opening of the new Berlin Police Station in 2018, a major investment in modernizing public safety infrastructure and preparing the department for future growth.

In addition to his departmental leadership, Chief Downing has been a tireless advocate for vulnerable children and families. He is a founding member of the Worcester County Child Advocacy Center (CAC), formerly known as the C.R.I.C.K.E.T. Center, which has achieved national accreditation and continues to serve as a vital resource for abused and neglected children. His service with the CAC, including roles as President and Vice President, earned him recognition as the 2009 Heroes of Child Protection Community Partner of the Year Award. He has also served as a board member of the Lower Shore CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) and a board member of the Worcester Youth and Family Counseling Services, including terms as President and Treasurer, helping guide key initiatives that support youth and families across the county.

Reflecting on his career, Chief Downing shared, "I'm proud of the advocacy work for abused and neglected children in Worcester County that I have been allowed to assist in accomplishing. The development of a community policing approach that fostered partnerships and mutual respect was highlighted annually with the Tri-County's best National Night Out. I am also proud to have assisted with obtaining a crosswalk at US Route 113 and Bay Street and helping to change the light sequence to create a safer intersection."

During his tenure, Chief Downing served on the Maryland Municipal League Police Executive Police Association Executive Board in leadership roles including President, Vice President, Secretary, and Sergeant of Arms. Additionally, he previously served on the Maryland Municipal League Board of Directors, Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission, Worcester County Bureau of Investigation, and Wor-Wic Community College Criminal Justice Program Advisory Committee. Chief Downing's distinguished service has been recognized with numerous awards, including the Alcohol and Other Drug Task Force Award in 1993, the "Charitable Soul" honor from The Dispatch's Shore Stars Awards in 2012, the Sun Award from Worcester Youth and Family Counseling Services in 2014, the Coastal Style Magazine Public Safety Official of the Year Award in 2020, and the Tri-County Martin Luther King Jr. Coalition Worcester County Award in 2023.

Mayor Zack Tyndall expressed the Town's gratitude for Chief Downing's decades of service, stating, "Chief Arnold Downing has dedicated his career to protecting and uplifting the people of Berlin. His commitment to community-centered policing, officer wellness, youth advocacy, and public safety has left a lasting mark on our town. We are a stronger, safer, and more connected community because of his leadership. On behalf of the Town of Berlin, I want to express our deepest appreciation for Chief Downing's decades of service and his unwavering dedication to our citizens and officers. We wish him the very best in his well-earned retirement."

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