

# Rocky Holcomb sworn in as seventh Sheriff of Virginia Beach

Virginia Beach – Rocky Holcomb was sworn in on September 29 as the seventh Sheriff of Virginia Beach.

Sheriff Holcomb succeeds Sheriff Ken Stolle, who is retiring after 13 years as sheriff. Pursuant to Virginia code section § 24.2-228.1, Holcomb – the highest-ranking deputy sheriff at the Virginia Beach Sheriff's Office – will serve as sheriff until a special election is held. There are two years left in Stolle's term, to which he was elected in 2021.

During a ceremony at Virginia Beach City Hall, Chief Circuit Court Judge James Lewis administered the oath of office. Holcomb's wife, Tracie Holcomb, pinned on his sheriff's badge.

"I am proud to pass the torch to a great man who has dedicated his life to public service," Stolle said. "Sheriff Holcomb will be a great sheriff: a good steward of the taxpayer dollar, a champion for mental health and a wise leader for the men and women of the Virginia Beach Sheriff's Office. Good luck, Rocky. I hope you have a long and successful tenure leading the best sheriff's office in Virginia."

Holcomb has served the Virginia Beach Sheriff's Office since 1991 and is Virginia Beach's seventh sheriff and high constable since 1963. He is the city's first sheriff to work his way up the ranks, starting as a deputy recruit and earning promotion to the rank of chief deputy before becoming sheriff. His full biography is below.

"I have served this community in various capacities for 32 years. Now it's time to serve in the capacity of sheriff!" Holcomb said. "This is not something that I take lightly. Leading this organization of over 500 strong and keeping our home, the City of Virginia Beach, the safest city of its size is something that I will work hard every day to maintain."

Holcomb also announced a new acronym for his leadership values as sheriff: TRUST – Transparency, Respect, Unity, Service and Training.

"This simple acronym TRUST will help guide our department in critical thinking, decision making and leadership," Holcomb said. "A community without trust is a broken community. Thank you to the citizens of our city by the sea for entrusting me with the responsibility of being your sheriff."

## Sheriff Rocky Holcomb Biography

Sheriff Rocky Holcomb has served the Virginia Beach Sheriff's Office (VBSO) since 1991 and, prior to his promotion to chief deputy in May 2018, served as captain of the Criminal Intelligence Unit and Classification Division.

During his career at the VBSO, he has served in every division, commanded the Emergency Response Team and championed efforts to improve mental health treatment for inmates, including by creating the Mental Health Housing Unit. He created the K9 Unit under the supervision of Undersheriff Brian Struzzi, acquiring and training two canines to detect narcotics and explosives. The K9 Unit has grown to three canines, including the region's first Fentanyl-detecting canine paired with the VBSO's first female handler. As captain of the Classification Division, he was instrumental in the creation of the Reentry and Veterans programs.

In 2017, he won a special election to represent the 85th District in the Virginia House of Delegates. He served during the 2017 legislative session, helping successfully carry bills to improve mental health treatment for jail inmates (HB2184) and expand access to contraception (HB2267).

On Aug. 12, 2021, the Virginia Beach City Council unanimously appointed Holcomb to fill the unexpired term for the Kempsville District (District 1) on City Council, and he won a special election to keep the seat on Nov. 8, 2022. He served as liaison to many different boards, committees and commissions prior to resigning on Friday, Sept. 29, 2023, prior to becoming sheriff.

Holcomb served eight years in the Marine Corps as an infantryman (three years of active service and five years as an inactive reservist). After joining the VBSO, he earned his bachelor's degree in organizational leadership and management from Regent University and graduated from the West Point Leadership Course.

Holcomb is an active volunteer, dedicating his time to the Pungo Strawberry Festival, Kempsville Meadows Elementary School and Mt. Trashmore Family YMCA.



**Under sheriff, Brian Struzzi; Sheriff, Rocky Holcomb; retired sheriff, Ken Stolle.**

*Left to right, photo from vbso.net.*