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Paduch sworn in as Romeo's new police chief

by **CHRIS GRAY**
Observer Staff Writer

As a young boy, Gregory Paduch remembers watching his father, a Detroit police officer, knowing he, too, wanted to someday be a member of a police force.

"I remember officers coming to our home and gathering together on more than one occasion after one of his friends and fellow officers died in the line of duty," he said. "It was at a very young age that I admired my father and his friends and what they did as a profession."

Now, after 18 years of serving the Romeo Police Department, Officer Paduch continues that aspiration, this time as Romeo's newest chief of police.

Paduch will replace Chief Jim Vanderlinden, who officially retired after 34 years of service, 14 of those as Romeo police chief. The Village of Romeo Board of Trustees unanimously approved Paduch as the new chief at its Dec. 15 meeting. Trustee Mike Cregar was not present.

Paduch, a former Detroit resident and currently a local resident, has been a member of the Romeo Police Department for 18 years. Before joining Romeo's ranks, he was a public safety officer for the University of Detroit in 1986, then a graduate from the Detroit Police Academy in 1989. He was also a member of the U.S. Navy for four years.

"From my first ride out here . . . until now, I've always enjoyed the quaintness and peacefulness of the community," he said.

As the senior officer, Paduch would occasionally serve as an interim police chief during the times Vanderlinden was away for extended periods of time.

"Over these last 18 years, I feel that I've been an asset to our department and I've tried to demonstrate leadership skills over that time to my peers, which I believe has contributed to my consideration for appointment," he said.

He and his wife are the parents of five children, a job he said he doesn't take lightly in terms of being a positive

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role model.

As chief, he has a few projects he would like to take up, such as more patrols on foot in the downtown area and more interaction with the local schools. He said he has already spoken with the principals at Amanda Moore Elementary and Croswell Elementary about implementing the DARE program.

The department is also in the process of testing new applicants and plans to hire a new officer around February.

"We'll have to run short-handed for about a month and a half until we get the new officer," he said.

He thanked a number of individuals, especially his family who came to support him, as well as the board for their approval.

"I now offer you my full commitment to all of you here tonight and to all village residents," he said. "I will strive in carrying out the duties and responsibilities as chief."

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