

New Orleans police chief resigns his post

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—Police Superintendent Eddie Compass stepped down from his post four weeks after Hurricane Katrina destroyed the city where he grew up and spent 26 years policing, saying he knew in his heart it was time to walk away.

His resignation follows the storm's turbulent aftermath, during which looters ransacked stores, evacuees pleaded for help, rescue workers came under fire and nearly 250 police officers left their posts.

"Every man in a leader-

ship position must know when it's time to hand over the reins," he said at a news conference Tuesday. "I'll be going on in another direction that God has for me."

Compass, 47, gave no reason for leaving, saying only that he would be transitioning out of the job over the next six weeks. Neither he nor Mayor Ray Nagin would say whether Compass had been pressured to leave his job.

Nagin, who appointed Compass chief in 2002, said it was a sad day for the city

of New Orleans but that the departing chief "leaves the department in pretty good shape and with a significant amount of leadership."

The mayor has named Assistant Superintendent Warren Riley as acting superintendent.

On the streets of the Algiers neighborhood, the first in Orleans Parish to be open to residents, some said Compass' resignation was a loss for the city.

"He was stretched beyond the limits of human endurance," said Ruth Marciante,

pausing outside a Winn-Dixie supermarket. "Under the circumstances I think he did a superhuman job. I wish the next guy who takes that job a lot of luck."

But another Algiers resident, Donald De Bois Blanc, said he had complained to police about looting in the hurricane's aftermath, and gotten only shrugs in return.

"I don't think Compass did a terribly good job," he said. "The department was inept."

Lt. David Benelli, president of the union for rank-

and-file New Orleans officers, said he was shocked by Compass' resignation.

"We've been through a horrendous time," Benelli said. "We've watched the city we love be destroyed. That is pressure you can't believe."

Benelli would not criticize Compass.

"You can talk about lack of organization but we have been through two hurricanes. There was no communications, problems everywhere," he said. "I think the fact that we did not lose control of the

city is a testament to his leadership."

As the city slipped into anarchy during the first few days after Katrina, the 1,700-member police department suffered a crisis. Many officers deserted their posts, and some were accused of joining in the looting that broke out. Two officers Compass described as friends committed suicide.

Gunfire and other lawlessness broke out around the city. Rescue workers reported being shot at. *(See Police Chief, Page 14)*

Graduates

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hol abuse treatment or counseling, household skill training and counseling on credit and money management. Many of the services are provided by local or national companies that partner with the public housing agency.

"The mission to homeownership would not be possible without our partners," Moorman said. Six support recognition awards were given at the event.

Only women comprised the graduating group this time, but Moorman said 20 men have been enrolled in the program and one graduated last time after achieving his goal to purchase a home for his family. Moorman said that most heads of household on Section 8 are women and that reflects in enrollment.

Many graduates were not able to attend, however ten women received award

stories of the recipients' triumphs, like Patricia Burrell's:

"I was living in Joshua Village (public housing)," she said. Now she owns a home of her own with her children, ages 16, 13 and 9. "My original goal was to get out of debt," Burrell said. She said she has "learned how to budget" and has "financial stability."

Shermaine Pitts advanced from the program with "cleaned up credit" and looks forward to having a better quality of life.

Rosalyn Johnson said, "My challenge was continuing my education at CCSN [Community College of Southern Nevada] in Early Childhood Development." She said she met her higher education goal and is happy to graduate, advance her career and continue her education.



Sentinel-Voice photo by Parker Philpot
Daughterly Pride: Dee Fladger, left, hugs her mother, Brenda, for finishing the Family Self-Sufficiency Program.

sion: to show it... to teach it to your families and neighbors."

After the ceremony, the women celebrated with their FSS coordinators, administrators, family and friends at a luncheon with door prizes. There were more cheers, and there were some more happy tears.

In addition to Moorman, Barbara Wheeler, Gesha Sanders and Miranda Ford serve as FSS coordinators to handle more than 200 presently enrolled participants.

Sanders said, "We are like coaches for them. ... We're like counselors." To stay with it for the many years it takes to meet the goal, she said, "It's up to the individuals."

Wheeler said, "We meet with them on a quarterly basis" and said there's flexibility for those who, for example, might need to meet alternate hours due to jobs or have a home visit while in the program.

Each coordinator agreed that challenges occur and difficult periods can threaten some participants, but they said nearly all of the participants go on to meet their goals.

didn't opt to pick homeownership at first "because I didn't think it was possible. It's something I always wanted but couldn't do on my own," she said, beaming a broad smile toward her coordinator.

She was supported by her daughter Dee Dee Fladger who brought her newborn son to the ceremony. Both of the women realized that the success is shared by the family and will determine a new direction for generations.

Graduate Charlotte Ross who was supported by her teenage son Quince said her graduation means a lot to her family, too. "It's an experience to let him see that his Mom can do it. I did it," she exclaimed standing beside her son.

Ross's son said his mother's action, "builds up my self-esteem. It let's me know I can do anything I put

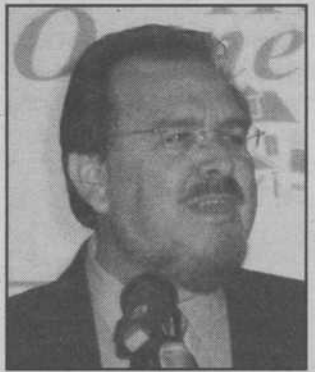
my mind to."

Other graduates included: Alicia Stewart, Nina Lopez, Nukinda Beets, Lisa Reed, Janet Hart, Roshawn Roberson and Socorro Orozco, representing a wide range of accomplishments, life stages and ages. Moorman said one of the program participants is 65-years-old.

The bond between the program participant and the FSS coordinator is evidently a close one.

After graduation the coordinators do follow-up with the goal-setters, but Moorman said, "Most of them follow-up with us. You bond with a client... you have worked with for years."

For information on in the FSS program, contact the Section 8 coordinator group at (702) 922-7074 or 922-7076 or 922-7016 for the public housing coordinator.



"You are living proof that obstacles can be overcome. It took a lot of hard work and sacrifice."

— Richard Martinez
Deputy Executive Director, HACLV

plaques at the event with their family and friends in attendance. Each graduate persisted in her dreams, visions, hopes and investment of several years of hard work.

Of all the goals, the most dramatic and moving testimonies came from those who moved from being on public assistance and Section 8 rent subsidies to owning a home, making payments and learning better financial management skills in the process.

The ceremony included a multimedia presentation and

HACLV Chairman of the Board Robert "Bobby G" Gronauer said that seeing the successes "is what has made it worth it." He added, "These are things that the outside community doesn't get to see."

Beyond reaching the goals, the success of graduates has a long-reaching effect on their children and others in the community circle, as HACLV Executive Director Parviz Ghadiri expressed in his congratulations to the graduates: "You have a mis-

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