

Police Department History (1967 – 2000)

The Union Township Police Department began with part-time officers and shared enforcement duties with the Butler County Sheriff's Office.

Township Trustee Marcellus Osner, citing rapid growth of the community and increasing demands for service, was instrumental in creating the police department in 1967. Prior to this, part-time Constable William Fisher policed the area, supplemented only by two sheriff's patrol cars operating countywide. The original six officers hired were Dan Snyder, John Lockett, Gerald Goforth, Gerald Heinze, Robert Shelly, and Harry Frederick. Snyder, a former state trooper, was named Chief of Police, and held that position until 1971.

The first uniforms featured gray shirts with black pocket flaps and epaulets, and gray pants with a black side-stripe. The hat was a western style Stetson. The original patch was circular, with yellow lettering on a black background and the breast badge a basic stamped design. The first firearms were vintage Smith & Wesson model 10, .38 cal revolvers. Starting pay was \$1.60 per hour.

Original requests for service were routed through a private dispatch service in Hamilton, Ohio, to the Ohio State Highway Patrol Post #9 in Hamilton, then to Union Township officers via radio. By early 1969, this system was upgraded by installing radios in patrol cars linked to the Butler County Sheriff's dispatch center.

In July 1971, William Noland was selected as Union Township's first full-time police chief, at a starting salary of \$11,000. Chief Noland had previously worked as a police officer in Sharonville and Evendale, Ohio.

Under Chief Noland, the staff increased to eight full-time and five part-time officers. In 1973, a full-time supervisor, Sergeant Jerry Reynolds was hired after working 12 years as a police officer in Sharonville, Ohio. Chief Noland secured grants for officer's salaries and new equipment, and in 1974, oversaw the establishment of the first Union Township Dispatch Center, housed at police headquarters at 7715 John Road. Chief Noland changed the uniform to navy blue and redesigned the shoulder patch. He also changed the badge design to that which was worn until September, 2000, when it was changed again to reflect the new name of West Chester Police Department.

Chief Noland resigned in August, 1974, and patrolman Frank Richardson became Acting Chief of Police.

In March 1975, Paul E. Arthur was appointed Chief of Police. Arthur had previously worked as a police officer in Deer Park and Madeira, Ohio, and in Tempe, Arizona and Coral Gables, Florida. Chief Arthur expanded the department to 20 full-time officers by 1979, serving a community of 23,000 residents. Insurance, competitive pay, holidays, vacations, and pension contributions were introduced for officers. The growing department moved to the Old West Chester Post

Office building at 8720 Cincinnati-Dayton Road in July, 1979. Portable radios were purchased, and a new computer system was installed that allowed for criminal history and wanted person's inquiries nationwide. Chief Arthur established the School Resource Officer program, promoted four new sergeants, and assigned full-time investigative officers. There were also some minor changes made to the shoulder patch.

Chief Arthur retired in September 1981, and Sgt. Lynn A. Brown was named Acting Chief of Police.

In October 1981, Jude E. Haslinger was named Chief of Police, leaving his position as Chief of Police in Gibsonville, Ohio to accept the post. Chief Haslinger developed the first policy and procedure manual, and restructured the ranks to include lieutenants, corporals, and detectives. The department was then divided into Uniform, Investigative, and Services divisions. Newly promoted Lieutenant Lynn Brown assumed command of the Uniform Division, while Lieutenant Ed Oliver took over the Investigative and Services divisions. A Crime Prevention Officer was added to develop neighborhood watch programs.

Chief Haslinger resigned in October 1984, to accept a position with the General Electric Company, and Lt. Lynn A. Brown was again named Acting Chief of Police.

In November 1984, Lynn A. Brown was promoted to the rank of Colonel, and appointed Chief of Police. Chief Brown was the first Chief to ascend to the position from the ranks of the Union Township police officers. In 1985, Chief Brown adopted the Smith & Wesson model 681, .357 magnum revolver as the departments issue duty weapon. He also purchased Remington 870, 12 gauge shotguns for all police vehicles. As part of Chief Brown's emphasis on officer safety, regular firearms training became mandatory and body armor was issued to all officers.

In 1986 Chief Brown oversaw the move of the police department to the newly constructed Union Township Administrative building, which also housed the Butler County Area III Court, at 9113 Cincinnati-Dayton Road. Under Chief Brown's guidance, the department grew rapidly, soon reaching 28 full-time officers. Rigid officer candidate testing and screening criteria was established to facilitate the hiring of the most qualified applicants.

In 1988, a SWAT team was created, originally consisting of six officers. In 1989, Chief Brown converted the duty weapon to the Smith & Wesson model 5906, 9MM semi-automatic pistol. In 1991, labor contract negotiations eliminated the rank of corporal. In 1992, a burglary task force was created and became the precursor for the later establishment of the Directed Patrol Unit, which performs covert and mini-tactical operations. In 1993, two canine units were established.

In 1996, the Traffic Safety Unit was added to address the many traffic related issues that accompanied the rapid growth of the community. Officers assigned received specialized training in accident investigation and reconstruction. In 1998, the Youth Aid section was created to investigate all cases involving juvenile offenders, abuse or neglect.

Also in 1998, Lieutenant John Bruce was promoted to the rank of captain, and appointed as the first-ever Assistant Chief of Police.

In June 2000, Union Township officially became West Chester Township.