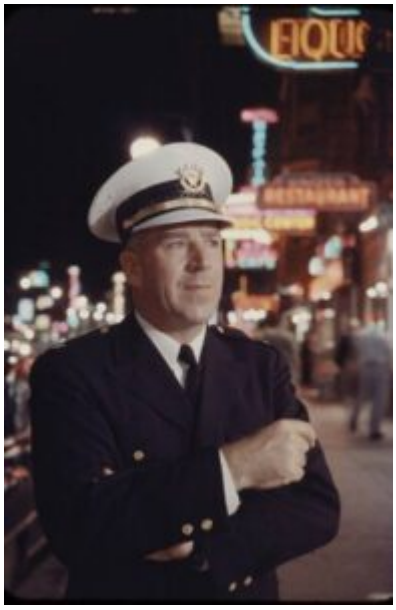
Colonel Stanley R. Schrotel (1914-2002)

Colonel Stanley R. Schrotel

- *by Lieutenant Stephen R. Kramer, Retired, Greater Cincinnati Police Historical Society*

Stanley Schrotel was born June 6, 1913 in Cincinnati, Ohio to Walter and Jesse M. (Cunningham) Schrotel. Walter lost his German immigrant father as a child and took on work as a woodworker, later as a carpenter, and then as a railroad car inspector. Stanley picked up woodworking from his father and it became his favorite hobby. His favorite recreation was reading. He graduated from Withrow High School in Cincinnati.



Because “he needed a job and the City Hall was seeking police officers,” Stan joined the Cincinnati Police Division. He was appointed Patrolman on August 16, 1934 and assigned to District 3 (in Price Hill). After almost three years, Patrolman Schrotel was transferred to the Safety Patrol at City Hall on June 16, 1937.

He was promoted to Sergeant 1½ years later, on January 1, 1939 and transferred to District 4 on West 5th Street. During 1941, he graduated from an 8-week Conference Leadership course. Sergeant Schrotel then transferred on June 16, 1941 to Vice Squad in the Crime Bureau. Six months later, on January 1, 1942, he was promoted to Lieutenant and remained in the Vice Squad as its commander.

A year later, on March 13, 1943 Lieutenant Schrotel was transferred to the Bureau of Identification and one month after that he was named Assistant Superintendent of the Bureau. He then attended a 4-month Police Administration course at the FBI National Academy, graduating in July 1943.

On October 1, 1947 he was promoted to Captain and transferred to Crime Bureau. From 1945 to June 1950, he studied Law at Chase College of Law and upon graduating became one of the best-educated law enforcement officers in the nation. On August 1, 1950 Captain Schrotel took command of District Two at 314 Broadway.

Within a year, he took the exam for police chief and scored the highest score of all competitors, 99.33%. On July 27, 1951, at the age of 38, he was promoted to the rank of Colonel and became the youngest Police Chief ever in Cincinnati.

Aside from the obvious rigors of taking over a major city police department, as soon as Colonel Schrotel assumed command, he faced two significant issues occurring in the Division. One, a towing scandal, where officers allegedly recommended tow companies in exchange for kickbacks. The other involved allegations that 90% of the City's bar owners operated bookmaking businesses.

On his first day in office, Colonel Schrotel suspended 45 police

officers for their participation in the towing scandal. City Hall preferred not to be involved in the politics of investigating, suspending, and firing policemen, so they gave Chief Schrotel the authority to handle it himself. It immediately provided him immense power within the Division, which he used judiciously throughout his tenure.

1951 Within five months, Chief Schrotel reorganized the Division, disestablishing some units and ranks and establishing others.



He dissolved the Motor Transportation Bureau.

He had an ordinance passed to eliminate the rank of Supervising Police Captain, thereby making it possible to interchange the top supervisory personnel of the Highway Safety Bureau, Crime Bureau, Police Training School, and Police Inspector.

A Traffic Enforcement Bulletin was created to identify high accident locations.

The Vice Squad was taken out of the Crime Bureau and change to Vice Control Administration, responsible directly to the Chief, in large part due to the bookmaking allegations.

He also redesigned personnel deployment strategies so that officers worked only 44 hours a week, instead of 48.

1952 The Division began paying patrolmen for Common Pleas Court and Grand Jury appearances.

On April 1, he established 30 new or revised procedures, called general orders. There were more than a dozen each month until a

year later he had a total of 84.

Radar was used for the first time.

Juvenile Court memoranda and all contacts with juveniles were combined into a central index by the Youth Aid Bureau for a more useful tool for identifying and addressing problem youths.

Colonel Schrotel wanted Cincinnati Police Officers to view themselves as the best in the nation. Over a period of a few years, he did everything in his power to assure there was no better educated, trained, equipped, and dressed law enforcement agency in the country.

Furthermore, he treated individual officers as valuable assets. Once he met an officer, he would remember his name forever. Patrol personnel would often find him lurking, at any hour of the day or night, when they were responding to calls for service or initiating vehicle stops and the like. Sometimes he would watch from a block away and would call up the officers' captain the next day with a report that the officer needed counseling or that he had done an excellent job. He read every report and seemingly knew every detail about every incident, offense, or policeman.

The Police Training School, which had been in City Hall and primarily used for recruit training, was reestablished at 314 Broadway, renamed the Police Academy, and emphasized in-service training and education. The classroom rivaled those at the FBI National Academy. For secondary-level managerial education, Chief Schrotel met personally with J. Edgar Hoover and reserved a seat for a Cincinnati supervisor in every National Academy session thereafter. A similar arrangement was made with the Southern Police Institute at the University of Louisville. A year later, the Target Range was updated, equipped with electricity, and made comparable to that of the FBI's in

Quantico. Added emphasis was placed on officers' appearance and how they conducted themselves on and off duty – especially with respect to impropriety and the perception of impropriety. To assure that their on-duty appearance was within their means, Chief Schrotel established a uniform allowance of $65 per year to purchase and maintain their uniforms. A few years after that, he established a Supply Room and issued officers new and replacement uniforms at the Division's expense.

1953 The Police Division went on television with a weekly show called "Play it Safe" which was conducted in elementary schools. It aired on Saturday mornings for many years.

Personnel service records, which had since 1886 consisting generally of a single page, were replaced with files containing the complete history of each member.

1954 Patrol cars were equipped with two-way radios, replacing the one-way radios from the 1930s.

The position of Superintendent of the Patrol Bureau was established with all district operations under him in order to reduce the Chief's span of control.

1955 Chief Schrotel established the classification of Deputy Inspector to function as Night Chief and he reported to the Inspections Bureau Commander.

District boundaries were realigned, and district stationhouses were moved.

A new police headquarters building was built, and District One, Traffic Bureau, and Juvenile Bureau moved into it.



A position of Polygraph Operator was established.

The Division was reorganized into eight bureaus and the assistant chiefs complement was increased to six.

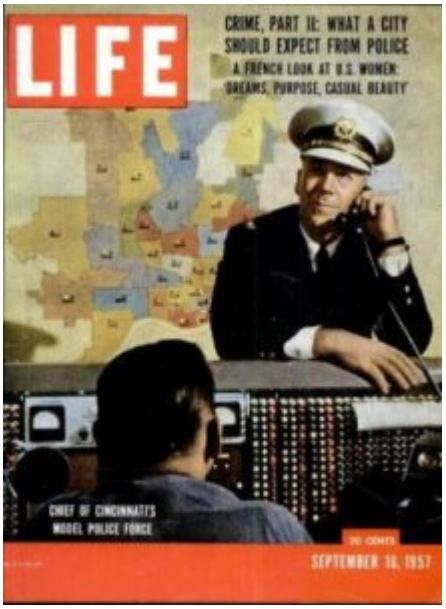
Taking another huge step forward, on June 20, 1955, Chief Schrotel established the Police Cadet Program. Initially, the Cadets were hired out of high school as temporary employees. They alternated working at clerical jobs within the Division for 10-13 weeks and attending college at the University of Cincinnati. College was paid for by the city. Eventually, as the program evolved, Chase College developed a Police Science course. During 1963 this course was adopted by U.C.; possibly the first of its kind. Police Cadets would eventually become permanent, year-round employees, with full benefits, and automatically accepted into future Recruit Classes upon turning 21 years of age. The program was so successful that, by the 1990s, the Police Chief and most of the command staff were former Police Cadets.



With the handling of a citizen complaint by an apparent bigot, Colonel Schrotel altered the practice, or at least the tradition of black officers being assigned to only black neighborhoods and expected to interact only with black violators. Lillian Grigsby, a black female hired as a Policewoman in 1947, was assigned to a black neighborhood one day and looking for truants and wayward children. She ventured into the downtown area and spotted three white Northern Kentucky boys coming from a movie theater and rounded them up. One of their fathers complained to the Chief and Colonel Schrotel asked him to come to his office. Before he arrived, he also asked Policewoman Grigsby to sit in on the meeting. Policewoman Grigsby feared that she would be made to apologize to the boy's father – or worse. When the father arrived, registered his complaint, including that she was a female and black and should not be arresting her son, Colonel Schrotel looked at her and then at the man and simply told him that she was not a black officer, or a female officer. She was a Cincinnati police officer, trained as a Cincinnati officer, and paid to locate violators such as his son, regardless of the neighborhood or color of their skins. Thereafter, black officers were assigned to all neighborhoods. And, still later, he directed that districts deploy mixed race double-cars.

1956 On April 1, 1956 Colonel Schrotel reduced the work week from 44 hours to 40 hours.

1957 He established a disciplinary board consisting of personnel of all ranks to review major disciplinary problems.



Another new building, District 5, opened at 1012 Ludlow.

Minimally marked “interceptor” patrol cars with high-powered engines were fielded to deal with deliberate traffic violators.

Motorcycle patrolmen were issued helmets and more readily identifiable uniforms.

His efforts landed Colonel Schrotel on the cover of the September 16, 1957 issued of LIFE Magazine. LIFE was involved in a major, multi-issue report on crime in the United States and while lambasting the departments in Chicago, Detroit, Miami, New Orleans, Baltimore, etc., they determined that Cincinnati was “one of the very best forces in the country.” A recognized expert claimed that “none stood higher … in the quality of personnel.” J. Edgar Hoover assessed Colonel Schrotel as having “earned the respect and confidence of not only his own men but also of peace officers throughout the country.” It took LIFE ten pages to explain all the Colonel Schrotel had accomplished and how he did it.

1958 The Field Interrogation Report was established with an official policy for collection of street intelligence.

In cooperation with WLW, a lieutenant provided helicopter traffic information to radio listeners and television viewers during morning and afternoon rush-hour traffic.

Electronic sirens, which could be used as public address systems, replaced mechanical sirens on patrol cars.

1959 The Crime Bureau received technology updates including interrogation rooms, an additional camera for use by specialized squads, a hand vacuum machine to aid in the collection of evidence, and a miniature portable recorder for field use.

1960 A Canine Unit was created with a 15-week training course. Four compact station wagons with two-frequency radios and portable transistor receivers were furnished each Canine Officer for when they were on foot with their partner.

A power-driven rotary file system replaced file drawers at Records Section in anticipation of a Master Name File.

1961 Press-type 4×5 Graflex Speed cameras were purchased for Traffic and Crime Bureaus.

The city purchased and issued handcuffs to all patrolmen.

The Firearms Training Program was improved to incorporate more double action shooting and with more realistic training.

The Polygraph Operator position was civilianized with a civilian holding a Master of Arts degree in Psychology.

Scout cars were upgraded with first aid kits and, in three suburban districts, resuscitators.

1962 The Division began using a psychologist to develop a profile of attributes that police recruits should possess.

Also, by 1962, Colonel Schrotel had been solicited by several

major police departments, including Baltimore and Denver, to serve as Chief there. Mayor Daley of Chicago personally asked him to take over his police department. He was elected as President of the International Association of the Chiefs of Police, becoming the first Ohioan to hold that position since Cincinnati Superintendent Philip Deitsch founded its parent organization, the National Police Association, in 1893. He was listed as one of six possible successors to J. Edgar Hoover to take over the FBI (though Hoover kept the position another decade). But his loyalty never wavered, and he never accepted a job outside of Cincinnati.

1963 Color photography was introduced in order to make identification of some suspects easier for witnesses.

1964 The Firearms Training Program was augmented with a color-sound film projector to “place” officers in a stressful situation presenting them with a variety of situations in which accurate shooting is coupled with decision making in field of legality and safety.

Riot helmets were purchased and issued to 450 field personnel as well as additional handcuffs, 25 “Handi-Talki” radios, extra stores of ammunition, and tear gas. Riot and crowd control training was given to all officers at the Target Range.

1965 A Block Parents Program was developed by the Juvenile Bureau and staffed by the Parents Teachers Association with purpose to provide a “house of refuge” for juveniles for emergencies.

In anticipation of a first of a kind computerized law enforcement information system, a Master Name File was activated, and all reporting procedures transferred to the Records Section, which began providing round-the-clock services.

A Police Community Relations Program was developed under the sponsorship of the National Conference of Christians and Jews.

1966 A Community Relations Bureau, the first in the United States, was established.

A Police Specialist classification was established, replacing the Detective classification, allowing commanders more flexibility in assignment of more highly motivated and technically accomplished officers.

In anticipation of moving radio communications to a secure facility atop the headquarters building, a new telephone exchange system was established which, among other things, allowed for ten telephone lines to go into the Communications Section.

Public Utility employees were utilized and empowered to assist Police Division with overtime parking enforcement.

Having set the stage for the dawn of a new, computerized era in law enforcement, which was to be led in by the Cincinnati Police Division, Colonel Schrotel “retired” on January 11, 1967 after 15½ years as Chief and 33 years of service.

His legacy would linger for many more years, especially with regard to education. When he was promoted to Chief, law enforcement officers did not require a high school graduation. By 1978, 22% of the Division’s officers had master’s degrees and 63% had some college. By 1987, thirteen of his (college-educated) Cadets had risen to the rank of Captain and all five assistant chiefs; Lieutenant Colonels Edward Ammann, Thomas Amman, Jeffrey Butler, Joseph Staft, and Dale Menkhaus. Two others would eventually run the Division as for eighteen years from 1992 to 2010.

1967 Colonel Schrotel took over security for the Kroger Company’s 20-state operation and served very successfully as such for the next sixteen years.

1970 The Ford Foundation named him as trustee of a $30 million Police Development Fund.

1983 Colonel Schrotel returned to public service as the Director of Hamilton County Domestic Court.

1999 After another sixteen years, a total of 49 years of public service, and 65 years of employment, Colonel Schrotel finally retired at the age of 85. Thereafter, he and his wife would spend their winters in Destin, Florida and summers in Cincinnati.

Among his other interests, Colonel Schrotel was a member of the Rotary Club, Scottish Rite, the Shrine, and the Order of Curia, a 33rd degree Mason in the Cincinnati-Lafayette Lodge 483, and member of the Fraternal Order of Police, Iota Lambda Pi Fraternity, Criminal Courts Committee, Ohio and Cincinnati Bar Associations, Ohio and International Associations of Chiefs of Police, and the National Academy Association.

By 2002, Colonel Schrotel was diagnosed with Cancer. He was eventually admitted to Hospice of Cincinnati in Blue Ash, and died at 12:03 p.m. on November 5, 2002, at the age of 88.

Colonel Schrotel was predeceased by his brother, Robert Schrotel. He was survived by his wife, Betty F. (Fisher) Schrotel, and children, Kim Schrotel of Milford, John T. (Nina) “Bucky” Schrotel of Tampa, and Rev. James A. Schrotel of Santa Maria, California; seven grandchildren Brett, Merit, Sheryl, Read, Chad, Catherine, and Francis; and several great-grandchildren.

A memorial was held on Monday, November 11, 2002 at the Jon Deitloff Funeral Centre, next to Spring Grove Cemetery.

Betty Schrotel passed away at 84 on January 3, 2009.

On September 9, 2014 at their annual awards banquet in Independence, Ohio the Ohio Retired Police Chiefs Association, posthumously awarded Chief Schrotel with their prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award. The award was accepted by Cincinnati Police Lieutenant Stephen R. Kramer (Retired), Greater Cincinnati Police Historical Society President.

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