

THE SENTINEL POLICE ASSOCIATION

“FOREVER VIGILANT – FOREVER STRONG”



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James E. Craig, Police Chief
City of Cincinnati Police Department
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Chief Craig,

I would first like to congratulate you on making history here in the City of Cincinnati. Becoming the first African American Police Chief and the first from outside the ranks of the Cincinnati Police Department, in the history of the Cincinnati Police Department, was an accomplishment within itself. The many achievements you were able to accomplish are well noted. You were welcomed with open arms by all. Your accessibility to the citizens of Cincinnati, the rank and file officers, and The Sentinel Police Association were received with excitement and appreciation.

As we approach your two year anniversary with the Cincinnati Police Department, as well as your departure, I am reminded of the first meeting we had with you. The enthusiasm and vigor you presented before us gave everyone a sense of hope and belief in your “change.” Chief Craig, you have laid out your “Vision of Change” for the Cincinnati Police Department. Your action plan discussed with the Sentinel Police Association and at your two day “State of the Cincinnati Police Department Conference,” held on the campus of Xavier University, outlined your vision for the department. Your action plan to change not only the cosmetic appearance of the police department, but enhance the internal morale of those working for you, reverberated throughout the Sentinel Hall and the Xavier University Conference Center.

While addressing the members of the Sentinel Police Association during your welcome reception, you spoke on “Leveling the Playing Field,” for all officers within the Cincinnati Police Department. This became a type of battle cry and was accepted by all in attendance. Although you accomplished your goals of being accepted by the community, the business community, the cosmetic changes of the department, and keeping your name on the tongues of everyone, you have yet to accomplish the “Leveling of the Playing Field.” In all actuality you have allowed the Cincinnati Police Department to conduct a business as usual attitude. “As Things Changed, Things Remained The Same.” Unfortunately the Cincinnati Police Department has been setback twenty years.

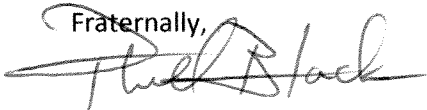
“The Sentinel Police Association was founded over forty years ago, to address the discriminatory practices, policies and procedures within the Cincinnati Police Department as well as ensuring equality in hiring, job assignments, promotions, and unfair disciplinary actions against its members”

In your short tenure as Chief of Police of the Cincinnati Police Department, you have failed to “Level the Playing Field” as well as addressing the unfair disciplinary practices within our department. You have actually displayed an asymmetrical practice of disciplining African Americans more than non-African Americans. Your action of swift transfers and “putting them in their place” was what you displayed. This has been a long practice of the Cincinnati Police Department in dealing with discipline and it continued under your watch. It is well documented the number of African American officers you removed from their assignments for discipline prior to any form of investigation. On the other hand, others received a long drawn out investigation while remaining in their current assignment or transferred to a better assignment, although there was sufficient evidence to grant disciplinary actions as well as an assignment adjustment.

Your work in the inner-city community is well noted. Your special request appearances along with the love the inner-city community displayed upon you was unprecedented for a Police Chief from our city. Unfortunately your acceptance and approval from the community and the direction your prominent business leaders wanted to stir you, consumed your workings within the police department itself. This created the business as usual attitude within the walls of the Cincinnati Police Department. “As things changed, things remained the same.” Your focus seemed to have switched from the overhaul of the Cincinnati Police Department to that of celebrity acceptance from the citizens of Cincinnati. You focused on being loved by the citizens and not making a major change within the historical lopsided disciplinary, promotional, and assignment process within the Cincinnati Police Department. You spoke frequently of fairness across the board, an “unchained” if you will. The “unchained” have yet to occur. The Sentinel Police Association will continue to fight any injustice bestowed upon its members regardless of race, creed, or color. We will continue to move onward to address the unfinished business that you will be leaving behind. We did not expect you to be the trumpet of injustice, but we did expect you to live up to the various speeches you gave, of making a change within the Cincinnati Police Department. “Appearance is more than the cosmetic changes. It is the total transformation of an unbalanced mindset and actions, which will last for years to come.”

Chief Craig, as you make your departure from the City of Cincinnati and the Cincinnati Police Department, as the President of the Sentinel Police Association charged by its membership, we wish you well and all the success with the City of Detroit and the Detroit Police Department. Remember, “The mark of a true leader is one who makes changes and those changes are sustained well after the leader is gone.” Once again I wish you well. You had the opportunity to right a wrong, but you did not and with that, the Sentinel Police Association grants a vote of no confidence on how you handled the in house actions of the Cincinnati Police Department.

Faternally,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phill Black". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "P" and "B".

Phill Black, President
The Sentinel Police Association