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CHIEF RETIRES



PHOTO BY SUSAN FRIED

Diaz was named interim chief in 2009, after his predecessor, Gil Kerlikowske, left to become President Barack Obama's drug czar. Diaz was given the job officially the next year and immediately faced difficulties, Mayor Mike McGinn says.

Diaz Steps Down in DOJ Shuffle

New federal plan for use of force prompts retirement decision

By Gene Johnson
The Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — Seattle Police Chief John Diaz retired Monday as his department faces a court-overseen monitoring plan to address the use of force by officers.

The announcement came after difficult negotiations led the Police Department to enter a court agreement with the U.S. Justice Department last summer to address concerns that officers were too quick to

use force.

Diaz said that after a 36-year career — the past 33 with the Seattle Police Department — he had planned to retire this year. A judge's acceptance of the monitoring plan last month provided a good opportunity to do so, he said.

"That monitoring plan is in place," he said. "It's time for me to let others move forward on that, but I wanted to make sure the hard work of the reform issues, that some of the innovation that I was really

interested in was up and running."

Diaz was named interim chief in 2009, after his predecessor, Gil Kerlikowske, left to become President Barack Obama's drug czar. Diaz was given the job officially the next year and immediately faced difficulties, Mayor Mike McGinn noted.

Soon after his appointment, the department was tasked with tracking down a suspect who had attacked a lesbian couple in their South Seattle

home, raping and stabbing both. One of the victims collapsed and died in the street after escaping the house naked and covered in blood.

Later that year, Officer Timothy Brenton was shot and killed as he sat in his cruiser following a traffic stop.

The next summer, an officer shot and killed Native-American woodcarver John T. Williams, who crossed the street in front of a patrol car.

The officer said Williams

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Fixing 'Legal Mistakes'

State weighs compensation for wrongful convictions

By Rachel La Corte
The Associated Press

OLYMPIA, Wash. (AP) — Alan Northrop anxiously waits outside a Senate committee hearing, his girlfriend rubbing his shoulders and whispering words of support as he prepares to sign in to testify about nearly two decades of freedom lost.

"Oh boy, here we go," he says as the door opens.

Northrop has been here before, but he's nervous every time. At stake is a measure that would compensate him and others like him who have been wrongfully convicted and imprisoned.

This is the third year in a row he's traveled to the Washington state Capitol to tell lawmakers his story: He was convicted of rape and served 17 years in prison before he was exonerated by DNA evidence.

"It's always intense," he said before the recent hearing before the Senate Law & Justice Committee, the third panel he's testified in front of this year so far. "I just have to get in the zone. It's something that needs to be done."

Northrop's story starts in early 1993. While playing pool with friends, detectives entered the tavern he was in and arrested him on a bench warrant for failure to appear at a hearing on a suspended license, later questioning him about the rape of a house-cleaner, who was attacked by two men in La Center while she was alone cleaning a house.

The woman was blindfolded and caught a glimpse of one of the perpetrators. Police later had her produce a composite sketch of one of them, which was ultimately posted around town. Someone thought the sketch looked like Northrop and alerted authorities. His friend, Larry Davis, has blond hair, a detail noted by the victim, who also thought he looked familiar in a photo montage provided by police. Though she didn't initially identify Northrop in a photo laydown, she

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Mental Health Budget Makes Gains

Legislature ponders most crucial needs in session focused on cuts

TACOMA, Wash. (AP) — As state senators proposed cuts in social services this week, one area gained ground: money for treating mental illness.

Budget writers understand how crucial this spending is in preventing dangerous people from being on the street instead of in treatment, The News Tribune reported in Sunday's newspaper.

"We had to put some resources there, or

there would be no room at the inn for people who were in serious trouble," Hoquiam Sen. Jim Hargrove, lead budget negotiator for the Democrats, said Friday night after senators approved the Republican-flavored plan.

The Senate proposal and Democratic Gov. Jay Inslee's spending plan both spend nearly \$16 million to avoid making mental health treatment backlogs any worse. And

lawmakers have proposed loosening standards in detaining patients with mental illness. Existing standards are seen as too high to catch some dangerous people.

The two budgets also add \$2.6 million to cover state psychiatric hospitals' unexpectedly high overtime costs. And they agree to add millions over the next two years for

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