

CH resident named VP of Police Foundation

by *Alaina Mabaso*

The City of Philadelphia is lucky that attorney Jeffrey Kolansky didn't like early-morning science classes.

While an undergrad pre-med student at Villanova University, Kolansky decided to try some criminology and sociology courses. He quickly realized that law was a better fit for him than medicine.

"It felt more my style," he said. "Plus, I didn't like chemistry at eight o'clock in the morning."

Kolansky, a partner at the Hadfield-based Archer & Greiner law firm, has been elected vice president of the Philadelphia Police Foundation, making full use of his passion for supporting law enforcement.

A 20-year Chestnut Hill resi-

dent, Kolansky grew up in Cheltenham, and his aptitude for public affairs was clear as a young man: He was elected an Elkins Park committeeman while still attending Cheltenham High School. But as a teenager, he felt the calling of a medical career.

Interning for a judge, however, turned out to be much more interesting, as was working as a special assistant to the U.S. Attorney during his years at Antioch School of Law in Washington, D.C.

After graduation, he began working as a prosecutor, and shortly after Ed Rendell began his tenure as Philadelphia's District Attorney, Kolansky returned to his hometown to join the District Attorney's Office in 1978. He was in for some hectic years.

In addition to several years prosecuting everything from child-abuse cases to robberies, Kolansky found himself managing the DA's Felony Calendar Program, scheduling about 70 cases a day for up to 90 attorneys.

"It was like herding cats," he said.

His interest in law enforcement continued when he went into private practice in 1990, often representing police officers and working for 14 years as chief counsel for the Fraternal Order of Police. In 2003, Gov. Rendell appointed Kolansky to the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency.

His in-depth knowledge of Philadelphia's legal structures, police department and commissioners led to an invitation to serve on the board of the Philadelphia Police Foundation in 2008.

The Philadelphia Police Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to serving needs of the police department that fall outside the city budget.

"I bring a lot of law enforcement background and knowledge of police procedure and policy," he said, adding that because of his additional experience in homeland security, communications, government affairs and civil rights, "when

the Police Department brings a request to us, I have an understanding of what they need."

He'll serve as vice president of the foundation for about two years.

"I like to stay involved," he said, referring to his volunteer work, outside of a demanding career.

He said he saw support for the police force as something that benefits everyone.

"I'm committed to the concept that the police are really out there trying to serve and protect and really help the citizens," Kolansky said. "It's not just about the job."

Foundation projects that Kolansky will continue to help oversee include a push to reinstate Philadelphia's Mounted Unit, which disappeared in 2004 under Mayor Street as a result of budget cuts, but are now being reinstated under Police Commissioner Charles Ramsey.

The horses that carry the city's mounted officers are an expensive proposition, and just the type of project the foundation likes to tackle (they've been instrumental in bringing 14 horses to the Philadelphia Police Department).

According to Kolansky, mounted patrol has "played a vital role in policing, crowd control and enforcement over the years," from

Chestnut Hill to South Street. He pointed to assaults or purse-snatchings that occasionally have taken place in Fairmount Park.

"These men and women patrolling Forbidden Drive really make an impact on that type of crime," he said of mounted officers.

Officers on horseback can approach an area quickly, quietly and unexpectedly, and, over time, Kolansky explained, their steady but imposing presence reduces crime.

"That clip-clop is not that loud," Kolansky said. "You don't really realize what it is until they're there."

Kolansky said mounted officers could also play a crucial role in effective, nonviolent crowd control.

The foundation also supports various PPD training initiatives, including a special daylong diversity program at the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C., for every Police Academy recruit.

"I'm not all that touchy-feely," Kolansky said, but he nevertheless admitted that this aspect of police training is particularly important to him. "It's not all about political correctness. It's about the right thing to do. It's something we need to make sure we're all sensitized to."

In his limited free time, Kolansky supports the arts as a member of the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia's board of directors.

"It's a worthy cause to keep music alive in the city," he said.

Kolansky and his wife of 30 years enjoy calling Chestnut Hill home. "I love the sort of urban-suburban feel to it," Kolansky said, along with the year-round beauty. "I like the sense of community. There's always something going on."



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