

Veteran Halton police inspector named province's first female sergeant-at-arms

By Kristin Rushowy
Toronto Star

Ontario's new sergeant-at-arms is the first woman to hold the position in the province's history.

Veteran police officer Jackie Gordon, who spent 34 years with the Halton force the last 12 as an inspector, told reporters Monday she will first spend some time listening and learning, meeting with staff to talk about their roles and responsibilities, and then I'll begin to ask questions, and I hope that those questions will help identify and lead to some priorities. And then from there, we'll establish funding and figure out what we can and can't do.

Gordon, who also worked for two years with the Ministry of Education in building and fire codes compliance, feels she's spent her professional life preparing for her new job, which also includes heading the precinct properties branch that operates and maintains the legislative building.

She is the province's 10th sergeant-at-

arms, and didn't want to dwell on the fact that she is the only female since Confederation to hold the post.

I just intend to be as competent as I can in the role, and focus my efforts on raising the performance levels of the team, and not focus so much on who held the chair before me, said Gordon, who was born in Hamilton and grew up in Burlington, where she still lives. She's married, and has a daughter now in her fourth year of university.

Gordon said she has always welcomed a challenge, and certainly picking policing, in a predominantly male environment, I'm obviously attracted to a challenge, adding she has worked in investigations, community policing, courts.

Speaker Dave Levac introduced her at a news conference Monday at the Legislature, where he said her experience makes her eminently qualified for the position.

As for the new job, Gordon confessed she's already gotten lost twice in the building, and that right now she's most nervous about the daily procession into Question Period, which resumes Feb. 21.

The part that probably gives me the most sleepless nights is carrying the mace and doing the ceremonial side of things, she said. That certainly will be a new responsibility for me, but I plan to rehearse and make sure that I don't trip on my first day and I'm going to work at making sure that I do everything properly.

The government's website says the position dates back to 14th century England,

when the sergeant-at-arms was appointed by the king.

Gordon replaces Dennis Clark, who held the post for 19 years.

In the aftermath of the shooting attack on Parliament Hill in 2015, Clark told the Star he was taking steps to arm some officers, and last March, it was announced that an armed response unit would be working at Queen's Park.



Former Halton police inspector, Jackie Gordon, is Ontario's new sergeant at arms and the first female to hold the position in province's history.

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