

# Longtime Chief Spokesman of Police Department Will Step Down

By J. DAVID GOODMAN

Paul J. Browne, the New York Police Department's chief spokesman, will step down next month after a tenure of nearly a decade as a powerful behind-the-scenes figure in the nation's largest police force.

Mr. Browne, who the Police Department said on Thursday would become vice president for public relations at the University of Notre Dame, has been a private confidant of Commissioner Raymond W. Kelly and occasional public sparring partner of journalists and civil liberties advocates.

His last day as the department's deputy commissioner for public information will be Aug. 19, weeks before the culmination of a Democratic mayoral primary in which the Police Department's stop-and-frisk practices have come under intense scrutiny.

The announcement intensified speculation in the waning days of the Bloomberg administration over Mr. Kelly's future in New York City as his name began appearing in discussions about the open position to lead the Department of Homeland Security. It was not clear what Mr. Browne's departure might signal about Mr. Kelly's future.

"Deputy Commissioner Browne served with distinction as D.C.P.I. longer than any of his predecessors and at a crucial, transformative time in the Police Department's history," Mr. Kelly said in a statement, using the abbreviation for deputy commissioner, public information. "I wish Paul and his family all the best in this new opportunity and challenge. Go Irish."

Reached on Thursday in Indiana, where he spent the day at Notre Dame, Mr. Browne said he "loved every minute" of his time as police spokesman, despite its rigors.

As chief spokesman, Mr. Browne often displayed a firm command of the minute details of daily crimes in the city and re-

sponded to reporters' inquiries at all hours. "I always thought it was a privilege to be the one getting those calls, even at 3 o'clock in the morning," he said.

But he also presided over a tightening of press credentials issued by the police and a resistance by the department to reveal certain data, notably concerning street stops by officers.

The New York Civil Liberties Union sought to obtain data from the department on street stops in the early 2000s, following a City Council law that mandated their release. The police eventually released a year's worth, late on a Friday in 2007, forcing reporters to scramble to write articles.

"There are delays that will occur in good faith and then the department will be accused unfairly of sitting on data," Mr. Browne said, citing the difficulties and cost for an organization designed to fight crime to quickly produce statistics. But, he added, "The reality is there's troves of information and data being provided like never before."

Mr. Browne's departure comes at a transitional moment for a Police Department facing twin challenges in an election year: two City Council bills that would increase oversight of the department are likely to be vetoed soon, and a federal judge is preparing to render a decision in the coming weeks over its stop-and-frisk practices.

For roughly two decades, Mr. Browne and Mr. Kelly have faced such challenges together, said colleagues and longtime police reporters. "He's my consigliere," Mr. Kelly playfully said of Mr. Browne in a 2001 interview in The New York Times, using a reference to "The Godfather" film.

"We've been involved in a lot of experiences, some of them hairy," he said in the interview, referring to their work in Haiti, where Mr. Kelly was director of the International Police Monitors starting in 1994, and Mr. Browne was his deputy.



MICHAEL NAGLE/GETTY IMAGES

Paul J. Browne, right, with Commissioner Raymond W. Kelly in 2012, leaving the United Nations. Mr. Kelly once said of Mr. Browne, whom he has worked with for roughly two decades, "He's my consigliere."

# Lured to Roof And Robbed, Man Falls To His Death

By WINNIE HU and E. C. GOGOLAK

A man who worked for his family's Brooklyn real estate business fell to his death after being lured to the rooftop of an apartment building and robbed of thousands of dollars in cash, the police said on Thursday.

Investigators believe that the man, Robert Reichl, was sprayed with an unknown substance by one of the robbers, and stumbled around the roof before falling off. Two men and a woman were later arrested, according to the police.

His family said that Mr. Reichl, 50, had been an internist in Texas and had returned to Brooklyn some years ago after his father, who has since died, had a stroke.

His sister Ingrid Reichl said that he had been measuring a closet for her on Monday, which was the last day he had contact with his family members. The next day, his mother, Mary Reichl, believes, he went out to pay some of the men who do repair work on the family's apartment buildings in Bay Ridge.

According to the police, Mr.

## A confidant of the commissioner is joining the University of Notre Dame.

Patrice O'Shaughnessy, a former reporter for The Daily News who covered the police for two decades and reported on the two men's work in Haiti, said that they "just get along very well, similar backgrounds, Irish Catholic." That was apparent, she said, when Mr. Browne began working with the press under Mr. Kelly the first time he was commissioner in the early 1990s, as well as during his current tenure. (Mr. Browne became the top spokesman in January 2004.)

"Kelly brought him in because he was a former reporter," she said. "He knew what we were looking for." But, Ms. O'Shaughnessy added, reporters' access grew more limited after the Sept. 11 attacks.

"It was a different atmosphere," she said, comparing recent years with past decades

when precinct commanders were more available to speak directly with reporters. "They became much more restrictive in terms of information," she said.

"I think the commissioner, rightly, wants for the department to speak with one voice," said Michael O'Looney, who was Mr. Kelly's chief spokesman for two years before Mr. Browne. He said the increasing complexity of the media landscape changed the nature of the job, a lot of which was "playing defense."

"I think Paul was able to do that," he said. Marveling at Mr. Browne's longevity in the role, he added, "He's like the Cal Ripken Jr. of N.Y.P.D. spokesmen."

Mr. Browne, 64, grew up in the Bronx and graduated from Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism. He began his career as a reporter for The Watertown Daily Times and The Daily News. He also wrote for other publications, including The New York Times.

It was during his time as a young journalist in New York City during the 1970s that he was approached by a Russian agent seeking to recruit him as a spy. Instead, he told agents from the

Federal Bureau of Investigation, who encouraged him to continue meeting with the man in a bit of counterespionage.

He later served as a press secretary to Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, a New York Democrat, and in similar positions at the United States Treasury Department and in Albany.

Mr. Browne will be replaced by John J. McCarthy, a mayoral spokesman. Mr. McCarthy previously served as an assistant commissioner working with the Police Department's public information office. Mr. Kelly described his soon-to-be top spokesman as "a consummate, thoughtful professional."

Mr. McCarthy, a lawyer and a Queens native, said he was "excited to have the chance to return to the N.Y.P.D." which "has terrific people who have done an amazing job reducing crime to record lows in neighborhoods across the city."

Mr. Kelly on Thursday also named Valerie Salembier, a former publishing executive and the chairwoman of the New York City Police Foundation, as an assistant commissioner for public information.

# Tomatoes Will Be Flying at Former Airfield, and Not Everyone Is Happy

By STUART MILLER

On Friday, 40,000 pounds of tomatoes will be delivered to Floyd Bennett Field, the old municipal-airport-turned-park by Jamaica Bay in Brooklyn. There are no plans for a giant salad or a record-setting pasta sauce; these tomatoes will meet a more violent end, when up to 5,000 people are expected to pay \$50 for the chance to hurl the fruit of the *Solanum lycopersicum* at one another.

Tomato Battle, a mess of a food fight that would make Bluto Blutzsky proud, makes its New York debut on Saturday at an outdoor space at Aviator Sports and Events Center at Floyd Bennett Field, after having played cities including Denver, San Diego and Portland, Ore. The concept was lifted from La Tomatina, a festival in the Spanish town of Buñol that attracts up to 50,000 people.

The biggest challenge for Tomato Battle, said Aaron Saari, chief operating officer of Massivo, the company that runs the events, is finding enough farmers and distributors with damaged and overripe tomatoes — Massivo uses only produce that "is going to be tossed otherwise."

In New York, however, objections have come because Floyd Bennett Field, whose 1,400 acres include gardens, a nature trail and campgrounds (as well as the hulks of disused airplane han-



BIEL ALINO/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

The tomato fight coming to Floyd Bennett Field in Brooklyn on Saturday is based on the one above: La Tomatina, held every year in the Spanish town of Buñol and shown in 2012.

gars), is part of Gateway National Recreation Area.

Complaints arose on a Google group devoted to Jamaica Bay that the food would attract flies or damage the environment. Mr. Saari said that Aviator and Massivo had reviewed any potential

environmental impact, adding that the post-event cleanup would leave the area "cleaner than it was before," with all tomato waste composted.

That does not make swallowing the Tomato Battle easier for critics who believe such events

do not belong in a national park. One writer online called it "an outrage and an insult." Another, Ida Sanoff, said the government had hosted numerous meetings about "historical and recreational uses" for the land but never discussed this sort of event.

"It just seems like a bad public image" for the National Park Service "to allow such frivolity and silliness in a national park," Don Riepe, the Jamaica Bay guardian for the American Littoral Society, wrote in an e-mail.

But Jaclyn Muns, the marketing manager at Aviator, a concessionaire that runs skating rinks, basketball courts and open-air events at Floyd Bennett, said to expect more silliness. This summer features a mud race and a race in which runners are doused with multicolor cornstarch. There will be perhaps a dozen events total, double last year's tally. She argues that the whole area is a "hidden gem," and that these events introduce people to the national park.

Not all nature lovers oppose Tomato Battle. Adriann Musson, president of the Floyd Bennett Gardens Association, whose community garden at Floyd Bennett Field is the city's largest, said she was happy to "let them have a good time and get their aggression out."

None of the garden's tomatoes will be tossed on Saturday, though, and not just because they are not ripe yet. "We donate our extras to City Harvest," Ms. Musson said. "We give them 500 pounds of vegetables a year, as opposed to throwing them at each other."

# Manhattan Leads in Increases in Life Span

By SAM ROBERTS

Since 1985, the life expectancy for Manhattan residents has increased more than that of any other county in the country, according to a new analysis, which attributed the increase to gentrification and to a healthier lifestyle.

Brooklyn, the Bronx and Queens also were among the 12 counties where longevity increased the most.

In Manhattan, the average lifespan rose nearly 13 years for men and more than 8 years for women over the 25 years through 2010.

"Our researchers think it's more than economics," said William Heisel, communications director at the University of Washington's Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, which conducted the analysis based on census data and health statistics.

"When we have looked at changes in income to see how they line up to changes in life expectancy, sometimes the trend

corresponds and sometimes it does not," he said. "In Manhattan's case, we think that the drive to implement smoking bans, trans fat bans, and to make the city more amenable to physical activity and healthy food choices has had and will have an impact. The early and aggressive interventions into the AIDS epidemic are part of the story, too."

"Manhattan stands out," said Dr. Christopher J. L. Murray, the director of the institute.

Though the statistical differences were infinitesimal, Brooklyn ranked third, with increases in life expectancy of 6 years for women and nearly 10 years for men. The Bronx ranked fourth for women (6 years) and fifth for men (nearly 10 years). Queens was 11th for women (6 years) and for men (nearly 9 years).

Marin, Calif., led in life expectancy among women, at 85 years. Manhattan was 15th (84 years), preceded by Bergen County, N.J., and followed by Westchester County, N.Y. No New York county was among the top 20 for men (Bergen was 12th).

Manhattan and Brooklyn, especially, have recorded an influx of wealthier white residents. The National Center for Health Statistics reported this week that while the gap in life expectancy between blacks and whites is lower

than it has ever been, whites are still likely to live four years longer, on average.

"New Yorkers today are living longer and healthier than ever before, and substantially longer than people in the rest of the country, in part because of public health initiatives to combat H.I.V. infection, heart disease, cancer, smoking, unhealthy diet, and physical inactivity" said Dr. Thomas Farley, the city's health commissioner. "We intend to continue these public health efforts, with a particular focus on the city's twin epidemics of obesity and diabetes."

Even a spokesman for the New York State Restaurant Association, which has resisted some of the city's initiatives, applauded the gains in life expectancy.

"It's reflective of the healthy food choices available in New York," said the spokesman, Andrew Moesel. "It shows both the attitude of New Yorkers toward healthy living and the multitude of options. If you want to only drink papaya juice you have five places that serve different varieties."

"We have always applauded Mayor Bloomberg's intentions to make New York a healthier place," he said. "Sometimes we disagree about the best method."

## THE SITUATION AT JFK

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