



Proclamation No. 25-2016
Honoring Chief Sonya Gillespie for over Three Decades of
Distinguished Service to the Denver Sheriff Department

WHEREAS, Chief Sonya Gillespie has devoted over thirty years of exemplary service to the Denver Sheriff Department, reflecting a deep commitment to operational excellence and employee well-being; and

WHEREAS, Chief Gillespie holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Technical Management, a foundation that has strengthened her ability to lead complex initiatives and drive innovation across the department; and

WHEREAS, Chief Gillespie is the first African American woman to be appointed as a division chief in the history of Denver Sheriff's Department. As chief of the Administration Division, she led the Wellness Teams, including the Peer Support Team, ensuring staff and their families have access to resources that support physical, emotional, and mental health. She also oversaw the Technology Management Unit, Training Academy, Professional Standards, and the Performance Management and Strategy Teams, driving strategic initiatives and continuous improvement; and

WHEREAS, her passion for equity is evident in her leadership of the Sheriff Department's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion team, working in partnership with the Office of Social Equity and Innovation to foster a fair and supportive workplace. She served as a dedicated liaison to the Safety Human Resources Team, helping employees navigate leave and recovery with compassion and clarity; and

WHEREAS, Chief Gillespie has long served as a bridge between the Sheriff Department and national platforms, including a board member of the American Jail Association, the American Correctional Association/Bureau of Justice Assistance, and Staff Wellness Advisory Committee. Through these roles, she advocated nationally for systematic improvements in staff wellness across the corrections profession; and

WHEREAS, Chief Gillespie has embodied a profound commitment to faith and family, recognizing these as foundational pillars that support her leadership and resilience. She believes that strong family bonds and personal faith provide essential strength and guidance, enabling her to navigate the challenges of her demanding role while fostering a compassionate and supportive environment within the department.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED BY THE DENVER CITY COUNCIL:

Section 1. That the Denver City Council recognizes and honors Chief Sonya Gillespie for her extraordinary dedication, distinguished career of public service, and lasting contributions to the Denver Sheriff Department, the Denver community, and the future of public safety in the City and County of Denver and nationally.

Section 2. That the Clerk and Recorder of the City and County of Denver shall affix the seal of the City and County of Denver to this proclamation and that a copy be transmitted to Sheriff Elias Diggins and Chief Sonya Gillespie.

PASSED BY THE COUNCIL December 1, 2025

PRESIDENT

