

WORDS OF ADVICE

A L AXFORD

One piece of advice.....DO NOT retire in the middle of a pay period. The city will cut your pay dramatically (and laugh at you). ONLY retire on the last day of the pay period.

JOE BALUSEK 94042 – Retired Corporal

Join the DPRA it's the best 25 dollars you can invest. Excellent resources, keeps you informed and in touch with fellow retirees and officers.

Always stay connected. Have lunch once in awhile with fellow retirees and catchup. The DPRA Roster is an excellent resource.

This is the BIGGIE - Always Remember There Is Lots Of Life After DPD, go enjoy it and accept all it has to offer.

I would not change a thing. I had a wonderful 31 year career with two very good departments.

Don't sweat the small stuff. All things happen for a reason and will always work out.

Have strong family ties, Enjoy the grandkids.

RICH BOROFF 70012 – Retired Detective

My wife was sort of forced into retirement to get a guaranteed pension. I then had 30 years on the job. I did not retire then, but I saw how she enjoyed not going to work and thought I should retire. I then had 32 years and decided to retire. Big mistake. The first few months were ok then everything seem to get boring. I had finished all the work around the house that had been building up then had nothing much to do.

I would go every Wednesday to have lunch at a Denver restaurant with a few of other retired officers. Then the restaurant was sold to Hickenlooper, who we did not much like, so that ended.

I tried a few volunteer stints, couldn't find any I really liked.

I knew I should have stayed until age 65 to be forced off the job, but I didn't and I have regretted retiring early.

Another situation occurred when I had 2 years on the job. Working an off duty job I was involved in a shootout with a person who came into the store where I was working and robbed one of the cashiers at the point of a gun. I got into a foot chase with the robber, he would turn and point the gun at me. I fired at the robber and killed him. I got no support from the Dept. went back to work the next day and was told the shooting would go to the Denver Grand Jury. I appeared and was told I had no right to have my attorney present and that the jury could indict me on several criminal charges. No one in the administration or the DA's office had even called me in to prepare me for this.

About 1 month later while setting in a barber shop to get a haircut. I read in the Rocky Mountain News in the very back page by the comic strip that I had been cleared by the Grand Jury. No one from the DA's office or police administration had contacted me prior to or after I had read the article.

I am so glad that officers are placed on administration leave after a shooting now and get some support from the Dept.

I don't know if this what you want. You can use it or not.

JACQUES BENSARD 58020

I have been retired for 33 years, with no fear that I will outlive my money.

PLANNING FOR THE DAY THAT THEY DECIDE TO RETIRE, SAVING, SAVING: Get rid of as many debts one would have. CONTROVERSIAL: A lot of pro and cons, all up of each individual for me it was pay off the house mortgage as soon as possible, giving too much money to the lender (best is to subtract Principal, tax, Insurance from the monthly payment and you'll know how much interest you are paying, or get your payment schedule provided by the lender, a heck of a saving, plus a lot of personal pointers and idea, how I succeeded.

When I got sworn in, 1/15/1958, I was paid 315 dollars a month, which was a great improvement working for the State of Colorado. For 225 a month, my wife at the time was working as a nurse's aid intent on becoming a nurse. Our combined income at the time was under three hundred dollars, so for now we were ahead. We were able to pay our mortgage on a new home (GI Bill) utilities, phone, groceries, all household expenses within our previous income, as we managed to save a few extra bucks. In those days we had to go to the public and a vote to get a pay raise, there were two litigations pending, after a couple a month on the Job I got a pay raise then another one bringing (my recollections are not that great) my salary (still on probation) to 375, since we were able to manage our expenditures to under three hundred dollars, we decided to start saving those \$ 75.00 every month, as a reserve, that's when we first joined the credit union, (first loan to buy our revolver)(a member for 64 yrs. from then on we adjusted our savings to the pay raises continued to save until I passed probation and was able to work off duty, also working as a framer, learning carpentry (watching our saving grow, we made a goal to have at least TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS, when we reached that figure, our next ambitious goal was to pay off the mortgage (30 years) which we did in 1973, sold the house, build a new one, rental properties , ALWAYS " SAVING, SAVING" but not miserly, we went on vacation, dined in restaurants, hunt and fish (which supplemented our diet, especially when we were able "I and my hunting companions" progressed from deer to Elk. Always wheeling and dealing, wore many hats, Coaxed by other cops to join the Colorado Army National Guard, assuring me 29 years of military service when in 1991 (mandatory retirement at age 61) I retired, with a small military pension, but best of all, guaranteed Medical Insurance for life, there are still ways to make an honest dollar in our country, if you can find the "MONEY TREE" (work, work) especially young men, if they dedicate themselves, without the need of all the toys, bells and whistles. (STAYING AWAY FROM SMOKING, DRINKING AND SCREWING AROUND) extra curricula cost money and heart aches

TI BLAIR – National Certified Peer Recovery and Support Specialist and a member of the Denver Police Department Retiree Peer Support Team

If you are still on the job, hang in there. There is life after the job AND you can start making a plan for yourself now so that you can be happier and more fulfilled in and after retirement.

Retirement (and even just contemplating retirement) is a HUGE accomplishment. It's okay if you are rolling your eyes. It's a big deal. One that comes with lots of "advice" from others as well as fantasies we tell ourselves about how great it will be. It won't always feel fun, relaxing or good. Just like normal life. In fact, it may be a bit of a rollercoaster. Boring sometimes. Overwhelming, uncomfortable, freeing, lonely, exciting and sometimes scary. It's a huge opportunity to learn, grow, try new things and nix old habits that no longer work for you.

I'm sure you've been warned not to expect that you'll be laying on the couch for the rest of your years. This is so true! In fact, your new forever "job" begins in retirement. This is where you focus on what makes you happy. Strengthen relationships. Strengthen your mind and body. Actually, SEE the sunsets. This can be hard work – simply "being." So, the more realistic you are with yourself, the better. It might be awesome for 2 years. Then not awesome on year 3 or 5. This is to be expected as much as the next sunset!

You WILL indeed be able to CHOOSE when you lay on the couch...but that will not be enough. You'll get super bored and find out that laying on the couch can make us feel more exhausted.

Start thinking now about what it is that lights you up. Is there a hobby, sport or interest that you can pursue? Boredom sets in really fast. And with boredom often comes thoughts like "I have no purpose." When we slow down, our bodies and minds think it's time to slow down. You are still young (I promise!!!) and there is a lot of life to live. It takes a little effort but can be rewarding and make you stronger mentally and physically. Let yourself get bored, do nothing, see how that feels. But also, be thinking about a backup plan to help occupy your mind. Volunteering is amazing and rewarding way to stay involved in life. What have you wished you could do if you only had the time? Now is the time.

Stress is inevitable. It may seem like there is not a lot to stress about after retirement. Don't fool yourself! There will be ups and down and lags and lulls, challenges, sticking points and unexpected gifts and roadblocks. Some stress is necessary and productive stress, like trying something new.

Pain is something that might pop up in retirement. This can be mental/emotional pain AND physical pain. Without the day-to-day distraction of work it can sometimes feel like pain becomes your constant companion. If you have old injuries or new injuries, be prepared to welcome them in retirement, along with

the normal wear and tear that comes with living longer. Normal!! Your job is to stay moving. Learn about the spine and major joints in the body. A little knowledge goes a long way for coping with body changes.

Finances. Your financial health is as vital as your physical and mental health.

Take steps now if you haven't already to speak to someone who can help plan for the future. Look honestly at savings, accounts, debts, investments, habits and goals. The more you can arm yourself with information and a plan in this regard, the better.

Sleep. You might dream about being able to sleep as much and as long as you like. It gets boring really quickly!!!! That said, sleep is also a vital element to health that can't be overstated. There are many tools and resources to check out. Retirement likes to throw us a curveball sometimes...and make old ghosts pop up even years later and seemingly "out of nowhere." With retirement the brain and body have the "space" it needs to process certain things from our past. Know that this is so incredibly normal. Do you remember the game "Whack-a-mole?" It is similar. Just when it seems like all is well, life throws a curveball and something pops up. Prepare for this as an inevitability. Make a plan. Build a safety net for when and if times get too difficult to process alone. You are NOT alone.

You are valuable and amazing, even after retirement. It might just take a little time to adjust. Take a break in life BEFORE you need one. Let yourself off the hook for not knowing all the answers. Know that "excitement" and "nervousness/fear" often present as the same sensation in the body. Sometimes anxiety is excitement about not knowing what comes next. Totally normal. It is okay to know what you know. It is okay to know what you don't know.

Periods of depression are to be expected. Perhaps even welcomed? (It's okay if you're rolling your eyes again.) As we age and change our "role" in life it can sometimes feel like we've lost a part of ourselves. What we've done is made a little space for something new to come in. Life is stressful. It is what we DO with that stress that makes or breaks us.

You must keep moving! Exercise is as vital as anything else for your mental and physical well-being. Also—know when NOT to move. Your body might not be able to do what it used to...so find out what it CAN do instead. Focus on what is going RIGHT. It often leads to more discoveries. Movement makes us breathe, moves the blood and heart and muscles, and feeds the mind and soul. You can still be "active" even if confined to a wheelchair. So....no excuses on that. KEEP GOING. No matter what.

Reach out to the DPD Retiree Peer Support team!! We are here because we know that retirement can be a challenge. The value of peer support does not disappear after the job and in fact may become more helpful than you think. You are not alone in this.

When all else fails, here is a complete set of instructions for life: Breathe In. Breathe Out. (Repeat.)

Ti also teaches about pain, practical anatomy, functional fitness, stress, trauma and breath as free medicine. Ti is also a volunteer In Policing Services (VIPs) for DPD. Ti was teaching for all districts in DPD (active duty) until 2018, when she had to get her 4th and 5th spine surgeries. Ti is only 48, but she felt like she was 88!! Ti has been working with veterans and first responders for 12 years in various capacities and used to teach SilverSneakers and senior fitness.

Ti has a brief video that can give you a glimpse of what she was doing before her last spine surgeries: <https://tivityhealth.wistia.com/medias/d46htggfzg>

Ti related that since those surgeries, everything changed, and she was unable physically to teach and run around like she used to. Her husband is turning 61 this year and while he is not a police officer, she is acutely aware of the challenges he is facing as retirement nears. Ti related that in many ways, she too was forced to "medically retire" from life as I knew it after being hit by a bus in 2009.

Ti also has special interest in addiction, PTSD, suicide awareness and prevention. Here is a brief video on her "Why."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C5r3pAbWnJg&t=5s>

Ti just wanted to give you a glimpse into why she is so passionate about this work.

JOHN COSTIGAN 69086 – Retired Detective

I retired 17 years ago at age 58 and 1/2 which looking back was a little too soon for me but I was locked into a time specific retirement because of a DROP contract. I now wish I could have stayed at least another year to age 60. I was fortunate in that I didn't have to go back to work to support the life style I had.

For the first 4 to 6 months, it feels like you're on extended vacation or sick leave because you still think of yourself as a cop. Then it starts to sink in that, I don't do that anymore. You'll still think like a cop and have reaction to stuff in the news like you did when you were working, but you now know you're not a cop. Every approximately 10 yrs, while still working, I'd go to an FPPA retirement seminar to keep current on what my retired pay was going to be and hear how others who had retired were living their lives.

The most important thing is to have a plan of what you're going to do with the rest of your life. I started bagging groceries at age 12 in an Air Force commissary at my father's last duty station. I worked continuously from that until I retired from the PD, a total of 48yrs. Since I had been working at an early age, I knew I was going to have to do something to occupy the next 25 - 35yrs of my life.....you just can't stop getting up and going to work so I volunteered with a church charity (and still do 17 yrs later), went back to the police dept. as a civilian volunteer for a few years, volunteered as a senior aide for a few years, taking seniors to the store and doctor appts, volunteered as a traveler's aide at DIA for 17 yrs until the pandemic virus laid us off. What I realized I needed was something to get up two or three times a week and get out of the house and these volunteer activities satisfied that by meeting with other people and doing things.

I also was able to travel without having to worry about a deadline of going back to work. My wife and I had several long trips before her health started going bad and we had to stop traveling. That is another important consideration, your health. Hopefully its good or manageable but your health will dictate what you're going to do.

To sum up: have a good idea of what you want to do, work a fulltime job, parttime job, volunteer or do nothing. I would not suggest the last option.

And good luck!!!

JAMES EGAN 68151

Many times, when people retire they want to do things or go places with special people. They are surprised when others don't immediately jump at the chance to do what they have been planning since they joined the PD or workforce. The newly retired discover sometimes it works, but most of the time it doesn't.

The absolute best advice given me was by an Uncle who said; "Do Not rely on ANYBODY for your activities, your travel, or for your own happiness".

You will learn, when you ask your 'special person' to take some time off from work, or change their plans, or even just their reluctance to leave home, so you can do different things with them, that you will get a "No, not right now", answer repeatedly.

In order to enjoy yourself, I would Highly Recommend you change that statement, for your travels or activities to; "Hey, I'm going to go to Europe, (or do such and such) did you want to go it with me"? 😊 Got it? THEN GO!

YOU are the ONLY person who can make you happy and if you have to travel solo, so be it, you will find a whole new world open up before you, for your enjoyment.

If you travel outside of the USA, you Will stick out like a sore thumb, just because of your clothing, and English speakers will seek you out in order to practice their language skills.

When first venturing forth, try a cruise, not a shipboard one (although they're fine) but rather one to different countries via land movement.

You will learn, nothing ever goes smoothly all the time and further, you will learn how 'not to panic' but rather how to work through the problem. Especially, regarding any involvement with formal authorities like, Customs, Policia, Border Guards, etc. Clam up and use body gestures, "I don't know nothing". Then, you will find they want to just get rid of you, so let them solve the problem. It works.

Good Luck, Enjoy, and Congratulations.

I hope this helps.

CHRIS FOEGEN 95056

Don't go into retirement in debt, and don't go into debt while in retirement.

Have a plan. I knew what day I was going to retire 9 years in advance and planned accordingly. I put my house on a 10-year note and knew exactly how much I would have to pay off from my payout. Pay into your 457, 459, or savings or whatever. Max out your leave banks. That payout is easily a half-years salary. If you plan right you can enjoy retirement comfortably with 25 years and age 55.

TIM GIMENO 67018

When on department I advised rookies that if they had a hobby or some kind of interest to keep up on that or if nothing else volunteer somewhere.

EDWARD HERTZING 71053

The best information I can offer to future retirees is to be sure upon retirement, is to ensure your federal tax withholding is sufficient from your pension through the FPPA. Since I do tax returns myself, all to soon that retiree has to have his or her tax return done for the year they retire. Most retirees under withhold the federal taxes and usually owe a large amount. Since you are on a limited budget the off duty work and overtime is no longer in the picture. A lot of retirees find this situation daunting and have a rude awaking.

Recommend you sit down and look at your future financial situation and try to project income for the future. Start by using last year's tax return and look at your taxable cash flow and adjust plus or minus accordingly. Time doing this will save a lot of pain and suffering

Hope this helps

KIM HULL 78020 – Retired Sergeant

- There is life after the DPD - A great one.
- YOUR WEALTH IS YOUR HEALTH! **work out, eat right & keep up with your physicals.** There is nothing worse if you retire and then get sick and cannot enjoy your retirement 😞 or pass away.
- If you have any major surgeries you need, (knee replacement, bunions, hip or back) Get them done before you retire. The health insurance you have on the job is the best. Once you retire Kaiser offers a great plan, but it is expensive compared to what you have been paying - nothing.
- DPD has always had one of the best benefits packages nationwide. BUT you cannot take your uniform allowance with you!
- PPA should always ask for more MONEY instead of benefits - because the money helps you in retirement.
- I worked as much off duty at the end of my career to save as much money as I could! It helped.
- If you are in DROP - **try and stick it out for the full 5 years** - the last year is where the money is made.
- When you just get so frustrated that you want to leave, look at the big picture. This too shall pass. Time goes by faster than you think. Try and get as much out of your investments, deferred comp, and DROP as possible.
- Put as much money as you can into deferred comp.
- Health Insurance - it is expensive until you hit 65 and Medicare kicks in.
- This is an individual choice. I took what little bit of Social Security at age **62**. It was only \$168.00 remember we paid into the pension plan so unless you worked a lot and paid into SS your Social Security check is small. That \$168.00 pays for my Medicare.
- PLUS, I learned - I will NOT receive any of my husband's SS when he passes, because I have a pension.
- When you separate you will be taxed on the money from sick leave and vacation time, it's about \$30,000.00 depending on your income - so roll it into deferred comp and it is tax deferred. Taxes on \$30,000.00 or more is a lot.

- I retired with my deferred comp, drop money and of course my pension that comes every month on the 21st and I do not have to do a thing!! It is awesome.
- Be careful taking too much money out of your 401K - you have to pay taxes on this and if you take out too much you could end up in a different tax bracket. Plus, depending on your age you could be penalized if taken out too early. (That is a mistake I made)
- New hires do not have the escalation clause in their pension (which is; when the active officers get a raise so do the old hires).
- That is a great benefit. SO, save your money while you can make it.
- Have a hobby or sport you love to keep yourself busy, travel or whatever your passion is. I LOVE GOLF. We joined Pinehurst CC and love it. Thank goodness for that deferred comp money!!
- Enjoy your retirement!

DEBORA LIBONATI

Don't get involved with too many things too fast; mainly with volunteer work. Even though it was all work that I enjoyed doing, I ended up stretching myself too thin and found that I wasn't enjoying any of it because I had no down time for other things like golf and hobbies, etc. The biggest challenge was to find the right balance for everything and that's different for each individual. It's also really important to stay in touch with your friends from the office and not let those relationships get lost as time goes by.

MICHAEL MARTINEZ 82029, Retired Homicide Detective

I am still trying to figure out this retirement. I have been retired for a little over 2 years now. I do know this.....I love being retired. I now have the freedom to do what I want, when I want and still get paid. I had a job that was very stressful and required long hours. The things I did not have time for because of work, I now have the time for. Yes, I realize that I am on the downhill slide of life, but let's

face it our demise could have come at anytime before this. I have been fortunate to have reached my retirement time. I am ready for some ME time!

Retirement has given me the freedom to remodel certain areas of my house; explore my interest in cooking; help friends and family with handyman type jobs, take on craft projects, travel and most of all enjoy golfing. It is still important for me to maintain my friendships with the guys and gals I worked with, so I still take time to see them when I can.

I am fortunate to have my finances in decent order allowing me to continue to live a comfortable life.

While our jobs are extremely important, I have realized that family is the most important asset we have. We can all be replaced on the job no matter how good we performed our duties, but we cannot be replaced on the importance we are to our family. So, during your retirement, enjoy your family.

So, I hope you are looking forward to your retirement and find your new niche in retirement life. Good luck and stay healthy.

TIM MULLIN 82076

Retirement is such an important part of a person's career. If the department hosts a retirement seminar, attend it! The department sponsored one in 2006 that I attended and it was great. Reps from DPD Personnel, the FPPA, United Health, money managers (from Fisher Investments?), Dr Nicoletti, and a few retirees spoke to us and it was an eye opener for me. My advice, if such a seminar is an option take it.

A month prior to pulling the trigger on retirement:

Contact the FPPA and go over the retirement options available. There are several different ways/plans to draw out the money. Retirees should evaluate each plan and make the decision that fits their situation.

DPD Personnel/HR should be contacted in order to explore the mechanics of retiring. How and when to retire; the use of vacation time vs getting paid for it. When one would expect to get a payout of unused vacation/comp time/unused

sick time. Also cover health insurance plans available to retirees. I knew that I had to pay for my healthcare, but writing that check stung!

Meet with a money manager once you have a good idea of what your finances are looking like. That meeting gave me a lot of confidence in the decisions that I had made.

Explore your hobbies and interests. In my case, I like to golf and fish. Living in Colorado limits my opportunity to do both year round. In finding something to do all year long I got more involved in the church that I attended for the 28 years prior to my retirement. Volunteering to work at the church's food bank, helping at the funeral receptions, and being active in the Knights of Columbus has given me the opportunity to stay busy well busier, anyway. The point is to find something that keeps you upright and using your brain.

JIM PONZI 73112 – Retired Lt.

Active Members:

I gave this advice at roll calls many times when I was active. You spend lots of time making sure that you will have enough money to have a carefree retirement. How much time do you spend ensuring that you will live long enough to spend it all? Get on a physical fitness program and stick to it. Your health is far more important than how much money you can amass. Money does not help much if you are sick and unhealthy. Start now!!! Find something you like to do and work at it. Weights are very important as you age. Muscle work preserves lean body tissue which burns calories as your metabolism slows down.

Retirement is much better if your health doesn't hamper it. Contact me if you need some advice on a workout program.

LINDA REMLEY W66002

Everyone will say to an officer retiring, do not sit with feet propped up, have a daily plan to stay busy or better yet, have a part time job, the spouse will appreciate it. There is an adjustment for the spouse as well. Plan fun activities in

addition to all the "honey dos". View retirement as a second life full of wonder and enjoyment.

JOHN SCHNITTGRUND 67006

When most of us retire there is a significant amount of money in our DROP accounts and the payoff following retirement. That money should be protected and it is a good idea to find a money manager to keep that money working to provide a comfortable retirement. There is no need to spend that money as it will have to be distributed when you reach 70 years of age.

Find a hobby or anything to occupy some of your time to yourself. Boredom can set in and that causes a whole lot of other issues. Hobbies like golf and other active activities keep up your social experiences.

Above all, stay active and stay involved. Having friends and people you can rely on is essential to staying healthy and happy.

JENNIFER STECK 84024

I started planning my retirement a couple of years out, but specifically one year before I left. I attended a class at DU called Change in the Third Age. I don't think they offer that particular class anymore, but they do have classes related to planning for retirement. What I loved was that it included people from all different careers. It was amazing how much we all had in common and I gained great insight from others who came from outside the government and law enforcement arena. The class helped me focus on areas that brought me great joy and work on a plan to include those areas in my life beyond the DPD.

I can't remember the whole list, but there are key things that studies have shown to increase people's satisfaction with retirement. One is purpose. In law enforcement, we've always worked hard to make a difference in the lives of the people we serve and those we serve with. I think it's especially important that we

find a new purpose and a place to contribute that makes a difference. It's part of who we are. Community, learning, activity, health...there are probably 8-10 different areas.

I approached retirement seeing all of the possibilities of what I could do next. Volunteering, creating, teaching, traveling...all the things I wanted to do but didn't have time for when I was working full-time. Let's face it, we are retiring younger and in so much better health than our parents were at this age (for the most part). We can have a second career if we want. I have a sign I bought shortly after I retired that says. I'm not finished, I'm just getting started. And I believe that.

I began retirement with a plan to volunteer at the Zoo. I'm a huge animal lover and have traveled to the African continent a number of times. I enjoyed my time at the Zoo. I also took lots of classes in a variety of areas at the Art Student's League of Denver. (I'll never be done learning.) I've created all my life, but I wanted to really get down into the weeds. I think being a rookie in new areas is important, scary and uncomfortable sometimes, but so valuable in challenging ourselves. It's amazing what we can do when we push ourselves to do new things. I left the Zoo when I spent my volunteer time wishing I was at home painting. I now volunteer in art related areas.

Just under two years after I retired, people started asking to purchase my paintings. That was a shocker and I had no idea what to charge or even why someone would want one of my paintings. Here I am, four years later, a full-time working artist. I teach online art classes, a business class for new artists and have sold art not just across the US, but pieces that traveled to Canada, England and European countries. I'm having a ball and I am working hard at my own business. It makes a difference when you are passionate about what you do. I set goals every year and do my best to say no to things I don't want to do so I can say yes to the things I do.

I don't believe my best years are behind me. They are ahead of me. I haven't even approached my greatest work yet. Another retiree asked me a few weeks ago why I continue to challenge myself. My response? "Because I'm not dead yet." I have way more to do and while I was honored to work for the department

alongside talented, passionate and incredible people, I am still working with talented, passionate and incredible people outside of law enforcement.

I am happy to speak to a group of officers regarding retirement, whether on a panel or as an individual. I have not once regretted retiring when I did.

MARCO VASQUEZ 75069

Tips for Retirement

Each officer will experience different challenges transitioning towards retirement, like each of us experienced different challenges in our career. Knowing that each retiree and his/her family is different, here are several tips, based on my experiences and conversations with other retirees.

Plan on what you would like to do in retirement. Know that retirement isn't a perpetual vacation. Planning on your retirement to be endless days of golfing, traveling, fishing, etc. probably isn't sustainable for most of us. You certainly can and should do what you want to do in retirement but don't think that retirement is 20-30 years of recreation. You will need other things to stay healthy, both physically and emotionally.

We all need some type of mission or "purpose" to be happy in retirement. Many retirees transition to another job or do volunteer work to have that purpose. Look at what you did on the job or something you always wanted to do, and plan on creating a new identify or purpose in your life. Being a Grandparent, getting more involved in a hobby, volunteer work, etc. can provide that purpose for most of us.

Plan on what you would like to do in retirement. Know that retirement isn't a perpetual vacation. Planning on your retirement to be endless days Plan on one or more activities each day. List your activities for the next day and check off your accomplishments for each day. It doesn't mean that you must complete each task, but this helps keep you active and engaged.

Many officers plan on retirement at a certain time of the year. Financial considerations and other reasons guide when we plan to retire. Consider beginning your retirement in the spring, because what you do the first 6 months of retirement becomes what your retirement looks like. If you spend the first several months of retirement during the winter, the days are short, and people tend to stay inside. You want your first few months of retirement to be active and spent outdoors.

Know that what you plan to do in retirement will likely change after a year or so. The first few months will seem like you are on vacation. After the beginning of your retirement, you may find that you want to do something entirely different than what you had planned. That is okay.

Most people who are getting close to retirement worry about their finances and paying the bills in retirement. Most retirees I have talked to, find that they do fine in retirement and their monthly pension allows them to live comfortably. DPD retirees are very blessed to have a great Defined Benefit pension and we are very lucky, compared to most retirees, police or private sector.

The DPD Retiree Peer Support team is active and available to talk to officers who are close to retirement or after you have retired. The team is very diverse, comprised of recent and long-time DPD retirees. We are happy to discuss retirement concerns with anybody and can connect you with the team member of your choice. You can contact us at (720) 340-1485 or at email retpeersup@gmail.com

JIMMY WATTLES 70102

TIPS FOR RETIREMENT

I retired after 29 ½ years from the Denver Police Department. My retirement came as a bit of surprise. I had entered the DROP program 15 months prior and upon doing so I thought I would be working another 5 years before retiring. My decision came pretty quickly and without much notice...I had had enough! I was 52 years old.

I retired on a Friday and applied and began testing for another job in law enforcement, which I was hired for 3 months after retiring. During those 3 months I had taken care of all my honey-dos! My returning to work wasn't unexpected, so I really hadn't retired, but was just between jobs! Following another 11 years of working, it was time to retire at 63 years old. Because of my DROP account and my Denver PD pension, I was able to put a nice lump in savings and add some to my 401K. So, finances weren't an issue when I finally retired. I had paid off credit cards and only had a mortgage to pay, on our very modest house.

Since my second retirement and second pension (and some Social Security), I have been a very active volunteer. My volunteering and my increased volunteering and activity at church, has brought me into another career, although as a volunteer, into a very rewarding positions as a Chaplain with the Colorado State Patrol (2011-2019); Licensed Pastor (2016-2022); Ordained Pastor (2022-present). I also have been part of the Denver Police Retiree Peer Support Program since its inception in 2019.

My advice to those considering retirement:

Plan ahead! In fact, start planning ahead when you come on the job. Start saving for retirement. I know sometimes it is difficult but start putting some savings away in Deferred Comp or IRA or other financial plans. Pay down or pay off bills, especially those credit cards.

I remember Dr. Nicoletti telling those who were preparing for retirement or who had recently retired, this very important bit of advice. Wake up every morning and have something to do that day! Get up, shower and get dressed, and don't sit around all day with your sweatpants and favorite t-shirt on. Your plans don't have to take up the entire day, but just have something to do on your schedule each day.

Hobbies are useful in retirement. They can be a financial aid to your reduced income and they can be a way to stay busy.

Yes, you will have things to do around the house, but get out and do something outdoors. Join a health club, or just go out for a walk or a hike. Get together with

friends or other retirees. (Those retiree coffee and lunches can get a little old after a while, listening to all the same old stories...from the old days! Sitting around and not doing anything isn't good for your health. You aren't getting any younger. You will be entering into an age group of those who have new knees, shoulders, hips, etc. Sometimes it ain't fun getting old, but it is more fun if you can do it with other people.

Your healthy can change quickly! As we see each and every year, we loose 30-35 retired officers on average...and some spouses too.

Retirement brings changes in marriages as well. Neither husband nor wife are used to the other being around so much!

Find a place you can retire and be a volunteer. There are plenty of places you can find that will fit your schedule. You can even volunteer to work at the Denver Police Department with the VIPS program, or if you feel inclined you can become a DPD Retiree Peer Support member. (720-340-1485 retpeersup@gmail.com) And if you must, there are opportunities for employment out there. Many of you will retire with a few good years still left in you. Don't waste them sitting around home each day.

And finally, as you will discover, retirement is a huge change and challenge in your life. It isn't as easy as it sounds. I know, after getting up and working for 41 years, on holidays and different shifts and even working extra jobs, it is quite a change not to get up and go to work. Like most retirees say, "I don't miss the job, but I miss the people." You made many friends on the police department, don't forget them!

If you are having trouble adjusting to retirement, don't hesitate to reach out for help at 720-340-1485. There are dozens of retired officers who are willing to help in anyway they can. Speaking with them is confidential and the PEER Support Team is well trained and have access to others to assist as well.

BARBARA WILLIAMS (Barb Wimmer) 96004

You asked for words of advice to pass along before retirement. Casey and I have enjoyed a great retirement so far. We have enjoyed good health (just luck of the draw) and our finances are going well (that I think is due to good planning). These are some of the things we did:

We saved money in our respective 457's for most of our careers.

Remember social security has that Windfall Elimination Provision and it will impact your social security benefits.

Be sure you sign up for medicare when it's time.

We were fortunate to retire on our terms. We didn't leave angry or with ill feelings. We had both been cops for a long time and we were ready for our careers and the pressure of that job to be over.

Consider the timing of your retirement – your buy-out will count toward your taxable annual income - so maybe retiring at the end of the year not your best option as it will put your annual income (and your tax bracket) much higher than usual.

We found there were too many accounts to manage ourselves (Casey had money in the City of Aurora money purchase plan - he had money in a 457 through Aurora PD - and he had his separation payout. I had a previously purchased annuity - a 457 through Denver PD - my drop money - and my separation pay so we hired a financial planner to manage our finances. Our financial planner (Chad Leigh with Exit and Retirement Strategies) helps us make investment decisions weighing risk and gain/loss potential and helps us decide which accounts to pull money from. We pull a small paycheck each month from our investments.

For a year prior to retirement, we kept track of every dollar we spent by writing it down. We knew exactly what it cost us to live month to month and that is the amount we pay ourselves every month between my pension and our investments. We were fortunate to find very flexible part time jobs (working from home) that provide us with all our “fun money” and give us all the money we need to travel and play.

We left on a long road trip just after our retirement party. We planned to be gone long enough that by the time we got home, it wouldn't feel weird to not be going to work. We were gone about 6 weeks. It worked. By the time we got home, it didn't feel weird to be able to sleep-in and it didn't feel weird to not be going to the station every day.

During the road trip, there wasn't a lot to do in the evenings and we often went to bed early. We found ourselves sleeping 10 and a couple times 12 hours a night. We decided maybe all those years of on-call and convincing ourselves 6-hours-of-sleep-was-plenty, had taken a toll. Now that we have been retired 6 years, we consistently sleep 8 hours every night.

Before you retire - figure out what you want to do with your time. We spend a little time on our part-time jobs, time with grandkids and other family and we travel a lot. I love to read the entire paper every morning and play my computer game. Casey golfs, we walk and bike ride. I have friends I stay in contact with and we schedule times to talk and get together. Truly, I am as busy as I want to be and I really don't how I had time to work.