



## OFFICE OF THE MERCER COUNTY PROSECUTOR

**ANGELO J. ONOFRI**

*Acting Prosecutor*

**VELDON HARRIS**

*Chief of County Detectives*

240 West State Street, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor

P.O. Box 8068

Trenton, New Jersey 08650-0068

Phone: (609) 989-6350

Fax: (609) 989-0161

[mercercountyprosecutor.com](http://mercercountyprosecutor.com)

**DORIS M. GALUCHIE**

*First Assistant Prosecutor*

**ROBERT DISPOTO**

*Deputy Chief of County Detectives*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 7, 2016

**CONTACT:** Casey A. DeBlasio

(609) 989-6379

### **Prosecutor Announces Investigative Staff Promotions**

**TRENTON** -- Acting Mercer County Prosecutor Angelo J. Onofri recently announced the promotion of eight members of his investigative staff.

"Every day, the demands on law enforcement across the country are escalating," Onofri said. "I am proud to promote these extremely qualified, dedicated investigators. They offer a wealth of experience, professionalism, and understanding of the office and the criminal justice system. I look forward to continuing our work together to better protect and serve Mercer County."

Captain Veldon Harris was promoted to chief of county detectives, becoming the first African-American chief in Mercer County history. Harris joined the prosecutor's office in 1992, shortly after graduating from Trenton State College. In his first five years with the office, he was assigned to the Special Investigations Unit, where he amassed several hundred undercover buys.

From 1997 to 2003, while serving in the Homicide Unit, Harris was instrumental in solving the 20-year-old murder case of Norma Williams. He was also the lead detective on the only homicide on death row in the history of the New Jersey State Prison, *State v. Ambrose Harris*.

Harris rose through the ranks, directing Grand Jury, Trial, Homicide, and Major Crimes. As captain, he supervised the Grand Jury, Trial, Juvenile, Internal Affairs and Identification units.

Captain Robert Dispoto was promoted to deputy chief. Dispoto joined the prosecutor's office in 1987 after graduating from Trenton State College with a bachelor's degree in

criminal justice. During his tenure, he has served in the Trial, Homicide, and Special Investigations units. He has supervised all of the Major Crime units in the office, including Homicide, Special Victims, and Counter Terrorism. From 2001 through 2004, Dispoto was assigned to the FBI PENTTBOM/Amerithrax investigation.

Also promoted were:

- Lieutenants David McGuinnes and Mike Novembre to captain.
- Sergeants James Francis and Tracey McKeown to lieutenant.
- Detectives Natischa Clark and Eric Hastings to sergeant.

The promotions come after the retirement of Chief William Straniero on May 31, 2016, and the establishment of the new deputy chief position.

“In his six years presiding over the investigative staff of this office, Bill’s expertise and leadership helped guide Mercer County into the area of intelligence-led policing,” Onofri said. “He has left a lasting mark on law enforcement, not just in this county, but across the state. We wish him well in his future endeavors.”

**###**



*New Mercer County Chief of Detectives Veldon Harris (second from right) is joined by his sons Donavon and Kendall, and his wife Tracey, as Acting Prosecutor Angelo J. Onofri (far right) administers his oath of office.*