

Susan E. Manheimer



Before being named in 2000 as Chief of the 155-officer San Mateo, California, Police Department, Susan Manheimer served 16 years with the nearby San Francisco Police Department, where she focused on gang and violent-crime suppression, headed the juvenile division, and served in her last assignment as captain of the 100-member, hand-picked Tenderloin Task Force. In the Tenderloin, one of San Francisco's toughest and most notorious neighborhoods, Manheimer was noted for her problem-solving and communication skills. A fellow officer in San Francisco was struck at her "amazing people skills—simply going up to Tenderloin's assortment of drug dealers, prostitutes and other residents and talking to them." She told an interviewer some years later that "her proudest accomplishment was making the Tenderloin's streets safe enough for children to have a community Halloween celebration."

Having previously worked for two years as a producer and police beat reporter at KCBS Radio, where she gained an appreciation of the power and potential of the news media concerning policing, she made her unlikely turn to policing as a career in 1982 at age 27, after she was the victim of an attempted robbery at knifepoint in the presence of her two-year-old daughter near Golden Gate Park. She worked intensely with SFPD detectives to identify the assailant, who turned out to be wanted as a rapist-slasher, a traumatic experience which drove her to seek the confidence to defend her family and her community, and which prompted the detectives to encourage her to apply for a job with their police department. Susan Manheimer's career choice shocked her nonetheless supportive mother and thrilled her father, who had served as a member of the New York City Council from the Bronx during Mayor Robert F. Wagner, Jr.'s administration during the 1950s and 1960s. As a councilman, her father was involved in many police issues, including strengthening the NYPD's then-nascent Civilian Complaint Review Board, and in the years that followed he shared with his daughter strong views about the strengths and weaknesses of civilian oversight panels for police agencies around the nation. If Susan Manheimer had the choice, the famous *New Yorker* magazine cover depicting a New Yorker's map of the world would have shown the Bronx, not Manhattan, as the center of the known world.

Since being appointed Chief in San Mateo, Manheimer has continued her commitment to neighborhood-focused, "new-millennium" policing and has led a variety of City and regional initiatives, such as the innovative and highly successful Homeless Outreach Team (HOT) and the Adopt-a-School program. She's also led the way in forming creative partnerships with the community and allied agencies, including the Tongan Interfaith Council for Central San Mateo County, the Juvenile Hall Assessment and Diversion Center, and the countywide Gang Task Force, which she helped to found. Chief Manheimer serves on many countywide initiatives, including the Juvenile Justice Advisory Group, the Domestic Violence Council, and Peninsula Partnerships. The reason she promotes partnerships with non-criminal justice agencies is that "public health, substance-abuse counselors, group homes for the elderly and youth, and other resources... are best equipped to deal with the myriad problems for which police are often the first ones called." Chief Manheimer currently serves as President of the California Police Chiefs' Association, the first woman to do so, where she reminds collaborators and adversaries she is only one click of the "send button" away from more than 300 police chiefs. She is also a

Governor's appointee to the State Advisory Group for Juvenile Justice, Delinquency and Crime Prevention and serves on the Board of Fight Crime Invest in Kids California, the Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center, and the University of San Francisco Law Enforcement Leadership Institute. Among numerous honors, Manheimer was inducted into the San Mateo County Women's Hall of Fame and was just named one of St. Mary's College's "40 Fascinating Women."

While working for the San Francisco Police Department, she received her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Business Management from Saint Mary's College in the Bay area and a Master's Degree in Educational Leadership from San Diego State University. She was an adjunct faculty member at St. Mary's College, teaching public policy in their masters in Public Sector Leadership program. Chief Manheimer resides in San Mateo County with her husband, Michael, and adult children Sarah and Jesse. She is active in the Police Activities League (PAL), the Military Mom's Association, and San Mateo Rotary, and enjoys skiing, hiking, rowing, and service to her community.