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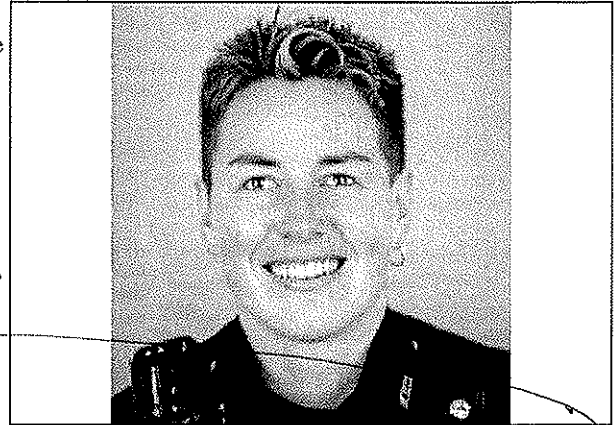
## Veteran cop, on paid leave for 14 months, under investigation for misconduct

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The Madison Police Department is investigating allegations of misconduct by a veteran officer who had been assigned to the Dane County Narcotics and Gang Task Force, according to the city attorney's office.

The specific allegations against Officer Denise Markham, 45, a 21-year veteran of the department who had been a K-9 handler with the Narcotics and Gang Task Force, have not been made public.

Police Chief Noble Wray put Markham on paid leave in June 2009, according to Professional Standards and Internal Affairs Lt. Linda Kosovac. But Kosovac and Wray have refused to say why Markham was placed on leave or whether she was the subject of an internal investigation.



In a letter Wednesday denying a State Journal request for information under the state open records law, Assistant City Attorney Roger Allen said the Police Department "is currently conducting an investigation into complex allegations of non-criminal misconduct" and has placed Markham on paid leave during the course of the investigation.

Allen said the investigation should be completed within 60 days.

In denying the State Journal's records request, Allen said the release of such records could interfere with the investigation. He also wrote "some cooperating witnesses may qualify as informants and thus be entitled to have their identities protected."

Wray, who is on vacation, and Kosovac did not return calls Thursday.

According to the Madison comptroller's office, Markham has also used vacation and sick time for a portion of the period she has been off work.

City records show Markham earned \$89,160 last year, including salary, overtime and other compensation. Her current annual salary is \$65,988.

Markham declined to comment on the investigation Thursday. She continues to serve as a constable for the town of Rutland, a position she has held for several years.

Andrew Schauer, an attorney with the Wisconsin Professional Police Association who is representing Markham, said, "It would be improper for us to comment while the investigation is ongoing."

Schauer would not discuss the scope of the investigation, but said the length of the investigation shows the Police Department is looking into the matter thoroughly.

"We believe the public will have full confidence in Officer Markham's ability to return to the force," Schauer said.

Officer Dan Frei, president of the Madison Professional Police Officers Association, said he would not comment on any investigation involving an officer.

"Anyone can make an allegation against an officer," Frei said, adding that the majority of times it turns out to be untrue.

"I've known Denise for the entire 17 years I've been in law enforcement," he said. "I've never met a harder-working, more dedicated cop who's given everything she has to this community."

Frei described Markham as "dogged" in her efforts to get criminals off the streets.

Officer Lester Moore, who worked with Markham on the task force, called her "one of the smartest, hardest working people I've ever worked with."

He said Markham, whose nickname is "Mad Dog," "really went after stuff" and "helped a lot of detectives" with their cases.