

Sergeant retired before inquiry was over

He showed inappropriate photos to female detective

By Michael Ferraresi

THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

When Phoenix Sgt. Ron Snodgrass showed a photo of his topless wife to a female detective, the longtime officer and police labor leader was two years from retirement.

Snodgrass retired in December in the midst of the second of two internal

police investigations into accusations that he kept sexually oriented photos on his city computer, used sexually charged language in city e-mails and tracked his accuser through a police computer system without authorization, according to investigative records obtained this week by *The Arizona Republic*.

The 39-year-old detective who complained about Snodgrass said the sergeant made her uncomfortable by flaunting nude photos of his then-wife,

a fellow Phoenix sergeant who retired last year after the couple's divorce.

An initial 2007 investigation of Snodgrass sustained allegations that the sergeant kept inappropriate photos on his computer, including a graphic image of female genitalia, which he said he intended to use as a joke in a PowerPoint presentation.

Efforts to contact Snodgrass through police-association representatives

See **SNODGRASS** Page B3

Police sergeant retired amid investigation related to sex photos

SNODGRASS

Continued from B1

were unsuccessful.

Investigators wrote that "when asked about the appropriateness of such conduct with a subordinate, Sgt. Snodgrass said that in hindsight, it was probably not a good idea."

"If I screwed up, I need to learn," Snodgrass told investigators, according to the report. He later shrugged off the accusations to investigators.

"That's Little Ronnie," he said, using the nickname by which he is known in Valley law-

enforcement circles.

Officials recommended a one-day suspension, though Phoenix Police Chief Jack Harris reduced the punishment to a written reprimand — a decision that prompted city staff to warn the chief of creating "an appearance of favoritism" for a veteran member of the department with ties to pension negotiations.

The chief told *The Republic* this month that reducing Snodgrass' punishment was no different than dozens of other discipline decisions he overturned in the past couple of years.

A second Snodgrass investiga-

tion concluded in December, though Snodgrass retired before the findings could be analyzed by a discipline review board.

The 2008 investigation stemmed from additional allegations made by former Detective Linnea Knowles, who retired from the department and became a reserve officer after the internal fallout from the Snodgrass accusations created too much stress at work.

In June, she wrote to Harris to explain the inappropriate photographs he kept "in full view of (Professional Standards Bureau) management." She also told the

chief she was "fearful and intimidated" by the idea of complaining about Snodgrass.

"My whole shock was you expect it's the Police Department, you expect them to do the right thing," Knowles said. "Getting a written reprimand for what he did, he got a free pass."

Knowles said the nude photo of Snodgrass' wife, former Sgt. Christel Boeck, came up during a conversation about breast-augmentation surgery. Snodgrass admitted to internal investigators that he revealed a topless photo of his wife during lunch at a Phoenix restaurant,

though Knowles said his account was inaccurate.

"He showed it to me in (the Professional Standards Bureau) parking garage when we were alone," Knowles said, adding that she felt uncomfortable viewing the photo in a dark car with her supervisor.

Besides working 37 years with Phoenix police, Snodgrass worked briefly as president of the Phoenix Law Enforcement Association before resigning in 2000. He transitioned to the Phoenix Police Sergeants and Lieutenants Association, where he is listed as a board member.