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Veteran law enforcement officer, criminal justice trainer, and chief deputy is prepared to lead in these difficult times.

MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers today appointed Dr. Denita Ball as Milwaukee County Sheriff. The appointment fills a vacancy created by Sheriff Earnell R. Lucas' resignation, effective Oct. 23, 2022. Ball will complete the remainder of the term, which ends Jan. 2, 2023.

"With over 35 years of service in law enforcement and criminal justice education, Dr. Denita Ball is a dedicated public servant who is committed to ensuring the safety of her community," said Gov. Evers. "I am confident she will serve Milwaukee County well as the next sheriff."

Ball began her law enforcement career with the Milwaukee Police Department, spending over 25 years rising through the ranks to deputy inspector. In 2011, she retired from the police force to pursue opportunities in higher education, where she helped shape the next generation of police officers and criminal justice professionals. This included her work as an instructor, subject area coordinator, and finally, the criminal justice program director at Bryant & Stratton

College and an adjunct faculty instructor at Cardinal Stritch University. Additionally, Ball continued her studies during this time, earning a Ph.D. from Cardinal Stritch University in 2018. After his election, Sheriff Lucas asked Ball to join the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office as chief deputy. She has served in that role ever since, where she is responsible for the agency's daily operations.

"Congratulations to Dr. Denita Ball on her appointment as Milwaukee County Sheriff," said Milwaukee County Executive David Crowley. "There is no one more prepared to lead in these difficult times. We will continue our strong partnership with the Sheriff's Office to improve our quality of life and ensure our streets are safe for all."

Upon Sheriff Lucas' resignation, Ball assumed the role of acting sheriff, and she is currently running unopposed for a full four-year term beginning January 2023. She is also the first woman to serve as sheriff of Milwaukee County.

"I offer my deep appreciation to the governor and Sheriff Lucas for being tremendous partners and trusting me to lead," said Ball. "I promise the people of Milwaukee County we will make it safer. Additionally, my promise to everyone in the Sheriff's Office is we will continue to make our agency a better place to work. I am only here due to the grace of God and the hard work of those who came before me. Together we will make Milwaukee County safer and stronger."