

"Family comes first:" Mark Kallal announces plans to retire as Jersey County Sheriff

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JERSEYVILLE - Mark Kallal has given his heart and soul to law enforcement since 1995, but because of family reasons he has made a decision to resign his post as Jersey County Sheriff.

Kallal's official date for retirement is Aug. 4 and it is before the end of his sheriff's term in 2018.

The Jersey County Sheriff said his wife, Patty, has a hospital position in Texas and he wants to be back with her every day and raise their 9-year-old son together.

"We have been apart for over two years since she took the job," he said. "I was hopeful things might work out differently, but they haven't. This is such a difficult decision for me. I have had a very hard time with it; I am very emotional about it. My family needs me and it is time I put them first."

Kallal has been with the **Jersey County Sheriff's Department** since 1998 and has been sheriff since 2006. He is a 1980 Jersey Community High School graduate. He began his career as a corrections officer in Greene County in 1995, then served in a similar capacity in Roodhouse before coming to Jersey Sheriff's Department in 1998 in that role. He was elected sheriff in 2006, 2010 and 2014.

Kallal will likely go back into some work capacity when he moves out of state, but he was uncertain exactly what he would do. He has done grounds keeping work and said he also wouldn't mind being in a support role in law enforcement without going back on the road.

Kallal said he always tried to work professionally with his own department and the media. He realized it is important to give credit to all the law enforcement groups on cases and provide the proper information to the media. He said the support system with Jerseyville Police, Madison County Sheriff's Department, Illinois State Police, Grafton, Greene and Calhoun sheriff's departments and all the neighboring departments has been amazing.

Recently in a case where he needed help, he said he had a wide group of investigators at his doorstep within eight hours, which allowed them to quickly crack the case and he said he couldn't thank the other law enforcement groups enough for their help.

The Jersey County Sheriff said he loves his officers and their contributions they have all made to his department's success.

"It has been a growing experience for all of us," he said. "I think to a certain extent we grew together through my time. Everybody has their own specialty. It has been a very rewarding profession with ups and downs and I have enjoyed it and had a passion for it all those years. I tried to treat it in a manner that would be rewarding for all of us."

The bottom line Kallal said is that he loves his family and wants to be with them every day.

"My 9-year-old son needs his dad," he said. "That weighed heavily on me. He has been home with me during the summer. I also miss my daughter. She is going to get married in the next year or so and has met a really good man. I missed a lot more with her than I did with my son. When I think about all that, I am not getting any younger."