

# SECURITY SHAKE-UP

## OEMC | Fire chief takes over from top cop as chief emergency officer

BY FRAN SPIELMAN

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Mayor Daley shuffled the deck Thursday to bring new leadership to an Office of Emergency Management and Communications racked by allegations of hiring and contracting irregularities.

Fire Commissioner Ray Orozco will make the move to OEMC, with a raise to \$189,360 a year but without retiring from the Fire Department. The City Hall version of musical chairs paves the way for Orozco's top deputy, John Brooks, to become Chicago's second black fire commissioner.

"John's a good man. He's risen up through the ranks. He's always been straightforward and honest. Ray was good for us, too," said Tom Ryan, president of the Chicago Fire Fighters Union Local 2.

Daley made it clear that Orozco alone would be the quarterback at disaster scenes. That's an apparent comedown for Police Supt. Jody Weis, who was hired at an unprecedented, \$310,000-a-year salary to wear two hats: superintendent and chief emergency officer.

When Cortez Trotter held the job of chief emergency officer, he called the shots at disaster scenes.

"OEMC has always been in charge of disaster scenes," the mayor said, arguing that the embattled Weis would focus on "terrorism and other issues."

"Any time there's a major incident, Ray is in charge. The Fire Department is in charge. He's done a tremendous job in the Fire Department, so I really wanted to move him over to OEMC because first responders are usually the Fire Department."

After nearly three decades on the job, Orozco, 49, said, "I know



**John Brooks, now the top deputy, becomes Chicago's second black fire commissioner.** | RICH HEIN~SUN-TIMES

what works at emergency incidents. I also know what work we need to do to keep our emergency preparedness at the highest level."

Brooks, 50, takes over a Chicago Fire Department with a history of discrimination and racial high jinks that has avoided embarrassments in recent years.

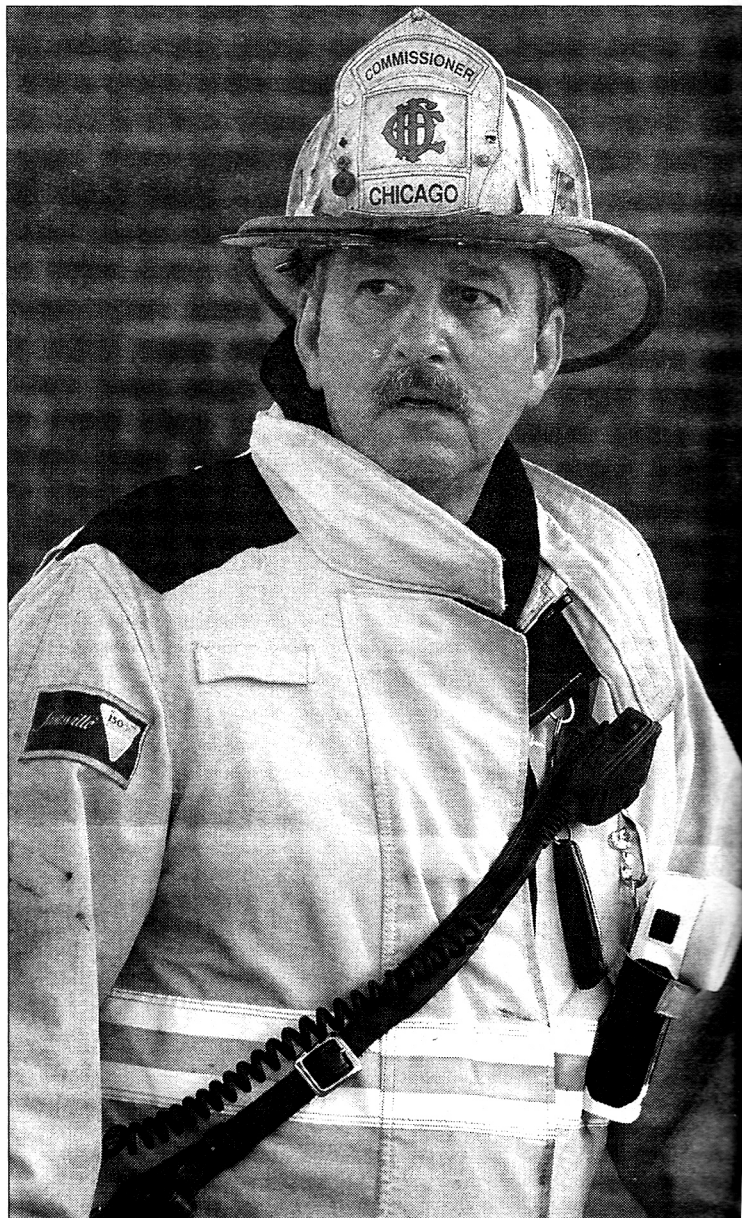
"We haven't had incidents. [But] we don't say, 'That's over with' and stop the training. We do diversity training, tolerance training. . . . We have a zero tolerance policy," said Brooks, who will be paid \$185,652 a year.

Orozco takes over OEMC at a tumultuous time.

The 911 center's director of police communications was fired earlier this year for allegedly falsifying performance evaluations to give insiders a leg up over outside applicants for supervisory jobs.

The contracting portion of Inspector General David Hoffman's investigation centers around payments to Motorola beyond the scope of the company's contracts.

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**Ray Orozco will head the Office of Emergency Management and Communications without retiring from the Fire Department.** | SCOTT STEWART~SUN-TIMES