The Citizens Police Data Project

A major source of information about Chicago Police Officers who have been named in misconduct complaints or disciplined is the “Citizens Data Project” sponsored by an organization called, “The Invisible Institute.” The data base (which you can find at cpdp.com) consists of over 240,000 allegations of misconduct by more than 22,000 Chicago police officers. The Invisible Institute reports that the data is complete for the period 2000 to 2016, substantially complete back to 1988, and includes some data going back to the late 1960s. (See the article titled “Invisible Institute Relaunches the Citizens Police Data Project,” published in “The Intercept,” an on-line news publication, by Jamie Kalven, on August, 16, 2018.)

The Invisible Institute obtained these records through litigation and Freedom of Information Act requests. The records include the names of the officers.

The data base highlights “repeaters,” officers against whom multiple complaints have been filed. For instance, it identifies an officer who was named in 136 allegations of misconduct, four of which were sustained. If you click on that officer's name, you learn that he served from 1976 through 2012, and that he is a white male born in 1951. Complaints against him are listed in reverse chronological order. The subject matter of each complaint is identified. One record, for instance, shows that he was accused of false arrest in 2011, but that no action was taken because the complainant did not sign an affidavit.

The data base also gives aggregate information on the categories of complaints, and the race, sex and age of the complainants and of the accused officers. It also reports that 9% of the complaint allegations were found “sustained” while 91% were found “unsustained.”

The data base shows that investigators sustained only 1.5 percent of the 8,700 excessive force complaints from January 2007 to June 2016. Nearly 74 percent of these complaints were filed by African-Americans. The 22 percent of officers who have 10 or more complaints account for 64 percent of all complaints during that period. (See Kalven article, cited above.)

The data base also shows that 29 percent of shootings by Chicago police between January 2004 and March 2016 were committed by only 130 officers. (See the August 16, 2018 article in “The Intercept” by Rob Arthur titled “130 Chicago Officers Account for 29 percent of Police Shootings.”)

June, 2020