

## Veteran detective reflects on 'great ride'

**He worked many big cases in 35 years with the sheriff's office.**

By JOSH POLTILOVE

TAMPA - In 1998, investigator **John Marsicano** and a sergeant under his command rushed from Hillsborough County to Texas to interview a teenage girl they thought had something to do with her mother's disappearance.

Valessa Robinson, then 15, ran off with two people, but deputies nabbed them. When **Marsicano** and Sgt. Jim Iverson met with Robinson late at night at a juvenile detention facility, she initially denied involvement in the disappearance of her mother, Vicki. **Marsicano** and Iverson kept asking questions.

Investigators learned Valessa Robinson held her mother down while Adam Davis slashed at the woman's throat with a bleach-filled syringe. Vicki Robinson's body was dumped in a trash can about six miles from her Carrollwood home.

It was a major investigation, but it certainly wasn't the only big case Marsicano worked during his 35 years with the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office. **Marsicano**, who retires Friday, also helped work cases against firebomber John William "Billy" Ferry Jr. and serial killer Bobby Joe Long.

"It's been a long ride," he said. "It's been a great ride."

### 'A real gentleman'

**Marsicano's** retirement will be a true loss for the department, Sheriff David Gee said.

**Marsicano**, a major who oversees deputies in southern Hillsborough County, has been an exceptional, appreciated investigator, Gee said.

Gee has known **Marsicano** for years, and they even spent some time paired on investigations.

"He has a reputation of being a real gentleman, really very kind," Gee said. "He's a hard guy to get riled, a very professional, very good guy."

Gee has decided on **Marsicano's** replacement - Capt. Ron Hartley, another veteran investigator. Hartley will be promoted to major, effective Aug. 10. **Marsicano** called Hartley an exceptional and well-liked investigator.

In May 2007, Gee announced **Marsicano**, an Apollo Beach resident, would become commander of District IV. **Marsicano** has been responsible for about 185 sworn personnel and 30 civilian employees.

### He's a Tampa native

Born in 1947, **Marsicano** is a Tampa native whose paternal grandfather immigrated to the area from Italy in 1898.

**Marsicano** and his four siblings grew up in Tampa, where he graduated from **Jesuit High School** in 1965. He earned an associate's degree in mortuary science from Miami-Dade Community College and then worked with his dad, a funeral director, until he was 27.

In 1974, he returned to college to study criminal justice and received his bachelor's degree from the University of South Florida in 1978. As a married student with two young children, he worked his way through school as a corrections officer, a position now called detention deputy, at the Hillsborough County Jail.

In July 1979, **Marsicano** graduated from the Tampa Police Academy and went to work as a patrol deputy for the sheriff's office. In the almost three decades since, his positions have included street deputy; homicide detective and sergeant; patrol sergeant; and training sergeant, instructor and lieutenant. He was promoted to captain in 2002.

**Marsicano** is a father of four. His wife, **Anne-Mari Marsicano**, works for the sheriff's office as human services supervisor for the inmate programs bureau at Falkenburg Road Jail.

He said he is going to enjoy retirement and spend more time with family. He said he'll hunt, fish and travel. He just returned from a trip to Majorca, Spain. He's going to Cancun in October, and he plans to travel to Europe next year.

He's looking forward to a less stressful life, but he said he enjoyed his time with the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office. He considers the agency perhaps the most progressive sheriff's office he was exposed to during his 35 years in law enforcement.

"It has just been a very, very rewarding, exciting career for me," he said.