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A Troubled Department

CHIEF KENNETH JOHNSTON 1981 – 1984



Researched and Written by Jack Templeman

The year of 1981 saw several officers facing serious criminal charges when it was discovered that many break and enters were being done by a couple of police officers. These break-ins also led to a brutal murder being committed by two police officers, Jerry STOLAR and Barry NEILSON. The murdered man was a brother-in-law to one of the officers and they feared that he was about to turn them in. They waylaid him en route to work and killed him then hid the body in a grave out in the country. This would have remained an unsolved missing person report except for several lucky breaks which lead to the discovery of the murder scene and later to the discovery of the body.

This black period in the department history did have a good ending when it was able to show that it was capable of investigating major crimes without fear or favour even when it involved police officers and due to the thorough work of many officers both Stolar and Neilson were convicted and sent to prison. One unusual part of the case involved identification through bloody bare footprints left at the scene.

Chief Johnston retired in 1984 and was followed by Superintendent **Herb B. STEPHEN** as the next Chief of Police.



Community Commitment

Researched and Written by Jack Templeman

CHIEF DALE HENRY, 1991 - 1996

Chief Henry had retired as Commanding Officer of the "D" Division in Manitoba and had a reputation as a respected officer among the minorities in the province. This was the first time in history that a Chief of Police had not been chosen from the ranks.

Chief Henry was determined to change and improve the image of the department and spent a lot of time out on the street meeting officers and citizens alike. During his time as Chief, the department saw many changes. One of the first which had been underway when he took over was the accreditation of the department making it the second department in Canada to receive this standard.

Two other changes during this period were the adoption of the motto "Community Commitment" and probably the most noticeable was the change in name to the WINNIPEG POLICE SERVICE after 120 years of being the Winnipeg Police Force. This name change led to the development of a new department badge on April 26th, 1995. A dress tunic for court and special occasions also was designed for the department.

Chief Henry served several months beyond his initial contract while the city looked for a replacement but retired in early 1996. Deputy Chief **Terry McGREGOR** took over temporarily until the new appointment was made.

Aboriginal Justice Inquiry

CHIEF HERB STEPHENS, 1984 - 1991



Researched and Written by Jack Templeman

Once again the department was plunged into a black period in 1988 when J.J. Harper, an aboriginal man died after a confrontation with an officer while being spot-checked by the officer who was searching for a male who fled from a stolen car. The officer reported that Mr. Harper pulled his revolver from his holster and during the struggle to regain control of the weapon it had discharged striking Mr. Harper in the chest resulting in his death.

The police investigation ruled that this had been an accidental death caused by the officer in the execution of his duty. There was a public outcry and a demand for an inquiry by an outside agency. It was eventually established under Judge Murray Sinclair and became known as the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry. The purpose was to look into the deaths of Mr. Harper and Helen Betty Osborne who had been killed some years before at The Pas.

The results of the Inquiry concluded that Constable **Robert CROSS** had used excessive force in the fatal confrontation. The incident and inquiry had a devastating effect on the department as Constable Cross suffered such mental stress that he never returned to duty and a respected senior officer, Inspector **Ken DOWSON**, took his own life the night before he was to testify.

The lengthy report of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry did eventually bring about a number of changes in attitude and procedure for the police.

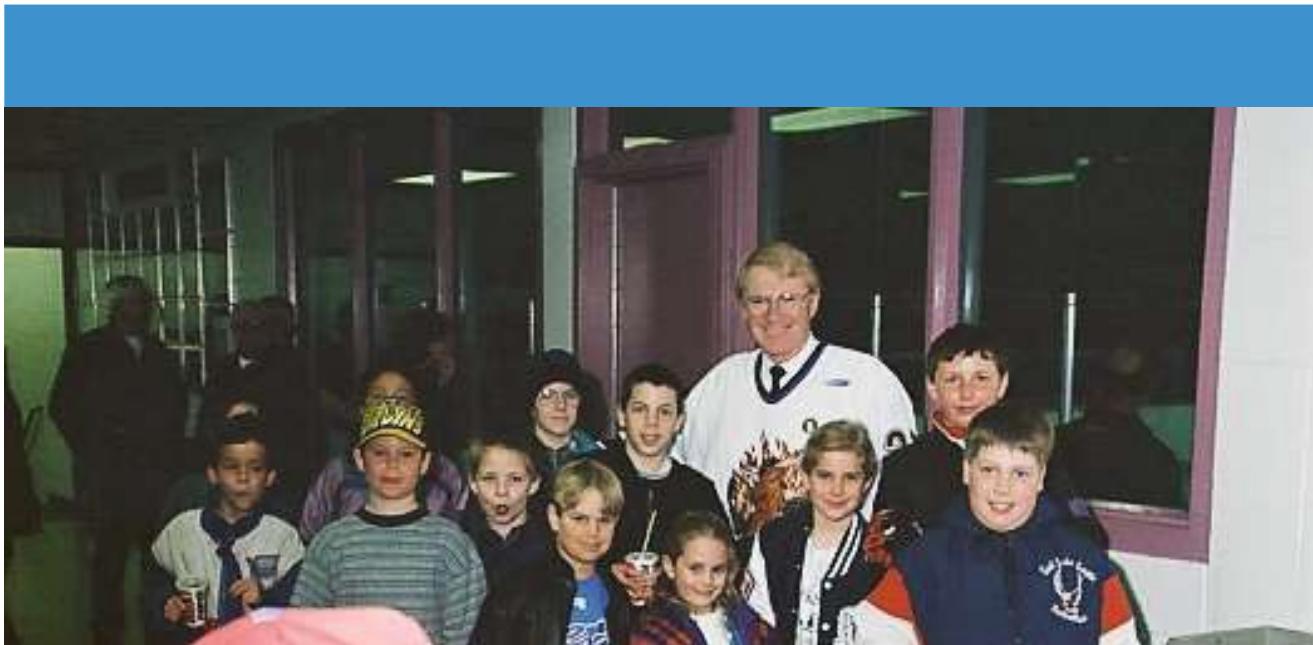
In December 1989 the department implemented changes in their appearance with the issue of dark blue shirts, pants with wide red stripes and red hatbands. Police vehicles also changed from the familiar

'black & whites' to white cars with blue doors and then to all-white cars with door crests and other markings.

Chief Herb STEPHEN resigned in 1991 and the department went through a long period without a Chief. Deputy Chiefs **Lawrence KLIPPENSTEIN** and **Joseph GALLAGHER** both acted in a higher capacity during this time. The selection committee eventually selected a retired RCMP officer, **J.B. Dale HENRY**.

Community Commitment

CHIEF DAVID CASSELS, 1996 - 1998



Researched and Written by Jack Templeman

On May 2nd, 1996, **David A. CASSELS** became the fourteenth man to serve as Chief of the Winnipeg Police Department of the City of Winnipeg. Chief Cassels was also chosen from outside the ranks but had served with a municipal force retiring from the Edmonton Police Service as a Deputy Chief.

While he headed the department, Cassels was an advocate for community-based policing, expanding area foot patrols and establishing more police service centres.

In July 1998, Chief Cassels decided to terminate his contract and leave the Police Department in October 1998.

On October 8, 1998, City Council selected Deputy Chief Jack Ewatski as the new Chief of Police.