

Speaking Notes for  
Mr. Doug Moen  
Deputy Minister and Deputy Attorney General,  
Saskatchewan Justice  
Police College Graduation Ceremony

Friday May 4, 2007  
1:30 p.m.  
Connexus Arts Centre  
Jacqui Shumiatcher Lobby

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Graduates, family members and friends. It is an honour for me to be here with you today as you celebrate the achievements you've made over the past 18 weeks.

You are all to be commended for you hard work and commitment.

I want to congratulate all the award winners – an impressive number of award winners.

Today marks a special day for the College. Graduating with you is Gerald Halcrow a member of File Hills Police Service.

This will soon be the first fully self-administered First Nations police service in the province. Congratulations Constable Halcrow!

Graduations are special events because they signify both the successful achievement of a goal and the beginning of a new stage of life.

I know that all of your friends and family here today are very proud of you, and the work you have done to get here.

They should be – police college training can be both physically and mentally challenging. Your presence here today shows you've excelled in both aspects.

Like your training at the college, the road ahead of you won't always be easy. It will at times be very challenging, but I also believe it will be rewarding, and I hope interesting.

Most or all of you will soon begin working as peace officers in communities across the province. This is a very important and honorable profession.

Police play a vital role in our democratic society. They work, as will you, to ensure that our rights as individuals are protected.

Because police play such an important role, they are highly respected in our society. This respect provides a great deal of power, but also demands a great deal of responsibility.

In your new role, you will work to prevent crime and keep individuals and communities safe, but one of your most critical roles will be to assist in strengthening communities.

Home Secretary Sir Robert Peel, who founded the first ever police service in London, England almost 180 years ago once said:

“The police are the public and the public are the police; the police being only members of the public who are paid to give full attention to duties which are incumbent on every citizen in the interests of community welfare and existence.”

As Peel has suggested, we need to remember that all members of a society have a role in keeping it peaceful. You as police officers will work on behalf of the citizen, but you can't do it on your own.

We know that keeping peace and crime prevention are things that can only be done successfully if communities and individuals trust and respect their police.

As peace officers, you will be role models in your communities, which means you will have the power to affect opinions, and the responsibility of ensuring that your attitudes and actions help bring together, rather than divide communities and individuals.

Your behaviour will have an impact on how people view their own actions in relation to their communities, and the justice system.

Because of this through your attitudes and actions you will need to exhibit honesty, compassion, sensitivity, diligence, patience and tolerance.

As well you will require a real understanding of the people you serve. To be the best officer that you can be, you need to understand the community in which you work, and understand how issues such as poverty affect its residents.

Martin Luther King once said:

“All life is interrelated. The agony of the poor impoverishes the rich; the betterment of the poor enriches the rich. We are inevitably our brother's keeper because we are our brother's brother. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly.”

Saskatchewan is a province with a diverse population.

It is home to people of German, English, and Scottish, Irish, Ukrainian, French, Norwegian, Polish, First Nations and Métis ancestry.

Some individuals in the province are wealthy, others live in poverty.

This range of backgrounds, cultures and economic levels can lead to challenges within communities, and for police.

As police officers you will deal with many different issues and many different people.

You will see people at their best, and their worst.

You'll see people who are mildly delinquent and others who are viciously destructive. All individuals are impacted by their surroundings.

Many who commit crimes have had troubled lives. You need to understand these issues so that you can help individuals and communities to find the best solutions to problems.

While diversity can be challenging, it can also bring great benefits.

Renowned cultural anthropologist Margaret Mead once said:

“If we are to achieve a richer culture, rich in contrasting values, we must recognize the whole gamut of human potentialities, and so weave a less arbitrary social fabric, one in which each diverse human gift will find a fitting place.”

Effective policing requires recognition of the wisdom and strengths that exist within communities and community organizations, and an ability to connect with these organizations to strengthen individuals and communities.

It's also really important to remember that you won't always have all the answers.

Sometimes communities will have a better understanding of how to address their issues, than you may have. Your role will also be to listen, learn and build on that knowledge.

Strong community connections and joint community/police projects can have a significant impact on crime prevention and reduction.

We've seen some fairly dramatic results using this type of crime approach in both Regina and Saskatoon

A number of years ago Regina had a fairly serious auto theft problem. At the time many of the agencies in the city were struggling to deal with various aspects of the problem. Nothing was working really well.

We decided we needed to look at a new approach.

Saskatchewan Justice, the Regina Police Service and quite a number of other agencies in the city began working together to address the issue.

Together, we developed strategies to target those involved in the thefts, and to address the underlying reasons for the continued behaviour.

As a result of this program we have seen the rate of car thefts drop by 49% in the city since 2002. This means in 2006 there were 1900 fewer vehicles stolen than there were prior to the implementation of the strategy!

We had a similar problem in with break and enters in Saskatoon. In 2004 we worked with community groups in that city to develop a Crime Reduction Strategy along the lines of Regina's Auto Theft Strategy.

Again the results were amazing. Because of this program, we have seen the rate of break and enters drop by 41% in Saskatoon over the program's first two years of operation. And the numbers are continuing to decrease!

To do the best you can for your communities you need to also take care of yourselves. Your job will depend on your physical and mental health.

Value your friends and family. Those relationships will be critical in getting you through difficult times you may face while on the job.

I want to commend all the friends and family members here today. Your support of these young men and women during their training has been, and will continue to be, very important to their success.

And finally, I want to congratulate all of you graduates.

You have chosen a very important and honorable profession.

Today you become police officers.

While this may seem like the end of your education, it is just the beginning.

As you head off to start your new role as a peace officer, I encourage you to learn as much as you can about the community in which you serve; learn about the issue affecting the residents; learn about people; learn about their history and their dreams for the future.

Former journalist Sydney Harris once said” The whole purpose of education is to turn mirrors into windows.”

I invite you every day to look for mirrors that you can turn into windows. You, your province, your communities and your fellow residents will be better off because of the knowledge you gain and share.

Thank-you.