

Respected Fredericton cop retires after 33 years

It will be a little odd and perhaps a bit crazy, but Ralph Currie says those are feelings he will get used to as he prepares to officially hang up his badge Friday. Ralph Currie is retiring Friday after more than 33 years as a police officer.

The popular constable with the Fredericton Police Force is saying goodbye to law enforcement after more than 33 years of chasing criminals. "It's going to feel weird," Currie said in anticipating a life away from a uniform. "Some people call it retirement; some people call it freedom. I am looking at the freedom - freedom to do things with the family." During his time on the force, Currie has worked in the patrol response division, the joint forces drug section, community policing, the family services section and with the training and media section. He has been the department's primary media spokesman for the last three years.

"It's been a great career," Currie said. "I really can't say that I have any regrets." Aside from a keen nose for police work, perhaps the biggest thing that will be missed about Currie once he leaves the force is his sense of humour. His ability to burst out laughing and use that as a tool to ease tension, has marked his time on the force. Currie said his humour has served him well over the years and has helped him survive having to deal with traumatic incidents.

"It's a way to carry on," Currie said. "A lot of things we deal with are very traumatic and heart-wrenching. Laughter is a known healer." Sgt. Tim Durling, who shares an office with Currie on the department's second floor, said he will miss his co-worker's distinctive chortle.

"Ralph comes to work each day with a great attitude and an infectious sense of humour," Durling said. "Ralph is certainly inspiring and sets an example for others to follow. He is a valued member of this police force and is well respected by his co-workers." Durling said Currie continually demonstrates and provides leadership while expressing an understanding of the value of community partnership.

"Ralph takes pride in his position as a police officer and as a member of the Fredericton Police Force. He continually demonstrates exceptional skill in preparing, presenting and responding to media inquiries," said Durling.

"Ralph's knowledge and experience and personal attributes have contributed to a very positive professional relationship with media personnel in his position as media liaison officer." Born in Antigonish, N.S., Currie set his sights early on a policing career with hopes of finding a job in Dartmouth after graduation from the academy in 1977. With nothing available there, he ended up in Fredericton - and has been here since - marrying a local woman and having two children, who are now in their 20s.

"I like the community, obviously," he said with his trademark laugh.

Currie said his final assignment with the force - dealing with the media - has been a good one. "I felt I had a good liaison with most of the media I have dealt with over the last three years. If there was something I didn't like, I made sure I told them."

His decades of experience in policing has made his daily job of dealing with media easier than it would have been for a lot of people, he said.

But has police work changed him as a person? Not really, Currie said, other than his days of a 14-½ neck and a 28-inch waist are nothing but a distant memory. "That's been one of the substantial changes over the years."

Currie said he has no particular plans after policing. He said he has some projects at home to tackle, and wants to do some camping, travelling and boating. "I will keep my eyes open (for other chances). I want the opportunity to do other things and not look in my senior years and say all I did was policing."