

Blatchford, Ralph

Friends say goodbye to Ralph Blatchford

By JACK EVANS
Staff Reporter

The true monument to a person is not a tombstone nor a statue, but those things which live -- that people can see around them.

Rev. James Hutchison, the officiating clergyman for the funeral for Belleville's former deputy police chief Ralph Blatchford Thursday, used that as a theme for his sermon, based on an Old Testament verse: "What mean ye by these stones."

The love and respect Blatchford had earned from his family, friends and police associates, the congregation of St. Columba Presbyterian Church, was evident.

"This very church and its congregation is itself a monument to Ralph Blatchford," Hutchison said.

The church was filled to capacity of 250, plus half the basement as an overflow area, for the popular citizen who died Monday at the age of 61. They included civic officials, elected representatives, fellow church members, family and many members of the Kiwanis Club of Belleville, of which he had been a member.

The eulogy was delivered by Police Chief Robert Regbie who described Blatchford as "a friend, a fellow peace officer, a good Christian and a family man."

He said other officers could "take a page out of Ralph's book" on the pride he took in his uniform and his force. He also said he was a man of "intellectual, moral, and spiritual character," and a man who showed "courage and determination" in carrying out his duties despite illness.

"We can all be proud we knew him," he said.

Also taking part in the service was Canon Robert Wright of Christ Church.

A full choir from St. Columbus sang several hymns, chosen from among Blatchford's favorites.

After the coffin was brought out of the church through an honor guard of mayor and aldermen and police and civic officials, a procession of about 60 police officers from Belleville Police Department, OPP, RCMP and

other police units, lead the way with a lone drummer as the funeral cortege moved off from the church toward the cemetery.

Blatchford began his police career with his home town Stratford, Ont. police force after military service overseas in the Second World War. He came to Belleville as a sergeant in

1960, working his way through the ranks to deputy chief, from which position he retired in March of this year.

The closed, flag-draped coffin lay at the front of the church for the ceremony with Blatchford's police cap and a blue, velvet cushion bearing military medals he had won over the years.



Police officers were pallbearers

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