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New Halton Police Chief Gary Crowell, left, shares a smile with son Mark, a detective constable with the Waterloo Region Police Service, during the senior Crowell's swearing-in ceremony Monday.

Crowell sworn-in as new police chief

HOWARD MOZELL
Special to The IFP

The swearing-in of a new police chief is so full of formal pomp and ceremony it might be easy to lose sight of the person behind the badge.

At Monday's transfer of command of Halton Regional Police to Chief Gary Crowell, however, the human element was as obvious as the gold braids, bagpipes and military precision.

A case in point involved the presentation of the Chief's Badge by Crowell's son Mark, a detective constable with Waterloo Regional Police—a reciprocal gesture, since Mark received his badge from his father when he was sworn in as a police officer five years ago.

"It was very emotional," said Crowell after the ceremony concluded.

The human factor also got its due when guest speakers like Regional Chair Joyce Savoline stressed not only Crowell's track record of leadership, but also his many other qualities—from his decisiveness to political acumen—that will serve him well in his new role.

The ceremony, held in the Halton Regional Council Chambers, was attended by police officers from a spectrum of jurisdictions (OPP, RCMP, Peel), area politicians, past and present Halton Regional Police Services Board members plus Crowell's family, close friends and more.

Front and centre, of course, was recently retired Chief Ean Algar, who offered Crowell some advice, but also praised his successor as a "friend and confidant" and a man of "strong moral character."

"I know you'll continue to make the service proud," said Algar.

Savoline echoed Halton Regional Police Services Board Chair Kenneth Musgrave's sentiment that Halton will be well served by Crowell's tenure as chief, lauding his rise through the ranks as a "true leader" and saying he brings "unwavering integrity" to the job.

Crowell wasted no time thanking a long list of people close to his heart.

"I'm indeed overwhelmed by the turnout and by your presence," said Crowell, who assumed his new duties June 3.

He then characterized Halton Regional Police as the "premier police service in Canada" and explained that all officers live by the organization's motto: Progress Through Participation.

"These three words speak to the heart of how we do business," he said.

This way of conducting duties includes an emphasis on diversity and respect for everyone, Crowell continued, plus the time-honoured law enforcement concept that the public is the police and vice-versa. To maintain public trust, however, it is up to every officer to conduct themselves both on and off-duty with only the highest of standards. Breaches of good conduct will not be tolerated, he added.

Crowell commenced his policing career in 1970 with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in Nova Scotia. After joining Peel, he rose through the ranks and had been an operational superintendent when he first donned a Halton Regional Police uniform as Deputy Chief on Feb. 15, 1999. Crowell earned the Ontario Medal for Police Bravery for his part in the 1979 Mississauga train derailment. He is also a recipient of the Police Exemplary Service Medal and the Canadian Medal of Merit.

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