



STAFF PHOTO/NICK IWANYSHYN

York Regional Police Deputy Chief Bruce Herridge (right) announced he will retire after 40 years of service as a police officer in York Region and Toronto. Mr. Herridge called it quits Dec. 31.

## From hockey to policing, Herridge accomplishes goals

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Bruce Herridge achieved two popular boyhood dreams.

He played hockey at junior and university levels and became a police officer — deputy chief, no less.

York Regional Police Deputy Chief Herridge, 62, who retired after 40 years of service Dec. 31, was born in Kapuskasing, where his father worked as a regional forester.

It was during a stint with junior hockey's Kitchener Rangers that he decided to give up on his dream to be a professional hockey player.

Instead of accepting a call-up to the American Hockey League, he decided to make his parents happy and go back to school while playing for Tom Watt, who was, at the time, coaching the University of Toronto Varsity Blues.

Mr. Watt later coached the Toronto Maple Leafs.

In the next four years, Deputy

Chief Herridge not only got an education, but also a chance to play alongside future NHL coaching great Mike Keenan.

One day, he accompanied a friend, who was a police officer, to a Toronto Police Service league hockey game.

Deputy Chief Herridge was sold on policing as a career and two weeks after his 21st birthday, got the call accepting him into the Toronto force.

Almost a decade later, when he was sufficiently fed up with his drive from Newmarket to Woodbine Avenue each day, he made the jump to York Regional Police.

"There was no Hwy. 404 in 1982," he said. "Of course, from where I lived in Newmarket to my new posting in Georgina, was the same distance."

Once in a York police uniform, he made an immediate impact, spearheading a program to put the first computers into police cruisers.

"They were pretty big back then," he said with a chuckle. "A lot bigger than now."

He was so good at the administrative side of the business, the force kept him managing records and eventually co-ordinating a new radio system.

It wasn't until former chief Bob Middaugh took the helm that Deputy Chief Herridge would take charge of frontline policing in Vaughan, then one of the fastest growing communities in the province.

"It was a refreshing change for someone who had been involved in technology for so long," he said.

After former chief Armand La Barge took charge, Deputy Chief Herridge was elevated to his current rank and helped co-ordinate the hiring of 376 officers in five years, along with current Chief Eric Jolliffe.

The force had to keep pace with York's significant population growth, he said.

In 2005, he was moved to operations, the role he will vacate at the end of the year.

During his time in the post, he successfully spearheaded several major investigations, including the Super Bowl Bust — involving 400 officers and what police say was \$2.5 million worth of illegal gambling cash seized in Markham.

More than the high-profile operations, he will miss his colleagues, both officers and civilians, he said.

"At the end of the day, it's all about the people and the camaraderie," he said.

Deputy Chief Herridge's greatest personal success is his everlasting passion for the career.

"I don't have a Paul Henderson moment," he said. "I'm in good health, it's been a solid performance and I'm doing a job I continue to love. It's a dream job. I'm very proud I can be so passionate about the job I do."

The hardest part of the job has

been losing colleagues in the line of duty, including Const. Garrett Styles, Det.-Const. Rob Plunkett, Const. William Grant and Const. Doug Tribbling, he said.

"It's difficult as an organization," he said. "It makes everyone pause and think about the work we do and how dangerous it can be. It's like a family here, so when you lose someone from a family, it makes you think about a whole lot of things."

If you think this is the last you will hear of Deputy Chief Herridge, you don't know the man or his love for the profession.

His next challenge will come in the form of his new role as director of the Ontario Police College in Aylmer.

He said he hopes this will allow him to shape policing through interacting with and training new recruits.

"I knew I wouldn't have been able to stop and do nothing, so I chose a related field," he said.