



JOSEPH W. "JOE" ROSS and the world of policing

Mr. Joe Ross has been involved in the world of policing for more than fifty years (1955-2006). Throughout Nova Scotia, he is a well recognized and respected "powerful police union chief".

Joe Ross signed on aboard an oil tanker as a galley boy in 1945, at the tender age of 14. He worked his way up through the ranks during a 10-year adventure that took him throughout the Middle East, the Caribbean, South America, and most of western Europe. He gained his first labour-relations experience in 1947, when, at age 17, he represented his tanker at an Imperial Oil conference in Toronto on how to improve conditions about the boats.

Joe left Imperial Oil in 1955 and joined the Halifax Police Department. He served as a "cop on the beat" within the Platoon Division, worked in the Detective Division, and then the Accident and Traffic Division, Motorcycle Unit. With the experience acquired on the tanker, Joe set out to improve the salary, benefits and working conditions of police officers.

Early in his career, Joe became active in his local union. He never hesitated to put his career on the line at a time when police associations had no voice in the eyes of police service management. He was elected President of the Halifax Police Association in 1961 and served in that capacity until 1969.

Paralleling his leadership as President of the Halifax Police Association, Joe formed the Police Association of Nova Scotia and became its founding President in 1966, a position he held until 1969. In order to devote his full attention to the Association and its members, Joe left the Halifax Police Department to become the first full-time Executive Director of the Police Association of Nova Scotia, a position he held from 1969 until 2007.

In his early years as a labour movement leader, Joe played a major role:

- in successfully lobbying the provincial government to bring changes to the Labour Act (1966-1969),
- in gaining full bargaining rights for police officers, including the right to unionize,

- in successfully lobbying the provincial government to establish a Provincial Police Act (1974).

This mission accomplished, he then organized 24 police forces into individual unions and negotiated their first collective agreements, this, over a period of approximately ten years. In the 1980s, a few other organizations sought PANS's representation.

Throughout his entire career, Joe has worked with politicians at all government levels to implement changes that were in the best interest of policing in general as well as the citizens. It is after years and years of lobbying that PANS, in cooperation with other Nova Scotia police agencies, finally succeeded to replace the "right to strike" with "binding arbitration" (2004).

As founder, Past President, and Executive Director of the Police Association of Nova Scotia, Joe has been responsible for all aspects of the organization. He established the Police Association of Nova Scotia Pension Plan. PANS also administers its own medical, dental, life and long-term disability plans. Under Joe's leadership, the PANS Stress Program was initiated as well as several fundraising activities, which produced thousands of dollars directed to various community projects and charities throughout the Province. In 1970, he introduced the publication of a yearbook via a telemarketing firm, an important source of revenue for the organization.

Joe willingly worked in cooperation with management, and by doing so, succeeded in improving the safety and quality of life of PANS members. Management openly voiced that "Joe Ross has been responsible for pretty well all the gains on the part of the policing ranks in Nova Scotia. He has done a great deal for policing in the Province."

During his tenure as Executive Director of PANS, Joe has served on several Committees and Boards, including the Advisory Council of the Atlantic Police Academy.

Joe Ross is an astute businessman and the backbone of his family's entrepreneurial ventures.

In 2002, Senator Michael Forrestall (deceased 2006) presented Joe with the Commemorative Medal for the Golden Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II awarded in recognition of his contribution as a police association leader.

From the outset, Joe understood the strength derived from "unifying" and has never ceased to work towards strengthening the bonds. He earned the privilege of being called one of the founding fathers of the Canadian Police Association for the integral role he played in joining forces with the forerunner to the CPA and adding a police association from the eastern region to create a link from coast to coast. It is with pride that he served on the Board of Directors of the Canadian Police Association for 40 years (1961-2001), for the most part in the position of Vice President/Secretary-Treasurer of the organization. In 1967, the membership elected him President for a two-year term, 1967-1968.

In his capacity as Secretary/Treasurer, Joe's main function was to oversee the finances of the organization. He sat on numerous committees, where he proved that his knowledge and expertise were invaluable. He played a pivotal role as a member of the team who:

- confronted government officials to cancel the disbanding of Ports Canada, as this action would needlessly jeopardize public safety – a known fact today;
- worked with politicians and government officials for the construction of the Speaker's Summer Pavilion, the repose of the National Police Memorial on Parliament Hill;
- negotiated and renewed agreements with CBU, an important source of revenue for the CPA;
- sat on the Board of the CI Labour Sponsored Venture Capital Fund (the Covington Fund);
- established the sponsorship of the Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime.

Joe also initiated a reserve fund to ensure the financial stability of the CPA as a contingency for leaner years.

Joe's values, integrity, commitment, tenacity, exemplary leadership have contributed to the respect he is shown and so well deserving today.

Joe Ross, a man of passion, ideals, dedication, achievements.