

Deputy Chief honoured by Governor General



By Brock Weir

Thomas Carrique has had the spark for policing for as long as he can remember.

It was a spark that was ignited in him by watching his father, Bevan, head off to work as an auxiliary police officer with the Toronto Police, and it was a spark which only burned brighter the older he got. It is a spark which transcended generations and is now within his own son, as he tackles his own police studies in Ireland, but Bevan watched on with pride Friday as Thomas was invested as a Member of the Order of Merit for the Police Forces by Governor General David Johnston at a ceremony in Rideau Hall.

No one could have guessed that the influence Bevan, now a retired superintendent with the Toronto Auxiliary, had over his son would set him on the path he has lead.

For the past 23 years he has served with the York Regional Police, now serving as Deputy Chief.

"It was an honour to be there in amongst my company of other officers receiving the awards today," Deputy Chief Carrique told The Auroran on Friday. "It is an honour to also be among those who had received them in the past, including [York Region] Chief Eric Joliffe and Deputy Chief Bruce Herridge, whom I am privileged to work with every day."

In his years with the force, he has seen his role grow, rising through the ranks from an operational function to more of an administrative position. That being said, Carrique said he believes it is important never to lose one's sight of the operational experience in order to be better in one's administrative role.

"We're very fortunate to be one of the fastest growing regions in Canada, one of the most diverse Regions in all of Canada, but also one of the safest in Canada and I think that is attributed, in part, to the great work that is done by members of the York Regional Police.

"Over the last 23 years I have been in the business, our organization has transformed from predominantly a law-enforcement agency to a crime prevention and law enforcement agency that is extremely community minded and very focused on building trust and confidence within the community for establishing and maintaining strong partnerships that focus on making a difference in the community together ? police and the public."

A prime example could be seen just over a week prior to the Carrique family's trek to the Nation's Capital to see him receive the prestigious honour, with the Deputy Chef overseeing 'painting the town red', a celebration raising funds and awareness for the upcoming Special Olympics Ontario Summer Games, which the YRP will be hosting in all nine local municipalities this July.

It was a bit of a long road to get to this point, however. Carrique started out in the health and fitness club industry before going back to school to get into the security field, with a focus on becoming an alarm technician and locksmith. At that point, the spark kicked in and he made the transition to police studies.

Through his work as the officer in charge of York Region's Organized Crime bureau, for instance, he took his studies to Scotland, earning a certificate in Terrorism Studies at St. Andrew's University, proving his own son is not the only one in the family to have an international flare when it comes to laying the groundwork of a future career.

'We're firm believers in education providing a strong foundation,' he said. 'It allows us to tap into the skills that we have and we have become so global here in York Region that training provided locally but also internationally is of a strong benefit.'

This is particularly true when one looks at the current and evolving makeup of the force, the result of what he describes as a 'very deliberate demographic change' to best reflect the diversity of the York Region community. Through these efforts, they take pride in the increasingly diverse representation the YRP provides, including the benefit of a vast range of language capacity and female officers within the department.

'For young people [looking to join the force] the most important thing is strong values of being a law-abiding citizen, of good character, being involved within your community, being a leader amongst your peers, staying in top physical condition, and continuing your education.'