100 YEARS of Women Policing in Ontario

Ontario Women in Law Enforcement (OWLE) is an organization that grew from an idea to bring together female members from law enforcement fields from across the province.

Police services within Ontario are either too small or simply do not employ significant numbers of females to form individual organizations. OWLE provides an opportunity for members to network and access professional development opportunities. Recognizing that there exists strength in unity and numbers, Ontario Women in Law Enforcement encourages women from each and every police service, and other affiliated law enforcement agencies within the province of Ontario, to collectively address their common interests and concerns.

Women have been policing in Ontario since 1913. The increasing numbers of women in policing are part of a longer-term trend evident since the 1960s. Over the past decade alone, the proportion of women policing in Ontario has increased. As of 2012, 18.7% or 4917 of the 26,274 officers serving in the province of Ontario were women (Statistic Canada, 2013).

WOMEN IN LAW ENFORCEMENT ONTARIO

Female Police Officers in Ontario

1986	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2012
662	1464	2434	3076	3889	4743	4917

(1986: Statistics Canada begins to track female police officers for the first time)

1913 Mary M. Minty, Maria J. Levitt:
Metropolitan Toronto Police's 1st female Officers

Flora Campbell:
Ottawa Police Service's 1st female Officer

DID YOU KNOW?

Women who were employed in policing in the early 1900s were college educated, middle to upper class, with no thoughts of upward mobility (Kurtz et al., 2012). Equality was not an issue, as most women believed policemen were beneath them in social class, demeanour, and education (Archbold & Schulz, 2012; Rabe-Hemp, 2009).

1958 Joan Coppin (nee McMaster):
one of Metropolitan Toronto Police's 1st female Officers, Canada's 1st female Detective

1961 Florence Hayashi:
(with Hamilton Police Service) North America's 1st female Japanese Canadian Officer

1962 Fern Alexander:
(with Toronto Police Service) Canada's 1st female Inspector

1963 Dorothy Hart:
Thorold Police Department's 1st female Officer, (the newly amalgamated) Niagara Regional Police Service's (NRPS) 1st female Officer (1971)

1964 Dolores Eitel:
Hamilton Police Service's 1st female Sergeant

1965 Linda Paul:
Kingston Police Service's 1st female Officer, 1st female Sergeant (1981)

1970 Maureen Grant, Christine Silverberg:
Mississauga Police Service's 1st female Officers

DID YOU KNOW?

Prior to 1974 policing in Ontario had been a male preserve. The 1974 Task Force in Policing in Ontario recommended that: Ontario police forces be encouraged by the Ministry of the Solicitor General and the Ontario Police Commission to recruit female police officers for specialized and general duties, with the opportunity for advancement equal to their male counterparts, and that there be no discrimination according to sex in recruiting or promotional opportunities.

1974 Ontario Provincial Police embark on a recruitment initiative to train and employ Policewomen, equal in all respects to their male counterparts

The first ever 15 women graduated from the Recruit Orientation Class and were all sworn in as Provincial Constables

Donna Moody:
Niagara Regional Police Service's 1st female Detective Constable, 1st female Sergeant, 1st female Deputy Chief (2001), OWLE Heritage Award for Lifetime Achievement (2000)

Sylvia Boswell, Maureen Grant, Christine Silverberg:
(the newly amalgamated) Peel Regional Police Service's 1st female Officers, Hamilton Wentworth Regional Police's 1st female Deputy Chief (Silverberg - 1990), Calgary Police Service's 1st Female Chief (Silverberg - 1995)

Mary Staughton (Cline):
(The newly amalgamated) Halton Regional Police Service's 1st female Officer (originally from Hamilton Police Service)

1975 Toronto Police Service changed title of Policewomen to Police Constable

Joy Villeneuve:
York Regional Police Service's 1st female Officer

Rita Westbrook, Paula Seidenkranz, Louise English, Barb Kelly, Debbie Nowak, Chris Hughes:
Waterloo Regional Police Service 1st female Officers, 1st female Detective (Westbrook - 1984)

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1976 the Ontario Police College moved to its present facility located at 10716 Hacienda Rd, Aylmer ON providing much needed co-ed accommodations for recruits.

1977 Robin Jones:
1st female to transfer to OPP as commissioned officer - Inspector (1992). Nishnawbe-Aski Police Service 1st female Deputy Chief (2008). NAPS 1st female A/Chief (2009). Confirmed Chief Dec (2010). OWLE Heritage Award for Lifetime Achievement (2011)

1979 Denise LaBarge:
York Regional Police Service 1st female Cadet, 1st female recruit from OPC

1980 Terry James:
Toronto Police Service's 1st black female Officer, retired as Sergeant (2012)

1986 Sandy Crozier, Elaina Taylor:
Woodstock Police Service's 1st female Officers, 1st Sergeant (Taylor - 1997)

1986 Laurie Hayman:
St. Thomas Police Service's 1st female Officer, 1st female Sergeant (1994), Strathroy-Caradoc Police Service's 1st female Chief (2012)

1988 Linda Doggett:
York Regional Police Service's 1st female Sergeant

1990 Vicky Redmond:
Strathroy Police Service's 1st female Officer

Marsha Geling:
Aylmer Police Service's 1st female Officer (1991) after serving as Auxiliary

1994 Lenna Bradburn:
Guelph Police Service 1st female Chief (Canada's 1st female Chief)

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1997 the Ontario Women in Law Enforcement was granted official affiliate status with the International Association of Women Police (IAWP). The IAWP is a world-wide organization of women police and law enforcement professionals who operate on the same principles as Ontario Women in Law Enforcement, but on a global scale with an annual training conference.

1996 Penny Craig:
Rama Police Service's 1st female Officer

Dr. Amy Ramsay:
founded Ontario Women in Law Enforcement, served as 1st president (1996-2001)

1998 Gwen Boniface:
Ontario Provincial Police's 1st female Commissioner, OWLE Heritage Award for Lifetime Achievement (2013)

2001 Sue O'Sullivan:
Ottawa Police Service's 1st female Deputy Chief

2004 Wendy Southall:
Niagara Regional Police Service's 1st female Chief, OWLE Heritage Award for Lifetime Achievement (2012)

2005 Jane Wilcox:
Toronto Police Service's 1st female Unit Commander (Sex Crimes Unit)

Tracy David:
Hanover Police Service's 1st female Chief

2006 Beverly Anne Busson:
(with the first women's Troop 17 in 1974) - Royal Canadian Mounted Police's 1st female Commissioner

2009 Cory McMullan:
Belleville Police Service's 1st female Chief

2012 Jennifer Evans:
Peel Regional Police Service's 1st female Chief, recipient of the OWLE Presidential Award (2012)

2013 Kimberley Greenwood:
Barrie Police Service's 1st female Chief

YOU ARE THE FUTURE OF WOMEN IN POLICING.

"What, after all, is the purpose of a woman's life? The purpose of a woman's life is just the same as the purpose of a man's life: that she may make the best possible contribution to the generation in which she is living."

Louise McKinney (1868-1931)