

*Transcript of a Saint Paul Police reflective oral history interviews for*

Chief

Richard Hyland Rowan



1947



2005

Reflective interviews conducted in 2009  
by Kate Cavett of HAND in HAND Productions

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2013

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All pictures are from the Saint Paul Police Department collections and the personal files of the Rowan family.

## **ORAL HISTORY**

Oral History is the spoken word in print.

Oral histories are personal memories shared from the perspective of the narrator. By means of recorded interviews oral history documents collect spoken memories and personal commentaries of historical significance. These interviews are transcribed verbatim and minimally edited for accessibility. Greatest appreciation is gained when one can listen to an oral history aloud.

Oral histories do not follow the standard language usage of the written word. Transcribed interviews are not edited to meet traditional writing standards; they are edited only for clarity and understanding. The hope of oral history is to capture the flavor of the narrator's speech and convey the narrator's feelings through the timbre and tempo of speech patterns.

An oral history is more than a family tree with names of ancestors and their birth and death dates. Oral history is recorded personal memory, and that is its value. What it offers complements other forms of historical text, and does not always require historical corroboration. Oral history recognizes that memories often become polished as they sift through time, taking on new meanings and potentially reshaping the events they relate.

Memories shared in an oral histories create a picture of the narrator's life – the culture, food, eccentricities, opinions, thoughts, idiosyncrasies, joys, sorrows, passions - the rich substance that gives color and texture to this individual life.

Kate Cavett Oral Historian

HAND in HAND Productions  
[www.oralhistorian.org](http://www.oralhistorian.org)

Richard H. Rowan was appointed patrolman October 13, 1947;  
promoted detective June 20, 1955;  
deputy chief April 17, 1964;  
chief June 30, 1970;  
and retired December 31, 1979.

**Chief John Mark Harrington:<sup>1</sup>**

I'm Chief John Harrington, the thirty-ninth police chief of the city of Saint Paul, Minnesota. You're listening to an audio-book of the Saint Paul Police Department. This is a series of oral history interviews sharing the history of our exceptional metropolitan department. This audio-book recognizes our thirty-sixth chief, Richard H. Rowan, who served the department from 1947 to 1979.



I'm honored to say that Chief Rowan appointed me into the department in 1977. As a rookie, I didn't get to know Chief Rowan, but since becoming chief, I've learned to value his contributions to our great department. He was a dedicated police officer and laid a strong foundation for the work we are doing today.

Richard Rowan was born in 1921 and died in 2005. He was appointed patrolman October 13th, 1947, promoted to detective June 20<sup>th</sup>, 1955, and made deputy chief April 17<sup>th</sup>, 1964. On June 30<sup>th</sup>, 1970 he was appointed chief of police for the City of Saint Paul and retired nine years later on December 31, 1979.

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<sup>1</sup> John Mark Harrington was appointed police officer July 11, 1977; promoted to sergeant September 7, 1983; acting lieutenant January 4, 1997; lieutenant November 1, 1997; title changed to commander January 1, 2000; senior commander July 1, 2000 ; assistant chief May 8, 2004; chief July 1, 2004; and retired June 14, 2010. Elected to the Minnesota State Senate from Saint Paul 2010-2012. Appointed Chief of the Metro Transit Commission September 4, 2012.

### **Chief Richard Rowan:**

Hello. This is Dick Rowan. This recording is being made early in 2005 in Georgetown, Texas. Sun City in Georgetown, Texas. Wow! That's a long way from the East Side of Saint Paul. Whoever would have thought that an East Side Rowan boy would be living in Texas? But it's where I live now, and as I am now eighty-three years old, I thought it might be nice to record some of my Irish memories of growing up in the 1920s, 1930s, 1940s and beyond. So many things happened in those years. It was the best of times and the worst of times. I'll try to give you a taste of what it was like.

Our family lived in a small two bedroom home at 942 Wilson Avenue on the E East Side of Saint Paul. My mom and dad and my three brothers, Bob, Tom, Jack, and me. And Mom and Dad shared one bedroom and all four of us boys in the other. My mom and dad's families both came from County Mayo in Ireland. Dad's family was large – thirteen children in all. Dad was the first child of his family born in this country. Mom's maiden name was Elizabeth Hyland. She and my dad met in Graceville, Minnesota. Their families had adjoining farms there. She was a school teacher and Dad was a foreman for O'Donald Shoe Company, located in downtown Saint Paul. Every day, Dad walked to and from work. He never owned a car. I remember on paydays, we would run to meet him and he always had a treat for us. Dad lost his job when O'Donald Shoe Company moved to Humboldt, Tennessee. This was during the Depression when jobs were scarce. My dad finally had to go on the



WPA, Works Progress Administration,<sup>2</sup> which was a federal program started by FDR during the Depression. Dad worked outside in the bitter cold winters and things were pretty bleak during those years. We never heard a complaint. You just did what you had to do.

All four of us boys attended Saint John's Catholic Grade School at Fifth and Forest Streets, and then went on to Harding High School. That was before buses and we walked both ways. I was not a very good student. I did love to play football



Rowan Boys

Tom Jr, Jack, Tom Sr. , Bob, and Dick

and made the first team. In those days we played both ways – offense and

defense. We didn't have face masks and our helmets were soft leather. I sustained a couple of broken noses and a sprained ankle, but otherwise I was injury-free. My parents were still struggling financially, so I left school in my senior year to go to work at Cudahy Packing Company in Newport. I was only seventeen years old and had to lie about my age in order to be hired. I contributed most of my wages to the family. My starting pay was forty-seven-and-a-half cents an hour. I had one day off a week. I went to my teachers at Harding and they gave me homework to do. I remember one teacher,

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<sup>2</sup> The **Works Progress Administration (WPA)** was the largest and most ambitious New Deal agency, employing millions of unemployed people to carry out public works projects, including the construction of public buildings and roads. In much smaller but more famous projects, the WPA employed musicians, artists, writers, actors and directors in large arts, drama, media, and literacy projects. Almost every community in the United States had a new park, bridge, or school constructed by the agency. The WPA's initial appropriation in 1935 was for \$4.9 billion, and in total it spent \$13.4 billion. –Wikipedia

Mrs. Scanlon, who helped me pass my final exams. I was able to graduate and get my diploma in 1940.

The war years. All four boys joined the war effort. In 1942, Jack and I joined the Navy, and Bob joined the Army. I went to boot camp at Great Lakes, Illinois. After boot camp, I was sent to University of Wisconsin at Madison, where the Navy had a radio school. I learned the Morse code and also how to type. I had a friend there named Frank Smith who fought professionally under the name of Rodeo Dooley. He was ranked in the top ten heavy weights in Ring Magazine. He taught me a lot about boxing. I fought every Friday night in the Smokers, and my buddy Frank was a referee and the sole judge, so I never lost a fight.

After graduation from radio school, I was sent to New York to board the ship I was assigned to. The ship was a PC-618.<sup>3</sup> It was a patrol chaser and designed for anti-sub work. We took convoys down the East Coast and dropped off at Key West, Florida or Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. In 1943, we were assigned to accompany the USS Bighorn. She was a Navy ship that was actually a disguised freighter. She had lots of hidden armament and all the latest anti-sub weapons. She would get the latest reports on German sub activity and head that way. The German subs would not waste a torpedo on a single ship, so they would surface and try to sink it with shell fire. The Bighorn had much heavier armament and



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<sup>3</sup> More than 300 **PCs—Patrol Craft** went into WWII service. Nearly 50,000 men served on them. PCs were rough riders but rugged ships, and their depth charge attacks helped defeat the U-boats. During World War II, Germany's U-boat campaign was strangling Great Britain by cutting off her supplies from the United States. The Navy, desperate to halt the carnage, needed more antisubmarine ships. Destroyers took too long to build. Meanwhile, the Navy built PCs. During their battles, the crews sent submarines to the bottom, blasted aircraft from the skies, and sank small ships. Nevertheless, they suffered losses of ships and men.

would blow the subs out of the water. We sank eight U-boats<sup>4</sup> when we were with her.

We were detached from that task force and helped escort a convoy to Plymouth, England. I was amazed at the damage the German bombers had inflicted on Plymouth. Acres and acres of rubble. We then participated in the Normandy invasion. The invasion fleet had over 5000 ships, not counting landing craft. Our assignment was to anchor a half mile off the beach, and when we received a radio message, we hoisted the flag. And that was the sign for the landing craft to hit the beaches. We witnessed an awful lot of brave soldiers getting killed that day. A big storm hit us and we lost both anchors and we were blown far off course and ended up in a minefield. Luckily we didn't hit any.



On Christmas Eve in 1944, we were tied up in Cherbourg, France when we received a message to proceed eight miles out in the English Channel, where a troop ship had been torpedoed. When it sank, there were many soldiers in the water. In our effort to rescue them, I fell overboard and almost drowned. I was not wearing a life jacket. It was a very, very close call.

Early in 1945, I was transferred off the ship at Cherbourg. I was shipped off to England and then to Glasgow, Scotland, where I boarded the Queen Mary. It took only five days to make it to New York, and we had a tremendous welcome in New York harbor. In December of '45, I was discharged honorable from the Navy. I signed up for the Navy Reserve.

In early 1946, I worked for Fairbanks Morse Company in downtown Saint Paul as a shipping clerk trainee. It was heavy warehouse work. I knew my job wasn't going

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<sup>4</sup> **U-boat** is the Anglicized version of the German word *U-Boot* ['u:bo:t] a shortening of *Unterseeboot*, which means "undersea boat." While the German term refers to any submarine, the English one (in common with several other languages) refers specifically to military submarines operated by Germany, particularly in World War I and World War II.



to last long after I beat up the boss's son-in-law. He was a real jerk and didn't get along with anybody.

It was about that time that Bob and Jack and I were walking home from Kepper's Bar at Earl and Hudson Road. A beautiful young lady got off the bus and changed my life. Jack knew her and introduced Bob and I. Her name was Patricia Shanley and she lived at 1001 Conway. That's the corner house at Conway and Cypress. We all walked with her up Cypress until Wilson Avenue, and Bob and Jack, they turned on Wilson to go home, and I decided to walk Patricia home. The next night, I invited her to a movie at the Mounds Theater, and that was the beginning of our fifty-five year romance. We married in April in 1947.

Shortly before our marriage, Pat's parents, Tom<sup>5</sup> and Jen Shanley, moved from 1001 Conway to 597 Forest Street. It was a much larger house and it had an apartment upstairs. Pat's brothers, Tom Junior,<sup>6</sup> Jack,<sup>7</sup> Michael, and her sister Donna lived there also. Pat and I rented this apartment for forty dollars a month. It was there that Tom Junior talked me into taking the civil service exam for police officers.

In October 1947, I was selected for training to become a police officer for the City of Saint Paul. I was in very good shape physically and had no trouble passing all the requirements. So that was the start of my police career. I was a patrolman from '47 to '55, a detective from '55 to '63, a chief of detectives from '63 to '68, a chief of patrol from

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<sup>5</sup> Thomas H. Shanley, Sr. was appointed motor patrolman April 16, 1921; leave of absence December 27, 1921 – June 21, 1925; appointed patrolman December 2, 1926; provisional detective March 10, 1932; reinstated patrolman August 1, 1932; military leave December 12, 1942; reinstated patrolman November 21, 1945; retired August 23, 1965; and deceased February 25, 1983.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas. H. Shanley, Jr. (April 27, 1925 - August 18, 1966) was appointed patrolman to the Saint Paul Bureau of Police July 25, 1949 (Badge No. 456); detective September 19, 1957 (Badge No. 135); leave of absence to accept appointed position as Deputy Commissioner of Public Safety January 1, 1963.

<sup>7</sup> John J. (Jack) Shanley (DOB: Feb 7, 1931) was appointed patrolman to the Saint Paul Bureau of Police March 4, 1957; (Badge No. 345 & 498) and retired January 20, 1980.

'68 to '70. But in 1969, I attended the FBI Academy<sup>8</sup> in Washington D.C. It was a twelve week course. At that time, the classes were held in the Justice building at Ninth and Pennsylvania Avenue. Several of us students lived in an apartment building at Fifteenth and Rhode Island. We walked to and from there to the Justice building. Our route took us right past the White House.

When it came time for our graduation, President Nixon invited the FBI to hold the graduation ceremony in the White House. It was the first and only time this was ever done. We were able to invite our families to witness the event, so Pat, Kathy, Maureen, and John all attended. Tom was still in the Navy. The president handed our diplomas to each of us students with a nice handshake. The ceremony was held in the East Room, and the reception after in the State Dining Room. Kathy, Maureen, and John all attempted to explore the White House, but they were all corralled by the Secret Service.



Tues., June 10, '69 ST. PAUL DISPATCH (W) \$  
PRESIDENT Richard M. Nixon presents an FBI National Academy diploma to Richard H. Rowan, St. Paul deputy chief of police, while FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, looks on. Rowan was graduated at ceremonies following the recent 83rd session of the FBI Academy, with exercises held in the White House.

<sup>8</sup> The FBI National Academy is a professional ten week course of study for U.S. and international law enforcement leaders that serves to improve the administration of justice in police departments and agencies at home and abroad and to raise law enforcement standards, knowledge, and cooperation worldwide. Four times a year, this ten classroom-hour weeks course is offered for some 250 officers who take undergraduate and/or graduate college courses at a Quantico, Virginia, campus.

J. Edgar Hoover was also present at the ceremony. At a previous reception held by Hoover at the Mayflower Hotel, I was able to introduce Pat and the children to him. I told him I had named my son John after him. When at a later reception, he remembered John's name, which I thought was pretty amazing.

The following year, I was appointed Chief of Police. That was in June of 1970. I retired January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1980, almost thirty-three years in all. There were many highlights during those thirty-three years – dangerous arrests, shoot-outs, riots, delivering six babies – too many things to list here, but I was never seriously injured and, all in all, a very satisfying career.



During that time, Pat and I were blessed with four wonderful children. Kathleen was born in May of 1948, Thomas in February of 1950, Maureen in April of '52, and John in January of '57. Patricia was a wonderful mother and is largely responsible for raising our children properly. Even though I was working two and sometimes three jobs at the time, I never worried about the children. Pat was just great. She made our home a warm, welcoming place for the children, our families and friends, and especially me.

In February of 1951, I was recalled to active duty for the Korean War. I was sent to Great Lakes Training Center. I was given a general classification test, which was called a GCT. I was told the average score was from forty-five to fifty-four, and if I

achieved a score of fifty-five or better, I would qualify for a school. So I scored a surprisingly high seventy-two. With that, I was qualified to attend the instructor school at the San Diego Naval Training Center in California. I did well there, and after graduation, they kept me on as an instructor at the training center. I was able to send for Pat, Kathy, and Tom. There were many fond memories of our time there in California.

On returning to Saint Paul and resuming my police career, we were able to get a place of our own. Pat and I moved to 1207 Burns Avenue. Mounds Park was just across the street. I would take the kids on hikes in the woods. We would make a campfire and I'd cook hotdogs. And I would tell tall tales of my adventures with Daniel Boone and Davey Crockett. I gave them all nicknames – Kentucky Kate, Tomahawk Tom, Mohican Mo, and John, who was one year old at the time, was Big Bad John. They still remember those names to this day.

After my retirement from the police department, I was approached by West Publishing Company to be their security director. I worked there for thirteen years and had an adjoining office with son, John, who also worked there. John advanced rapidly and had a very successful career. I enjoyed working at West and under John Nasseff.<sup>9</sup> John is one of the most dynamic and perceptive men I've ever known. He and his wife Helene have done a lot for the Rowan family and we appreciate their friendship.

I retired from West January 1st, 1993. This time I was really retired. Pat and I divided our time between Minnesota and Florida. When Pat's health began to fail, son John and daughter Kathleen wanted us close to them in Austin. We bought a nice home in Sun City and Tom came down to live with us also. Pat died from congestive heart failure on October 18, 2001, two weeks after her seventy-eighth birthday. Son Tom and I still live there, and Pat and I really enjoyed our time together in Texas.

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<sup>9</sup> John Nasseff retired as a vice president of West Publishing and is a well-known Minnesota philanthropist.

I am now eighty-three and living an active life here in Sun City. My health is excellent and I pray it stays that way, but I still miss my sweetheart Patricia. I play golf two or three times a week. I play with Bill McCutcheon<sup>10</sup> regularly, and Bill and I have breakfast every Wednesday together, usually at IHOP. I offer you this Irish blessing. "May your troubles be less and your blessings be more and nothing but happiness enter your door."



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<sup>10</sup> William Wallace McCutcheon served the Saint Paul Park Police 1948 to 1954, appointed patrolman January 4, 1954; promoted to sergeant August 22, 1960; lieutenant December 12, 1965; captain June 20, 1969; deputy chief February 4, 1972; chief April 1, 1980; and retired July 15, 1992.

### **Retired Captain Theodore Fahey:<sup>11</sup>**

My name is Theodore Fahey. I go by the name of Ted. I joined the police department in 1947, and there was a group of twenty-five of us that were hired at that time. We were the first group to be hired after World War II. We were all veterans and Dick Rowan, who became my partner later on, was also one of that group.



Ted Fahey  
2007

Chief Rowan was a good man and he was a good cop. I believe because he was honest, he was intelligent, he had a good sense of humor, and I think he had compassion for people. And also, he felt that if I'm working for the city, they should be able to get something for their salary. The old story goes if a person starts saying, "I've paid your wages," you should take a penny out of your pocket and say, "Here. This is the part of the wages you paid." But the powers that be in those days discouraged us and says, "Don't do that." [laughs] That was a no-no. But he was a good partner. You never had to worry about your back. And, like I say, he was very intelligent and I mentioned before about his sense of humor.

He pulled a couple of things on me that – I was very angry at the time – 'cause I was probably angry enough to invite him into the gym, but I'm glad I didn't, because I found out he'd been a pretty good boxer in his day. So that would have been a big mistake for me.

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<sup>11</sup> Theodore C. Fahey was appointed patrolman October 13, 1947; promoted to sergeant September 16, 1955; lieutenant December 18, 1965; captain December 9, 1972; and retired April 20, 1981.



In front of Mother Merrill's, there was a lady laying on the sidewalk, intoxicated. She wouldn't move. And a lot of people standing around. So Rowan says, "Well," -- we had the panel-truck again, the emergency squad. He said, "I'll get inside." He says, "We'll sit her on the back. I'll get ahold of her under her arms, and you get ahold of her knees. When I holler push, you push and I'll pull." So I got my hands under her knees. He hollers, "Push!" and I push, but he didn't pull. And her legs went apart. I lost my balance, and my nose was about six inches from you-know-what. And she had no panties on. And all the guys on this sidewalk, they were laughing and joking. That's when I got so mad at Rowan. Oh, boy.

Yeah, and then another time. Well, I won't tell you the other one, because it's kind of a deal where a guy was having intercourse with a female, and he told him, "Finish what you're doing or I'll run you in."

Oh, another time, too, to show how that he perhaps never ever looked at another girl besides his wife. And of course, she was a pretty girl. Anyhow, we had a call up on University Avenue. This young girl -- she was old enough -- she was twenty-one and she was half drunk. And the people that had her, a man and a wife that she was staying with, they couldn't control her anymore. The guy got fed up and they called the police. So they insisted that we arrest her. They would be the complainants, because by that time, we had the law about wife complainant or somebody had to sign a statement. So



Emergency Car 1968

anyhow, Rowan gets in and I help the girl to get into the back of the squad car, and all of a sudden she starts trying to kiss Dick. Dick was a very good looking guy. [My wife,] Peg used to say he had beautiful eyelashes. He hollered, "Ted! Ted, get in here!" He says, "You're single. You can take care of this!" He says, "I'm married. Get in here!" and I said, "You're doing all right, Dick." But that was Dick. He didn't want to get kissed.

Well, then the other funny one was Rowan and I got sent up on Wheelock Parkway of a mental case. So they almost always sent the emergency squad on mental cases, because one time, I guess a guy went berserk and the ambulance was a Packard and he kicked the windows out of the ambulance. And boy, they didn't want any more windows kicked out. So they got to their sending the emergency car on the mental cases. And actually, what we did, we'd book them M for O at the hospital, Mental for Observation.

So we got sent up at Wheelock and we come into the house and the lady says, "My daughter just went crazy and she's in her bedroom now and she chased us out. It's just me and my husband, and she's got every sharp knife in the kitchen on the stand next to her." So she says, "We called the doctor and the doctor says take her to the Ancker Hospital."<sup>12</sup> And he said, "Then I'll meet her up." So Rowan and I went in the bedroom and she looked perfectly normal now. She's sitting up in bed. She's got pajamas on. But there was butcher knives and peeling knives and paring knives and this and that. And so we start talking and Rowan had a good gift of gab. Like I say, he was intelligent. He says, "You know," he says, "Your doctor wants to see you." And she says, "Well, yeah, I would like to see him, too." And so he says, "Well, if you want to, we'll take you. But he's a very busy man and he wants us to take you to a different place, because he's there now and he's going to meet us there and it won't take as long that way." He did that thinking that she would know how to get to the doctor's office if we went someplace else. So then she's, "Okay, I'll go. No trouble." But she said, "I want to sit in the front seat though," because the back seat was the bench. But the mother got

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<sup>12</sup> Ancker Hospital opened in 1872 as the City and County Hospital. In 1923, it was renamed in honor of its late superintendent Arthur B. Ancker. Over the years, it encompassed twelve buildings over several acres with a mailing address at 495 Jefferson. In 1965, it moved to 640 Jackson Street and was renamed Saint Paul Ramsey Hospital, renamed again in 1977 Saint Paul-Ramsey Medical Center, and in 1997, renamed Regions Hospital.



in the back. I says, "Okay." But I stay behind her. I was ready to grab her, but Dick says, "Boy, I hope you'll grab her in time."

So we went to the hospital. So at the hospital, Dick is in there making out the entrance report and all of a sudden – I'm down getting some of the nurses or something – and a nurse come in, "Help your partner! Help your partner! He needs help!" And I ran down there and I come in. This gal was a stocky girl. Large breasts. Now she's bare naked. The nurse had just got her bottom part of her pajamas off, because she went to the hospital in a robe and pajamas. Got them off and she went berserk again and she hit the nurse and that's when the nurse ran for help. But now, Rowan's got ahold of her. He's from behind. He's standing there, one breast in each hand. I kid him about it later, like, "The only thing there was to grab ahold of," he says. But she was swinging around and actually taking him right off his feet. He held her, "Grab her legs! Grab her legs!" and I start laughing. He swore a little bit, "Grab her legs!" I'm getting back at him for that deal over at Mother Merrill's. But then I grabbed the legs, flipped her up, and held her down. And he held her down and they strapped her down on the gurney. But I can still see that. Rowan got a hold of each one. [laughs]

Well, one of the things that stands out in my mind mostly was our problems with the [Oliver] Crutcher. When I'd been off for a couple of days, got back to work, and Rowan was my regular partner and we worked on the emergency squad, 326, which patrolled University Avenue. Or actually, one third of the northeast portion of the city. He was telling me about a young man that was holding up liquor stores. He says, "He should be very easy to pick out, because he's short. He wears what they call a bee-bop cap," – they're kind of a tam – "and he's a Black kid."

And as we were driving by Janssen's Liquor Store,<sup>13</sup> Dick looked out the window and he says, "Ted, a guy like that just come out of the liquor store. Let's check him out."

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<sup>13</sup> Janssen's Liquor Store at 365 West University Avenue, Saint Paul

So I went up to the corner, made a right turn, went around the block, another right turn. As I'm approaching University Avenue, a lady came running out and she says, "Stop that man! He just robbed a man." By that time, we could see him. He was running south – I think it was Frye. He was running south from University and as we went after him – golly, I could have probably run over him with the car if I wanted to. As I pulled over, he cut across in front of me. So when he stopped, he was right by the driver's side of the car.

And to be able to explain this a little bit further, we carried a gun that was carried on the left side of our body and it was a cross draw holster. Mine was a six inch barrel with built up grips, so it was a better target shooting weapon. And as I pulled up,



I was trying to get my gun out. I couldn't get it out with my left hand because it was too tight and it kind of slipped down between the door and the seat. I couldn't get it out with my right hand. And about that time, I'm right opposite the guy, and as I'm looking, you could see money sticking out of his jacket. He had a – it looked like an army fatigue jacket – out of his shirt pocket of that jacket. And Rowan, by that time, was leaning across in front of me, had his gun on him, and says, "Put up your hands." And the guy put his hands up. He had a gun. And he was bringing it around, so Rowan fired. Rowan missed and the guy jumped back.

Now, the emergency car was a panel truck. The window – you have a window for the driver's side and you have a window for the passenger side. But the windows at the back – there are only windows in the very rear where the doors to get into from the back of the truck. And in there we carry a stretcher and there's a bench on one side. Why I'm pointing that out is that when Crutcher jumped back out of our view, we couldn't see him. I was the driver. And all I could think of was, "We're sitting ducks." So I just jumped right out, and as I jumped out, I expected to see him running north. He wasn't there. I ran to the back of truck and I had my gun out by that time, and by the

time I got to the back of the truck, some shooting took place on the other side. He made a U-turn and ran directly past Rowan, who was starting to get out. And he shot point blank at Rowan and Rowan shot point blank at him and, thankfully – and Rowan missed, of course.

At the time, we thought it was just as well that Rowan missed, too, but now that Lee got killed later on, we both kind of felt we were responsible for that. And anyhow, I ran out and I shot at him, but I missed. Couldn't believe it. See, I shot in the low nineties then, and Rowan shot in the high nineties. Right, Rowan



Officer Fahey  
1949

was a much better shot than I was. But we both missed.

We called for help. By our actions, I suppose we were able to contain him in a certain area. And other help came to us. So then, when the homicide crew got there, it was McAuliffe.<sup>14</sup> They got there, I suppose, because of the shooting. We had to run down to headquarters to make our report, but on the way to headquarters, two detectives, Skarolid<sup>15</sup> and Billy Schmitt,<sup>16</sup> wanted to see us. They said, "We think this guy might be a guy by the name of Crutcher. He lives over on Lewis. If you want to go over there, we can talk to the people and they might show us pictures and you can verify if it is or not." So we stopped off there and the pictures that we saw, yes, that was the guy we were looking for. So now we knew who committed this problem for us.

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<sup>14</sup> Lester E. McAuliffe was appointed patrolman March 24, 1936; promoted to sergeant December 16, 1947; detective March 16, 1948; detective lieutenant December 1, 1949; assistant chief November 15, 1955; and chief May 23, 1961; and retired March 31, 1970.

<sup>15</sup> William R. Skarolid (born June 17, 1926) was appointed patrolman to the Saint Paul Bureau of Police July 6, 1948; promoted detective October 1, 1954; died September 13, 1973.

<sup>16</sup> William C. Schmitt (born February 7, 1904) was appointed patrolman to the Saint Paul Bureau of Police March 5, 1936; and retired July 16, 1976.

So then while at headquarters we were writing our reports and we got a call – well, not we, but McAuliffe got a call from somebody stating that Crutcher was in the basement of a house at 324 Saint Anthony. So he told us, “Come on. Leave your car here. You can ride with us.” So we drove up there.



Dick Rowan  
September 10, 1949

By the time we got there, Lee was there and his partner, Crowell.<sup>17</sup> And then Skarolid was there. I walked up to the back of the house and McAuliffe went in, and by that time, Lee was talking, and then Lee said, “Let’s go back and check the back of the house, outside.” So, Lee and I went around to the back of the house and there was a woodshed attached to the back of that house, with a door that was kept closed with a hasp for a padlock, but the door was just hanging open. So we went over there and there was a piece of wood on the ground. Lee picked it up, we closed the door, closed the hatch, and put that wood in there, and Lee said, “Well, now, if he’s in the house and tries to get out this way, he can’t.”

So we walked back and Lee said, “I’m gonna go up and watch the front of the house, because I got the shotgun.” And just as I got in the kitchen, two shots rang out. Crutcher was coming down the stairs, Lee was coming in the front door, coming in to tell us there were no basement windows. Apparently, that’s what he was gonna to tell us. And he hit Lee twice, once in the forehead, I believe it was, or chest area, and Crutcher jumped over and ran.

Rowan was outside and Rowan says – out in front of the house – and he says, “I saw him jump out and run.” But he says, “There was so many people, I didn’t dare

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<sup>17</sup> William H. Crowell (born February 27, 1908) was appointed patrolman to the Saint Paul Bureau of Police November 1, 1937; military leave May 15, 1942 till November 26, 1945; promoted detective March 16, 1948; and retired February 26, 1973.

shoot.” He says, “I chased him but I lost him, but I didn’t dare shoot, because there’s just so many people, I didn’t want to injure somebody.”

But Rowan definitely was a good man. He was an asset to the department. We didn’t socialize much. Later, didn’t socialize at all when he was a deputy chief or chief, mainly because he was working straight days and I was kind of working shifts. It seems that we no longer had anything in common and his buddy he had in the police department was Bob Highberg.<sup>18</sup> And Bob had worked with him in the sex division investigating sexual complaints.

Rowan could sing Irish songs, so he was a fun guy. So like I say, with Dick, we had our good times and our scary times. I never had to worry about my back when I had Dick, but I’ve never had to worry about my back with any partner I ever had. He was brave. Captain Pond<sup>19</sup> had a word for it, “intestinal fortitude,” and he said Dick had intestinal fortitude. That’s all I can say, really. I can’t say anything bad about him.



1970



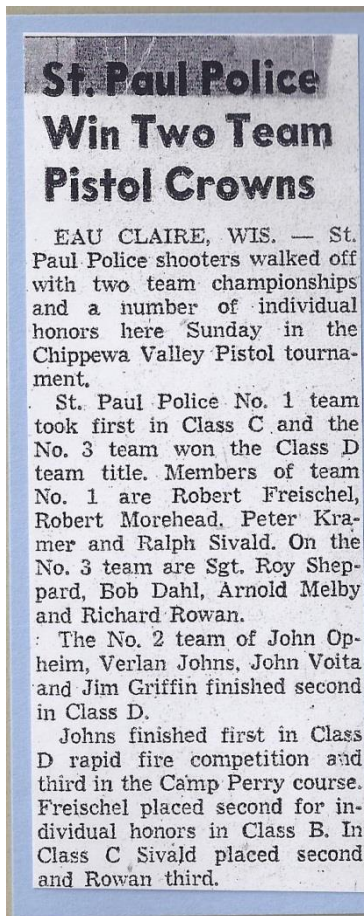
1971

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<sup>18</sup> Robert L. “Bob” Highberg (born November 19, 1918) was appointed patrolman to the Saint Paul Bureau of Police October 13, 1947; promoted detective October 1, 1954; lieutenant December 8, 1966; captain December 9, 1972; and retired July 16, 1976.

<sup>19</sup> Burton E. Pond was appointed reserve patrolman April 29, 1941; patrolman full-time April 16, 1942; promoted to sergeant September 20, 1948; lieutenant October 1, 1954; captain September 1, 1957; and retired July 16, 1969.

## Retired Sergeant William Roppeau:<sup>20</sup>



My name is Bill Roppeau. I went on the job at the Saint Paul Police Department back in October 13<sup>th</sup> in 1947. I was a sergeant. I was promoted sergeant on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1964. And I retired on January 31<sup>st</sup>, 1991.



Bill Roppeau  
2007

What do I know about Dick Rowan? I went to school with his wife at Harding – Pat Shanley. And Pat Shanley's dad was an old time policeman. Then Shanley's brother (Thomas Junior) came on the job. Then another brother (John) came on there. So we had an abundance of Shanleys.

I'd never worked on the same relief with Rowan when we were first on. He worked with Bob Highberg and they worked the East Side squad. He shot on the

pistol team and I shot on the pistol team. I know if he got himself half in the bag, he liked to sing a lot. [laughs] You know, we'd go, like, to a convention with the pistol team, and after the convention, you'd party a little, and usually at the parties after you'd have a few drinks and he'd start to sing. He had a good voice, too. [laughs]



Officer Roppeau  
1951

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<sup>20</sup> William Roppeau was appointed patrolman on October 13, 1947; promoted to sergeant October 1, 1964; and retired January 31, 1991.



### Retired Lieutenant Russell Bovee:<sup>21</sup>

My name is Russ Bovee. I went on the police department on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1957. I retired as homicide lieutenant commander on the last day of 1989, and I've been retired for eighteen years.

Chief Rowan – oh, hey! It was kind of a unique situation for me, because Dick was an eastsider. My sister married a guy from the East Side. They hung around together before he even went on the job. And when he was a young policeman, I hung around with Dick. So I got to know him pretty well. Socially, he was at my house many times. I used to have parties at my house – casino nights and things that I would do at my house – and Dick and his wife were always there.



Russ Bovee  
2008



Lt. Bovee  
1980

Department-wise, Dick was the last of the old Irish police chiefs. He kind of rolled with the punches. He was not as quite as easy to deal with as McCutcheon would have been and, in fact, I think the general consensus was that McCutcheon pretty much ran the department when Rowan was the chief. McCutcheon came up and made the ideas and things that should have been done and stuff.

I really never had any scrapes with him. He certainly never did me any favors because we were friends. And he certainly never hurt me in any way either.

It was just kind of expected, I guess, that Rowan would have become the next chief. And he was a graduate of the FBI Academy, which everyone seemed to put a lot

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<sup>21</sup> Russell W. Bovee was appointed patrolman January 2, 1957; promoted to sergeant October 1, 1964; lieutenant January 11, 1973; and retired January 1, 1990.

of faith in at that time. All of the fair-haired people in the department were sent to the FBI Academy. That was their stepping stone to success or promotion. And Dick was one of the first ones run through the FBI Academy that I remember. There may have been some before him, but he was one of the ones to go to the FBI Academy. So you kind of knew that he was next in line to be promoted.



Deputy Chief Rowan  
1968



## Retired Lieutenant Carolen Bailey:<sup>22</sup>

I'm Carolen Bailey. I was hired as a policewoman in 1961 for the Saint Paul Bureau of Police. At that time, they required that a policewoman have a bachelor degree in social work and experience working as a social worker. After I was hired, I worked in juvenile division for two years. Then I was moved up to the crimes against persons. After that, in homicide. I was the first female promoted to lieutenant after taking the same exam as the male officers. I worked as a commander in the Northwest Patrol Team and then head of the vice squad.



Carolen Bailey  
2007

After that, I became lieutenant in charge of special events and community relations. I retired as a lieutenant in 1991. During my career, I was also president of Association of Women Police.



Policewoman Carolen Bailey  
1969

And I do recall some incidents with Dick Rowan while he was still – I believe a detective was his rank then. One of the incidents involved purse-snatchers that were coming up behind old ladies, putting their knee in their back, and breaking their backs when they grabbed their purses. And they decided to do—I think Dick Rowan was working robbery at the time. I'm not positive about where he was normally assigned. But they decided to try a

<sup>22</sup> Carolen Fay Bailey was appointed policewoman July 17, 1961; resigned December 3, 1963; returned to the department September 16, 1964; promoted to Sergeant December 25, 1971; lieutenant May 25, 1985; and retired January 31, 1991. President, International Association of Women Police 1980-1982; Minnesota Association Women Officer of the Year—1980, Minnesota Assistant Commissioner of Public Safety 1992-1997; IAWP's Dr. Lois Higgins-Grote Heritage Award, 2003.

decoy operation. They asked me if I would help make them up with make-up. Then that's how I learned that they were going to be doing it. And so I did. I made Rowan up as a beautiful lady and we got his clothes on, and he walks like the very adept tough guy that he was, and it didn't look one bit like an old lady walking. So I had to start showing them that.

In the meantime, I got a little upset that I wasn't doing it, because I thought I could do it just as well or better, because I could certainly walk more like an old lady. And so I raced into the chief and he says, "No, you're not doing it, because they'll break your back," and he would not bend. So I couldn't do it, but I trained Rowan and he was really – he was always eager to do work. I really admired him and respected him as a detective, as well. But it was just hilarious. He was a beautiful female, but he could not move like one. [laughs]

I really respected him. He was very honorable. Of course, I always liked him as a person. He came to a couple of my parties. In fact,

I have party pictures of him. One time, and I'm not sure what the circumstances were, because I don't think there was anybody else around, so it must have been after a party when a lot of people had started leaving. No, I don't think so. It was later, after the parties. He told me that he didn't enjoy going to social events and parties as much as he used to, because he found that he was always approached by somebody who wanted a favor. And it just gave him a different perspective of people that might have been his friends or whatever. And I really thought he was quite lonely then.



Dick Rowan and Leroy Thielen  
c. 1973

I came across an investigation. It started as the investigation – a death investigation of a woman in Harold Mordh's nursing home. And it looked suspicious. So I started having contact with some of the people that worked for Harold Mordh. I started developing informants that were telling me some horrendous things that probably would not be believed by most people that had contact with him, because he was kind of looked on as a god. I heard the word "god" many times.

Harold Mordh was the director of the Union Gospel Mission and the owner of Bethel Nursing Home. Anyway, I started getting a lot of valuable information about serious crimes that he was involved in. Since he was a community leader as well, I went to the chief, who knew him, and told him about this and wondered if he wanted me to proceed, because this was not part of my death investigation.

I admired him very much for what he did. He told me, "You proceed and work only on this for the next six months. But don't trust or give this information to anyone." And part of the reason for that was that I had learned that there was a lot of federal contacts as well that he had, so he was quite influential elsewhere, Harold Mordh was.

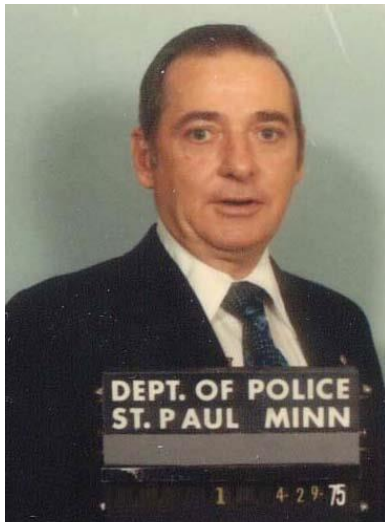
So I admired Chief Rowan for authorizing me to go ahead on such a hot potato. And it was without any doubt the most intensive investigation I ever did on corruption.



Actually I always felt that people in the city of Saint Paul were fairly upstanding and so forth. And I learned a part of it that was not. And so it was an interesting experience, but Chief Rowan really authorized me to go ahead with all that and it resulted in, I believe, sixty-one indictments. And he plead guilty, I believe, to about three of four. I really admired Dick Rowan and respected him.



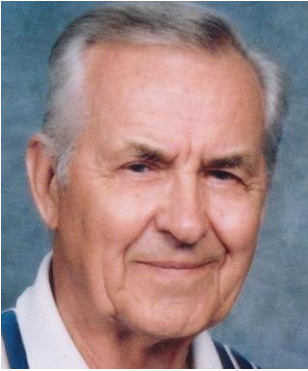
Lieutenant Bailey  
1985



1975



### **Retired Deputy Chief Donald Blakely:<sup>23</sup>**



Don Blakely

I'm Don Blakely. I joined the park police in 1949. I was later appointed to the police department as a patrol officer in 1954. I retired as deputy chief in 1984.

Rowan became chief, and then they set up an examination for deputy chief. In fact, there were only three that passed and that was it. So he was forced – he didn't like the other two. He liked them less than me, so I got appointed.

Rowan did not do anything major without talking to McCutcheon about it. I don't think that he interfered a lot. He wasn't micro-managing, which was good.

During my time as deputy chief under Chief Rowan, there were a couple of incidents that I thought significant. The first one was when we had – one of our police officers was injured when his squad was hit broad side by an ambulance. One officer,

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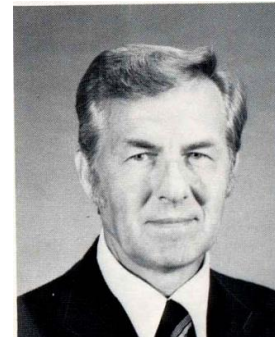
<sup>23</sup> Donald Blakely was appointed to the Saint Paul Park Police for four years , and then was appointed patrolman January 4, 1954; promoted to detective March 1, 1962; captain August 28, 1968; deputy chief December 26, 1970; and retired January 31, 1984.



Harold Larson,<sup>24</sup> was injured severely,<sup>25</sup> and Chief Rowan asked me to take him over to the hospital.

Chief Rowan and I went into the area where they were working on him in the emergency room. Chief Rowan wanted to go in there, and a doctor was blocking the doorway and said, “No, you can’t go in there.” But he was very, very upset and very emotional and he insisted that he was going to go in there, and the doctor said, “No, you can’t go in there.” Rowan was going in anyhow and the doctor said, “I’ll have to call the police,” and he said, “I am the police.” And the doctor stood there and didn’t know what to say then. Unfortunately, the officer died.

While he was in charge of patrol on Saint Patrick’s Day, things got a little bit wild and I was cruising around. The parade was over, and the people that were out celebrating and drinking and getting intoxicated – they were getting up a full head of steam. A group was in front of Gallivan’s on Wabasha and they were drinking beer and each time they finished drinking a bottle of beer, they would throw the empty bottle up



Deputy Chief  
Blakely  
1984

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<sup>24</sup> John Harold Larson (Badge No. 308) was appointed patrolman April 1, 1968; was fatally injured in a traffic accident while responding to a call for emergency assistance Saturday, August 9, 1974, and died August 10, 1974. He was U.S. Air Force Veteran.

<sup>25</sup> At 2335 hours on Friday, August 9, 1974, Police Officer John Harold Larson was fatally injured in a traffic accident involving the officer’s police squad and a fire ambulance (truck-van) at the controlled intersection of S. Snelling and Grand Avenues in the City of Saint Paul. Both units were responding to a call for emergency assistance at an earlier reported automobile accident and had their sirens, red lights and “Opticom” systems (traffic signal preemption) activated. The ambulance “T-boned” the squad broadside on the passenger side, carrying it out of the intersection just south of Grand. Both units were heading to the same emergency call, and the accident took place about fifteen seconds after it was determined that neither emergency vehicle was needed at the other incident (no injuries). Officer Larson died the next morning, Saturday, August 10, 1974 at Saint Paul Ramsey Hospital (now Regions Hospital), of a lacerated liver.

in the air. It would come down and crash on the street. We had broken glass all over the street. And I got a call to go over to the Minnesota Club and meet Chief Rowan. So I drove over there. So when he got in the car, he said, "What's going on?" He says, "I heard that they're throwing empty beer bottles in the air and so forth and breaking in the street?" And I said, "That's right. That's what's happening." So he said, "Take me over there."

So I drove over, pulled in front of Gallivan's, and Rowan jumped out of the car -- and he was not in uniform now -- and he jumped out of the car and went up there and started pushing these guys around, telling them to get back into Gallivan's, and they didn't know what the problem was. They just, "Well, we were having fun." We finally got some more help there and got those guys back in, but he became very emotional.

I think he was a little bit sensitive about Saint Patrick's Day, because he was total Irish and didn't make any bones about it. These people were acting in a way -- they weren't necessarily Irish, either -- but they were acting in a way that, I think, it looked bad for Saint Patrick's. So I think that made him extra sensitive, but he was sensitive about that.



Chief Richard Rowan

## Retired Chief William McCutcheon:<sup>26</sup>

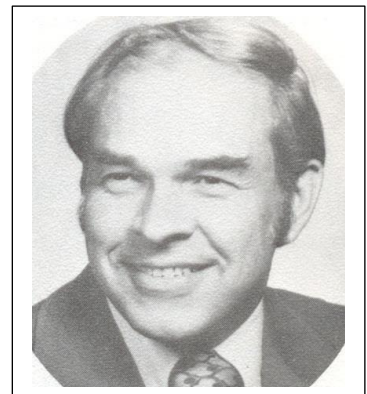


Bill McCutcheon  
2008

I'm Bill McCutcheon, member of the Saint Paul Police Department and retired in 1992.

Dick Rowan became chief and I was disappointed, because I thought I was going to be chief, because of the information that I had received from a variety of people in the city that we should be ready to go down to the City Council because we were going to get the job. And that didn't happen and so, when it didn't happen, I got a call and they said it wasn't going to happen for certain reasons, and I was really mad. I was angry. But Dick got the job.

And I sat in my office and fumed like, you know, like a spoiled kid, I suppose. But I fumed for awhile and finally, I thought, "Well, you got to work through that somehow." So I went in the office and Dick was still there. It was late, because I was still in my office late. And then after we got to talking, and he said, "I was going to sit here until you came in." He said, "I knew you'd come in." And that started our relationship and we had a real strong relationship all through his tenure, and then after I became chief, we still had a strong one. So a couple of East Side guys, you know.



Deputy Chief  
McCutcheon  
1975

I know Dick most of my teenage and adult life. Dick and I lived together down in Sun City, Texas. We went to breakfast every Wednesday morning at the IHOP and we

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<sup>26</sup> William Wallace McCutcheon served the Saint Paul Park Police 1948 to 1954, appointed patrolman January 4, 1954; promoted to sergeant August 22, 1960; lieutenant December 12, 1965; captain June 20, 1969; deputy chief February 4, 1972; chief April 1, 1980; and retired July 15, 1992.



lied to each other every morning about all the good things that took place when we were with Saint Paul Police.



Dick was very good to the officers. He enjoyed the outdoors. He also enjoyed the position that he held. He had a great friend – he and Ed Devitt,<sup>27</sup> who was a federal district judge – and he and Ed played golf on a regular basis and he was great friends with Amos Martin.<sup>28</sup> He went around – one of his famous sayings was the Rowan and Martin Act. But anyhow, that was Dick's forte and he was a very social guy. He got along good with most everybody – not always with the court house. But we were separated from the court house and there were personnel things that the court house thought should be done and that Dick did not agree with, and he was very adamant in his positions and he stuck with them, which caused some controversy and some difficulty with certain people in the court house.



Take Home Car Program  
1971

Dick, he was very strong in his positions, but he didn't have outbursts of anger. He was very strong in his delegation. Clearly, under the leadership of Rowan, the department became very upfront, very forward looking, and we did a lot of things that were some of the first in the country. We did the Take Home a Car program [1971]. We did dogs [1970]. We did just about everything we could think of in the modern world. We downsized when we had a crises with the gasoline in the 1970s. We bought little cars. So we did whatever was necessary and we were upfront in doing it. Dick Rowan, he was a good chief.

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<sup>27</sup> Edward James Devitt (May 5, 1911 – March 2, 1992) was elected to the US Congress 1947 –1949; returned to private practice in Saint Paul from 1949-1950, Judge Minnesota Probate Court for Ramsey County 1950-1954; judge US District Court for the District of Minnesota (chief judge 1959-1981) 1955-1981; assuming senior status on May 1, 1981 until his death in 1992 at age 80.

<sup>28</sup> Amos S. Martin was president of the Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce for twenty years from 1967-87.

### Retired Deputy Chief John Sturner:<sup>29</sup>

John Sturner, started in 1963, January. I went through the ranks. Patrolman for four years, I guess. Sergeant, lieutenant we had then, and captain, and then deputy chief. I was deputy chief for eight years under Chief McCutcheon. I retired in the end of 1997 after thirty-five years. They call it senior commander now,

but they didn't then. So I've been retired for ten years.

Well, Dick, you know, certainly was a good friend of mine and a good guy. And a good chief. Going through the books was very informative; those are wonderful. Four scrapbooks that the Rowan family provided. It's almost a lifelong history. The only thing that's not in there is his graduation picture from high school, I think. And those are wonderful, because that goes back before my time, of course. And some of the pictures of people that were still in the department, they're baby pictures, so to speak.



John Sturner  
2013

His really good friends you can see through the pictures were Bob Highberg and Highberg was a really close friend. And looking through the albums, the many things he did as a police officer I wasn't aware of before I was even in high school. He was just a hell of a street cop. You can just see it. Every picture and he was involved in many

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<sup>29</sup> John Sturner was appointed patrolman January 21, 1963; promoted to sergeant September 30, 1967; lieutenant November 27, 1971; captain November 26, 1980; emergency deputy chief August 4, 1983; return to captain December 10, 1983; deputy chief April 1, 1984; captain August 16, 1992; title changed to commander April 7, 1993; and retired December 31, 1997.



high profile arrests, often times involving danger to himself. I mean, it's in the books. You can see it.

So he's just a—he was a cop's cop, and that was one of the things that was quoted there. And I know that he was involved in many big investigations when he was a detective, some very high profile murders and so on. And of course, he was a robbery detective and that's probably the most dangerous, because you're out looking for people that just did something with a gun or a knife or whatever, or trying to catch them in the act. But he was a good investigator. Common sense, you know.

If you wanted to talk about his attributes. Great memory. Tough guy. He was a hell of a boxer, you know. Very, very tough guy. You wouldn't want him to get mad at you.

Well, I do remember that I was a sergeant on the East Side working patrol on the East Side and Dick Rowan was the deputy chief in charge of the patrol division. And I had a bunch of young officers – we were all young – I had a bunch of young officers working for me and, you know, Dick was a tremendous family man and had a beautiful family. His wife and his daughters – very good-looking ladies. And his son John, a good looking young man. And the chief was listening to his police radio – he was in his car – and one of my guys happened to spot a very good-looking young lady driving a car and he decided he'd like to know who she was, so he asked for a license check over the air, which was what we did at the time. And it came back to one of the Rowan girls and then, of course, the chief heard this and [laughs] then next day that young officer was in his office to explain why he'd be running a check on a vehicle that belonged to his daughter, who was minding her own business driving on the East Side. [laughs] We all had a good laugh about it later. I'm not sure the officer had a good laugh about it, but Dick said, "John, what are your people doing out there chasing women." I go, "Chief, I'll check. I don't know" [laughs]

At heart, I think always a street cop. I worked for him as a sergeant when he was the new deputy chief of the patrol division, and if you made a good arrest or you deployed your people and something good happened, Dick was there the next morning congratulating and thanking you and telling you what a good job you did. He really kept his eye on the street. That's where our work is.

Over the years, we became good friends. I used to play golf with him a lot. He always beat me, of course. And a lot of people always said, "Well, McCutcheon ran the department." Well, there's only – it's like the new president just said. There's only one president at a time and there's only one chief at a time, and only the chief can sign orders, transfer people, do all the things the chief's office has the power to do. Other people advise the chief. And as I said, Chief Rowan was at heart a street cop.

He came up through the detective division ranks, which, at the time in those years, pretty much was the cream of the department. Ran the department. The patrol division was pretty much looked down upon. The detectives were the elite in the department and he came up through that system.

And Bill McCutcheon – today you would describe him as a policy wonk. Bill was a good street cop, but he was a policy kind of guy. Very innovative. They each had tremendous strengths. Not that they were weak in another area, but they had a tendency to have tremendous strengths in different areas, which was very good for the department. And that's goes back to McAuliffe using McCutcheon to do a number of things with the Eastman study, and that's just when I came on the job when that had just been completed and released.

McAuliffe, he was old school. He was the last of the old school and Dick Rowan was the first of the new school. And I didn't know Dick Rowan so well at the time. And then when Dick became deputy chief, I got to know him very well, because I worked for him. He was in charge of the patrol division. And really grew to admire him as being a very good leader and basically just a decent honest guy. You know, if you went

bowling at the bowling league, Dick was there with his wife and there was no pretenses. He was just a good friendly guy. And he was tough, you know, and that's in the book, too. If you screwed up, he let you know it. And if you did something unethical, he really let you know it. He fired some people that deserved to be fired.

And we really went through a reorganization that the two of them, Rowan and McCutcheon, got their heads together. McCutcheon drew up a reorganization plan. We went from just a few lieutenants to many and really decentralized the department. And I was one of the new lieutenants, that I was fortunate, because we still had veteran's preference. I was very deeply involved in the decentralization process, and I was one of the first team commanders of the first six teams as a lieutenant. So I'm very familiar with that process and what we went through. And those weren't easy changes. You know, there was a lot of resistance in the department. There was skepticism in some parts of the community. And Dick had firm leadership and he wanted to do that and those things happened.

So to say that one person other than the chief ran the department is not true. It's a generalization – perhaps the perception that some people had. But I know I was in many meetings in the chief's office because I worked for McCutcheon in planning and, you know, you took in recommendations and maybe argued your case, but the final decision was the chief's and he made it. So they both had their strengths and they complimented each other, and I think that's the best way you can put it. Their strengths complimented each other and they were both good for each other.

If you wanted to just say, "What was his greatest legacy after he left the department after being chief for nine years?" there were probably a lot of them. If my

timing is correct here, first female police officer that worked the street, Debbie Montgomery.<sup>30</sup>

But I remember that Dick brought education into the department, supported you if you wanted to go to school. And education was never important until that transition between McAuliffe and Rowan. I know I was allowed to work – we still had rotating shifts – I was allowed to walk a beat and work straight nights so I could go to the University. And then of course the federal program [L.E.E.P.<sup>31</sup>] came in after the riots, and then the money was there for lots of people to go to school and things changed. But Dick brought in lots of people, or allowed his staff to bring in lots of people, and they had seminars and different kinds of training opportunities.

We started to do planning and that's a great legacy, because he opened the department up to planning and different views. If you look at the long term impact of doing something like this, like planting a seed. And a lot of young managers were trained. A lot of young commanders were trained in a new way of thinking that was new to that department – any department at the time. You know, policing went through a great catharsis in the early 1970s, late '60s after the riots and so on.

That certainly is one of the significant contributions that he made by encouraging it, allowing it to happen, and funding it. You know, the chief controls the budget. The educational things that he used to talk about doing on department seminars and bringing in guest speakers and getting all the management staff together. It was a good

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<sup>30</sup> Deborah Louise Montgomery (April 17, 1946) was the first female to complete the same academy as male recruits. She was appointed police officer September 8, 1975, and was the first Black woman promoted to sergeant November 8, 1987; lieutenant May 29, 1998; title change to commander January 1, 2000; senior commander February 8, 2003; retired July 31, 2003. She became assistant commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Public Safety 1991-1998 and was the first Black woman to serve on the Saint Paul City Council 2004-2007.

<sup>31</sup> L.E.E.P. Law Enforcement Education Program was established in 1968. The purpose of this program was to "create greater professionalism in criminal justice through higher education." The program was funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice.

nine years as you see in the books. There were a lot of significant – I mean really significant – changes in the hiring practices and police community relations and the way the police department looked at the community and vice versa. He was a cop's cop.



June 17, 1976 Graduation Ceremonies 105<sup>th</sup> Session  
FBI National Academy  
Janice Sturner, Chief of Police Richard Rowan,  
FBI Director Clarence M. Kelley, Lieutenant John Sturner



## Son John Rowan:

My name is John Rowan. I'm Richard Rowan's son. I was born in 1957 and currently live in Austin, Texas.

We grew up on 1207 Burns Avenue. That was the first house I remember. We moved there in about 1958, right on Mounds Park, and that's when I became aware that my dad was a policeman for the Saint Paul Police. We had a scanner in our living room and would listen to all the calls come in. I found that very interesting. My dad would come home for lunch just about every day when he was a detective, and I would go out and sit in his car during lunch while he would have a sandwich with my mother. And I would listen for his call sign to come through. I had strict orders that if I heard his call number, which I believe at that time was 190 – and if I heard 190, I was to run right into the house and get dad so he could come out and talk on the radio. I thought that was pretty cool, because I thought I was helping a little bit when I could do that.

Some of my favorite things were going down to the department with him on Saturday mornings and pulling into the garage downstairs and being able to go up to his office and just hang around. I loved that and I was so happy to be part of it. There was a reporter that was on the beat. At that time, the police department had their own reporter who was right in the building. His name was Nate Bomberg<sup>32</sup> and I remember every Saturday when I'd come in, Nate would be there, and Nate would always give



John Rowan  
2013

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<sup>32</sup> Nate Bomberg became a reporter in 1924 at sixteen years of age. Bomberg was a legend for having access to the whole police department, knowing the criminal code better than many officers, helping to write or edit many officers' police reports, and sometimes arrive at the crime scene before officers. He was a "leg man," as it is known in the newspaper business, calling in stories and dictating them off the top of his head—never known to use a typewriter. He knew three generations of police officers. He filed his last report January 1977 and died of a heart attack three days later.

me those great big reporter pencils that he had to sharpen with a knife. I wish I still had some of those pencils, because they would remind me of what an interesting time that was for me to be the son of Dick Rowan.

One story my dad told, which I thought illustrated his philosophy towards things, was when he was either a rookie patrolman or a fairly new patrolman and they received a call for a drunk and disorderly person up near O’Gara’s Bar in Saint Paul. And when they arrived, they found a Catholic priest who was seen to be intoxicated berating a crowd that had gathered and using some profanity. My dad was in the passenger seat of the squad car and they pulled up. He recognized what was happening right away and probably how embarrassed this priest would be after he sobered up. And there was obviously some of his congregation out there. So Dad went over and kind of took the feet out from underneath the priest and got him down and looked underneath his collar and yelled back to the driver of the police car, his partner, “Hey Joe, we’ve got a diabetic here! We’ve got to get him to the hospital right away.” And then he scooped him up and threw him into the back of the squad car and then drove away with the lights and siren on.

He drove a few blocks away and then called down to the department to the dispatch, and my dad’s father-in-law, my grandfather Tom Shanley, was in charge of the dispatch operation at that time. And he asked Tom, he says, “I’ve got a Catholic priest here who’s had too much to drink. What do you want me to do?” He said, “Where are you?” and he gave him the intersection where they were at. And he goes, “Wait there.” And Dad says it wasn’t long after that that a big black sedan pulled up and two of the biggest priests he’s ever seen got out of the car, came over, and said, “We’ll take it from here, officers.” And they went into the back and got the inebriated priest out of the car, threw him in their car, and took off.

I always thought that that illustrated to me that my dad was very concerned about the reputation of Catholic priests. It was a different time and place then. I thought

it demonstrated his degree of humanity toward people and never wanting really to get anybody in trouble and helping them as best he could.

Very interesting childhood memories to me were my dad seemed to be always working. You know, a policeman's job never ends, so when there would be something going on, my dad would want to be out there on the street and be part of it. And when there wasn't a lot of danger with it, I was always asking if I could come along with him. Most times the answer was no, but sometimes he'd say yes.

I remember one time specifically he was going as part of a stake-out. I think he was chief of detectives at the time, and he wanted to personally help stake-out and follow a particular car, a burglary suspect. And he agreed that I could come along and I remember being—he'd have me in the backseat – he'd describe to me how they would follow the car.

There'd be three cars and they'd be obviously unmarked cars and they would – I always found this interesting – to make sure they kept following the right car, they would always take a screwdriver and break the tail light of the suspect car, so if the car got into a group of other cars or similar cars, they needed to know which one to follow. So they would follow the one with the little white light coming out of the tail light. One car would be directly behind the subject and then another car would be – I remember this was on University Avenue – so then there would be one car on a side street one block north of the subject and then there'd be another car on a side street following along to the south of the subject. So then if the car pulled up, let's say, to Lexington and took a right, then the car that was on the north would get behind the car. The car that was directly behind him on University Avenue would go one block past the subject and take a right. Then the car that was to the south would maneuver itself to be then one block to the other side of the subject. So there was always three cars behind the subject, so whatever way he turned, they could put a new car behind him. Obviously, it got more complicated than that on some Saint Paul streets, but it was just a well

coordinated ballet of following someone, so they would not figure out that it was the same car behind them. As a twelve- or thirteen-year-old kid, I thought it was pretty fun to go along and witness that type of operation in action.

I remember in – it had to be in the early Seventies– the Rolling Stones had come to town and they were playing at the Saint Paul Civic Center. Dad was meeting with some undercover officers and some uniformed officers, because there was a large crowd that gathered and there was a rumor that counterfeit tickets had been distributed and sold and there was going to be a lot of irate fans. He gave his orders, you know, stay in the crowd, keep an eye on things, and then sure enough, that's exactly what happened. There were a lot of people that couldn't get in and were denied, so a riot had broke out in downtown Saint Paul.

So we were going driving around. I had never seen anything like it. It was bedlam. It was just roving groups of young people breaking windows, smashing windows on cars, so on and so forth. And we were on Wabasha Street. We were going north on Wabasha towards the capitol, and a group of kids had broken the windows of Rogers's Jewelers and were going in and running out with things and running in with things. And here my dad pulls up. I'm in the passenger seat and he's got his radio there. It's an unmarked police car and what do you do? How's he going to stop this from happening, especially when his son is right there. So I remember he stopped right in the middle of the street and he got out and he yelled, using some profanity, to "Get out of the store!" and he took out his revolver and he fired two warning shots in the air. And that really got people's attention in that store. And then he trained the gun down on them and said, "Get out of that store." and was very forceful. I'd never really heard my dad talk like that up to that point and he was very forceful. He got it accomplished and everybody got out of that store.

And then he had to watch the store and there was a policeman coming by in a squad car and he was obviously on a call with his red lights on. And Dad just hopped

on his radio. I think the policeman looked at him right as Dad got the microphone up to his mouth, and Dad just said, "Stop here!" And he screeched on his breaks and stopped. And Dad said, "I'm leaving the scene," but he said, "Here's what happened and you stay here." And the guy said, "Yes, sir, Chief." Then we took off, but that's an indelible memory for me.

There was another story that I remember again in the early Seventies. I believe it was right after, shortly after, my dad was named chief. There was a museum on the corner of Saint Peter and Kellogg Boulevard that had a burglary. One of the items that was taken was a priceless chalice, a jewel encrusted chalice. It was part of some exhibition that was going through regarding the Catholic faith. They had some tips about where they could find it. There was a lot of pressure from the Archdiocese on the police to find the chalice. The news media had gotten ahold of it and was putting out information about it and trying to find it. So the pressure had kind of come on my dad to get this.

So they had received some tips that it was out in the north Saint Paul area near the intersection of Highway 36 and Country Road 120. And I remember being out there that day and my dad had a – I believe it was a 1970 Buick Electra and that was the chief's car. The Saint Paul Police at that time had a motor home that was like a crime scene unit and they were working out of the crime scene unit. There were quite a few policemen up there, more than thirty or forty probably. They were searching on the area, searching some fields up there. I remember going to the – there was a chicken fast food place on the corner there and I remember going there with my dad and buying chicken and meals for the policemen that were working and bringing it out to them. And they're all talking about, "How are we ever going to find this thing?"

It was probably in the late winter, early spring, but there was still a lot of snow on the ground. Very difficult searching for this piece, especially when you didn't even know where you were supposed to be searching. And I could see – it was just me and

my dad driving around and I could see the pressure mounting on him about all the overtime that was stacking up and that was his responsibility now to make sure they keep overtime to a minimum. So I could see that he was grasping at "How are we going to find this?"

So he said, "To heck with this." Then he said, "We're going to go somewhere. So let's go." So I said, "Okay." So then we went over towards the East Side of Saint Paul and we were on the south side of the highway, south side of 94 near Sun Ray shopping center and there was a small rambler house there. Dad said, "You stay in the car." He says, "I'm going in." I said, "Okay." So then he went up and knocked on the door. A guy came to the door and Dad went in.

So I'm just sitting in the car and listening to the police radio and just looking around. Soon another car pulls up, an unmarked car. A couple of guys I don't know come up and knock on the window. I roll the window down and they said, "Is this the chief's car?" and I said, "Yes." And, "Who are you?" I said, "I'm his son, John." And they said, "Where's the chief?" and I said, "He's in there." And they said, "He's in there alone?!" I said, "Yes." "Okay." So then they got in their car and they pulled down the street and they waited on the side of the street.

So shortly after that, Dad came out of the house and said, "Let's go!" He talked to the other detectives that were there and then they went racing out to the intersection of 120 and 36 again. Then we went down to where the crime scene unit motor home was and said, "Everybody pile in. Follow me." Then he drove down the road a few miles farther and then he directed some people to the left side of the road. He said, "You guys search over here." Then he drove up a ways and then on the right side of the road he goes, "You guys search in there." They had their metal detectors and things like that. And sure enough, shortly after that, they found both pieces of the chalice. They found one piece of the chalice on one side of the road and then the top of the chalice on the other side of the road.



I remember Dad felt real good about that, and the Archdiocese and the news media all reported it. So I asked Dad after that, I said, "Who was that guy and how did you do that?" and he said, "Well, I knew that guy was involved. That guy's a crook," he said. "But I know him and so I went to him and I just explained to him that, 'You've heard the news reports. I'm sure you don't want any part of that and I'm not looking to get anybody in trouble. I just want that chalice back!'" And the guys really didn't respond and he says, "Now I know you probably had nothing to do with it. I'm just asking because I know that's kind of your line of work. If it were you, hypothetically, what would you do? How would you dispose of something like that that you didn't want to have no part of?" And the guy says, "Hypothetically, Chief?" And he says, "You're not going to get in trouble. Hypothetically, I just want your expert opinion how you would dispose of something like that." And he goes, "Okay, Chief. I trust you." He says, "Well, for me, Chief, I probably would have gotten some chicken at that little chicken spot right there on the corner, and then I'd be going, 'Jesus, what have I gotten myself into here?' And I'd say, 'I gotta get rid of this.' There'd be a snowstorm going on and I'd be eating my chicken and I'd say, 'You know, I might as well get rid of it right here.'" He says, "If it were me, Chief, that's what I would do." And he says, "So I'd roll down my window and I'd grab the base of it and my hands would be a little greasy from the chicken, so I'd kind of throw it out but not get a real good throw on it. It'd be pretty close to the side of the road, you know, up about two miles or so." Then he said, "The other piece," he said, "I'd be going about thirty miles an hour and I'd roll down that window, and as long as it would take me to reach over and roll down the other window and grab that other piece, then I'd throw that one out." He says, "I believe if there was a ditch or a grove of trees, I'd probably throw it right in there." He says, "Now, Chief, that'd just be me. If it were me to do that, that's how I would have done it." And my dad said, "Thank you very much," and left.

I remember just shaking my head and feeling a lot of pride that Dad was able to do that. And that he was trusted even by people that he was out to catch. They still trusted him and they trusted his word. And that made me feel real good.

Well, I just remember how proud I was to be the son of Richard Rowan who rose to be the chief of police in Saint Paul and just the honor and integrity that he had throughout his career and to see how he was respected by the officers on the department. Even by the criminals. They all respected him and understood his job and what it was to do that job.



1979

### **Retired Businessman John Nasseff.<sup>33</sup>**

John Nasseff, Saint Paul. I's born and raised here. Lived my life here. Well, I was property manager at West Publishing Company. I wanted to get a good rapport with the fire department and the police department for the safely and protection of our employees and our building, our properties. I knew the police chief and the fire chief through our work. The



John Nasseff

chief who was before him, but I knew that chief, McAuliffe. And then after him was a good friend of mine. He took over when Chief Rowan retired. It was Bill McCutcheon. He's down in – he moved to Texas and I've talked to him once or twice since then. He was a great guy.

We supported the fire department and the police department back then. That's how I got to know the chiefs and the fire chief. And so we kept in contact with them and supported their causes and had a good relationship, because they needed us and we needed them.

Well, Chief Rowan. He was known as the cop's cop. In street vernacular, he was a blood and guts guy. He did what he thought was right and to hell with the laws. You know, I mean, to a certain degree. He didn't molly-coddle people. He was fair. He was more than fair. He was a good guy, well liked by everyone. Had a good personality. Had a wonderful voice, used to sing a lot. Irish songs. Didn't drink too much, not with me, anyway. But we visited often. He had a nice family. Got to know his wife and his children – some of his children – and we had a good relationship.

The only thing that's outstanding in my memory about Dick Rowan is we had a very good relationship and one summer he asked me – his son came in, John – and he was graduated from high school. And he was going to go to college, but he had to work

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<sup>33</sup> John M. Nasseff, retired vice president of West Publishing and well-known Minnesota philanthropist.

for the summer. The chief made his kids work, raised a good family. John came in and applied for a summer job and we hired a lot of students in the summertime at West Publishing. Children of our employees and friends. So we used a lot of students during summertime.

So I hired John and, by gosh, he was a fireball. He was really good. I mean, intelligence and politeness. He had everything that goes with being a successful person, so I'd give him more responsibility and he'd accept it and take it. He did very well. I was really impressed with him and we were growing. West was growing at the time. We were expanding. We were getting new machinery and new presses. We were growing and my responsibility was to keep the facilities operating well and expanding as needed, and I figured, "Boy, this guy's got a lot of balls. I'm going to talk to him." He came to me in the fall of the year and he said, "Well, Mr. Nasseff, I'm going to give you two weeks notice. I'm going to leave and go back to school. I'm going to go back to college." And I says, "Oh, you don't want to do that. We got a better job here. You got a better future here." "No," he says, "I got to get a diploma." And I say, "What is a diploma?" I said, "A diploma is an attendance certificate. It tells you that you went to that school for X number of months or years. It doesn't tell how good you are. It gives you your marks, but it doesn't tell what your abilities are." And I says, "And all that diploma will do for you is open doors for an interview after you spend three or four years in college." And I says, "You're going to take that diploma and apply for different jobs different places depending on the economy." I says, "It's a crapshoot. But now, you're sitting on a golden chair right here. That door is open for you and we're growing and expanding. And I'm not going to promise you anything, but if you stay working here, I'll guarantee you that you'll advance at the company further than you could most any other place. The door is open to you." He said, "Let me think about it." I says, "Okay."

So, two days later he called and wanted an appointment to see me. I called him in the office and sat down and he says, "Well, I thought about your offer and decided to take it." And I says, "Well, that proves I was right. You're very smart and you got a lot of ability." So we discussed what he'd do and where we'd use him and things like that, you know. And that was the end of it.

Well, boy, that night I got a call at home from the chief. And he says, "God damn you! What the hell did you do, talk my kid out of going to college?" He says, "I want him to get a diploma." And boy, I couldn't calm him down. He was just furious with me. So after I tried calling him back, and he cussed me out again. So finally I met with him and I explained to him as I explained to John what his future would be. "Well," he said, "The kid's got his own mind and he decided to stay with you. But I don't agree with it!" And I says, "Well, in time you will, Chief." And he did.

In later years, he thanked me several times for taking John into the company. So that was my biggest deal I had going with the chief personally, personality-wise.

John – he ended up in charge of – one of my – an assistant to me. He was the right hand man to me and I used him in many areas. I used him for – we'd have trouble installing some telephone lines maybe in Puerto Rico, or with the phone company expanding, and I would send him out. I sent him to different cities to do different things for me that I didn't have time to do. He was more qualified than I was in some areas because of his personality and because of his ability, you know. And so I used him a lot. He was my right hand man in many areas and to prove that I was right, when we sold the company and he retired – that was fourteen years ago – he hasn't worked since. [laughs] He made enough – and I encouraged the president to give him stock in the company, which he did, so he was a stockholder. So he had a nice little nest egg when he retired and didn't have to work anymore. So, I was right.

When he retired as a chief, we built Eagan. Massive facility over a million square feet in several buildings. I think we had like four or five security people, but we put in a

big multi-million dollar computer room and we really wanted some security out there. So, I hired the chief to work for West part time – he didn't do full time – and he could hire the security staff we needed and see that the right systems were put in place for alarm systems. So he did a good job for us. So he worked for us; he worked part time for a monthly salary. Several years before he retired. Then he moved out of town.

As I said, he was really an honorable man. He treated everybody well. He was very helpful to many people, especially the cops that needed anything. He was very helpful to them. If you stepped on his toes, boy, you knew it. He didn't make any bones about coming down on somebody if they did wrong. So everyone had the fear of him, but he was good in other ways. I mean, he'd make it up. He was a great guy. We miss him.



### Retired Mayor George Latimer<sup>34</sup>:



George Latimer

I'm George Latimer. I was mayor of Saint Paul from 1976 to 1990 (six terms).

I never met Chief Rowan, nor did I know much about him until I was elected mayor. There was an occasion in the middle of the campaign when my opponent, George Vavoulis,<sup>35</sup> who had been a Republican mayor in Saint Paul for six years in the Sixties, came back to run for the open seat that he and I were contesting in 1976. In his campaign, during the spring of '76 – that would be in March to April of '76 – told the press that I had made a commitment that I was going to remove Chief Rowan as soon as I became mayor.

Apparently, they did that because Chief Rowan was highly regarded and, of course, since I had come from the liberal side of the city and the politics, I think the plan was to make me sound as though I was anti-cop and anti-Rowan. And I said to the press, "That's the first I heard of it. Not only was it untrue about that, but I don't even have a commitment of anyone for any position. And I won't until I'm elected. I'm going to look over everybody's work." So that was part of the background.

But moving to the more interesting part of this story is I was elected on April 27th of 1976. I was to take office on June 1st of '76. And someone will have to check my memory against this factor, but I believe it was during that window of time that Chief

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<sup>34</sup> George Latimer (born 1935) attended Columbia Law School and practiced law in Saint Paul from 1963 - 1976; mayor of Saint Paul 1976 - 1990; dean of Hamline University's law school from 1990 - 1993; special adviser to Henry Cisneros, President Bill Clinton's Housing and Urban Development secretary, from 1993 to 1995; visiting professor of Urban Studies and Geography at Macalester College in Saint Paul 1996 - \_\_; CEO of the National Equity Fund 1996-1998; served on the Kennedy School of Government Executive Session on Policy at Harvard University and as Regent of the University of Minnesota.

<sup>35</sup> George J. Vavoulis was Saint Paul's mayor 1960 - 1966

Rowan's reappointment came up. I knew that the power to appoint him was occurring in that spring. And Larry Cohen,<sup>36</sup> whom I had known fairly well – not intimately, but fairly well – before he was mayor and less so after he was mayor, Larry called me up, more or less cold the way he would, and he asked if I would come over to his office. And this, of course – he was very kind once I was elected and very friendly, but he was very kind in that he introduced me to other mayors and all that kind of thing. So it wasn't unusual for him to call me cold after I was elected and say, "Would you come over to the office?" So I came over and, lo and behold, alone with the mayor in the mayor's office, is Chief Rowan. And I was sort of taken aback. Didn't know what was up. Sat down. And Larry Cohen basically – not basically – he said, "As you know, the power to appoint him is occurring right now, so if he's the chief, he'll be your chief going forward. So I'm prepared to do whatever you want me to do. I will either not reappoint him or I will reappoint him. Whatever you want to do."

Well, needless to say, flashing through my labyrinthian brain was two or three thoughts. One: "Really! What a tacky thing to do." If the mayor had wanted to make me such an offer, he did not need to try to humiliate the chief in that manner. Secondly of course, I thought, "Well, this poor guy. He doesn't know me. I'm a bearded guy from the East Coast. I'm a liberal. I have no doubt that he probably thinks that I did want to remove him. I'd never talked to him."

I should tell you, by the way, that I had used McCutcheon a lot in preparing to run for mayor in the two or three months it took for me to run for mayor. Not politically, but as a way of understanding policing, and he and I talked about team policing on the West Side and the seeds of community policing were begun by then.

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<sup>36</sup> Laurence Cohen was Ramsey County Commissioner, 1970-1972; City of Saint Paul's Mayor 1972-1976; Ramsey County/Second Judicial District Judge 1988 – 2004.

And so I had used McCutcheon, and he and I had met several times and he had coached me and tutored me about what the issues were. He and I never talked about who the chief should be or anything of the kind.

So I looked at the chief and I looked the chief and I looked at Larry and I said, “Mayor, you are the mayor until June 1. You should do what you think is best for the city. And when I become mayor after June one, I will do that. But I don’t intend” – I sound a little bit like Obama,<sup>37</sup> but I really do believe that really strictly that you can’t be making decisions of that kind. Plus, lo and behold, I was telling the truth in the campaign, which is that I didn’t have an opinion about who would be the best people. So that’s what happened on that occasion.

Therefore, when I became mayor, Rowan was the chief. And I worked with him as chief from then until the time of his retirement. The interesting thing is that notwithstanding the beginning, I think it took – now, I can’t document this factually. I’m now sharing with you my perception. My perception was that in the first years with Chief Rowan, I don’t think he had what I would call an unfettered trust in me and my leadership. [laughs] And I tested this at the conclusion of his tenure and he verified it. And that is basically – I was a liberal and he really was, everything about him, he was a cop’s cop. He was a strong professional, but definitely of the old school.

I can remember – this is a good example. Whenever it was that we were talking about – at the time the police were raiding bathhouses for homosexual conduct – I had a very strict policy of not telling the cops what to do. I just believe strongly in separation between the civilian and the police decisions. And obviously it’s policy that becomes important. And the only time I can remember ever really confronting a police chief, whether McCutcheon or Rowan, it was based on what I thought was an understood policy. And they didn’t disagree about that.

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<sup>37</sup> Barack Hussein Obama the 44th President of the United States 2009 – 2016.

But, relative to the homosexuality, I can remember him telling me – and I could just feel his sincerity – it had nothing to do with me telling him to enforce the law or not, because I wasn't going to do that. But he said, "Well, you know, Mayor, fine and dandy to say everybody should have the human rights and all that." He said, "But it's so disgusting when you see the—" In other words, he was so repulsed by the physical acts of homosexuality that he just shared it with me, you know. I said, "Well, I understand that." But I don't remember where that conversation went. I don't even know when it occurred. But it was a sidebar rather than a policy decision that we were talking about.

So my relations with the chief were always proper and arms length. And it took several years before I thought that we really had a very trusting relationship. Chief Rowan chose good people and strong people, and he was very comfortable with himself in being the leader and letting them manage. And so on the operation side he had McCutcheon, and McCutcheon is an operations guy. I never talked to Chief Rowan about this, but needless to say, the chief, like a mayor, has a benefit of having a strong chief operating officer, because when a bone or two is broken, he's not the one who did it. [laughs heartily]

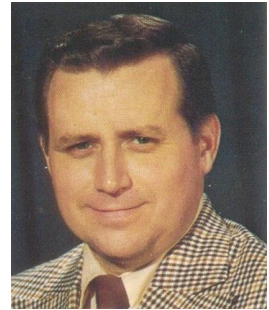
I never asked Chief Rowan that, but there is that benefit of nominating a chief operating officer. But he did the same thing on the not-operating side with LaBathe.<sup>38</sup> LaBathe was a wonderful detective. Strong, thoughtful, and just a great professional. And at the same time, you had a guy named Sergeant Joe Corcoran<sup>39</sup> who started electronic fingerprinting.

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<sup>38</sup> Robert F. LaBathe was appointed patrolman July 6, 1948; promoted to detective September 16, 1955; deputy chief April 17, 1964; acting chief April 1, 1970; returned to deputy chief June 30, 1970; emergency chief January 1, 1980; deputy chief April 2, 1980; retired July 18, 1986.

<sup>39</sup> Joseph Kane Corcoran was appointed patrolman March 2, 1964; promoted to sergeant October 3, 1970; lieutenant March 24, 1990; and retired March 27, 1998.

You know, the first fingerprinting that we did in the country was really a pro bono gift, because Corcoran was such a student of detecting and fingerprinting that he was reading the literature and he saw this company called Digital Biometrics, whose board I was on years later after I left the city. Anyway. He read the literature, and he knew what they were for the first time, electronically. So they agreed with our department to start that system here as a pilot. From that, it's grown a nationally. I'm not saying we were the only department to be doing such. But we sure were the first one in Minnesota.



Sergeant Joe  
Corcoran  
1978

I'm not prepared to say whether Chief Rowan conceived of that. But clearly he chose such good people and he supported them in doing good professional work. That's very characteristic of him to have done it. Just as McCutcheon began the seeds of community policing on the West Side with team policing. Chief Rowan obviously supported that innovation even though he might not have conceived it.

I literally have no idea of what the inner conversations were between the chief and the deputy. It's not an area that I would ever intervene on. Just rarely. There were a few times in the early years, and they were not frequent, in which I would call the chief about something that bothered me.

And I remember both of them had to do with Summit/University. I had spent a lot of time in Summit/University on the school board. We started the Webster Magnet School in the early Seventies when I was on the school board. So I'd known the community well and the community leaders well. And two episodes I remember vividly. I was present at a meeting and a woman -- not elderly, probably in her forties, African-American -- said to me, "You know, if I were walking down the street alone at one o'clock in the morning and a car pulled over and made a proposition, I would be offended, but at least I would understand, you know." She said, "But you know, Mayor,

if it's three o'clock in the afternoon and I'm walking my twelve-year-old kid home, and I have a john pull over and..." she said, "That's just awful and wrong."

I was just totally hurt, felt badly for her and the fact that that kind of thing was occurring. So I called the chief and I said, "You know, Chief, I haven't been very attentive. But I understand that it's very common in Selby/Dale for johns to pull over and proposition African-American women assuming that they're prostitutes." And I said, "There should be a way of pushing back and making that rare instead of common." And I remember him saying to me, because he was the old school, he said, "Well, Mayor, we can stop down there and push it out. But understand when we do that is like stepping on a balloon. Sure as we're talking, that activity will simply move where we're not. And so it would just move out to University Avenue."

He was absolutely right. We did both. We did, I think. I never followed the detail, but it was obvious he started pushing it. And just as obvious that in the Eighties, the big problem was University and Dale, and north of University in Frogtown,<sup>40</sup> where I went to ride around to see that same activity. So he was conservative in the sense that he understood crime and the management of safety, but he also was very sober about the limits of what we were going to be able to get rid of, you know.

The only other time I remember calling him to complain really was a homeowner from Summit/U told me that when he – "You know, we were burglarized and while the cop is interviewing us about the details, before he leaves, he says, 'You know, if people like you don't expect to get burglarized, you shouldn't be living in this neighborhood.'" [laughs] Well, I'm laughing, but obviously I thought, "Well, that's ridiculous." So I called the chief. I said, "You know, Chief, you know I never stick my nose into individual police conduct. That's your job." I said, "But the report came back to me and

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<sup>40</sup> Frogtown or Thomas –Dale Neighborhood are terms that refers to the area in Saint Paul that is enclosed by Lexington on the west, Pierce Butler route on the north, I-35 Freeway on the east, and University Avenue on the south.



I hear too often that something that happens, and you can even see it in police reports on the Hill,<sup>41</sup> or up on the Hill.” I said, “I get the feeling that our police treat something that happens up on the hill as different than somewhere else.” And I said, “You know, that’s a wash.” He said, “Mayor, you’re absolutely right.” And then he said, “In fact, I have told cops that I don’t want them talking about one neighborhood being too bad to live in and that kind of thing.” So we understood each other on that.

With just those few examples I’ve given are the only exceptions to what grew to be a very respectful and, I think, productive relationship. Because I knew that the troops and the public trusted Chief Rowan and that was good enough for me. And gradually we did have, I thought, a pretty good working relationship.

There was a famous liquor investigation, infamous one. And the county attorney was not investigating certain infractions including illegal arms in the trunk of a character who otherwise the citizens supported his work. And I threatened to refer the matter to the federal district. In fact, I told the chief, I said, “Just tell the county attorney that evidence of arms in a trunk – I don’t care if the Archbishop is driving the car – you’ve got to look into that.” And they said, “Well, you’re right.” And I said, “Well, just tell the county attorney that if he doesn’t pursue that, then I’m going to refer it to the federals.” There are other pieces to that, but I don’t remember any resistance to my recommendation to pursue this as a matter of law and enforce the law.

I don’t know why, but that’s mixed together in my mind with the only other alleged illegal activity which I was more or less forced into examining more closely than I felt being mayor required. And I think the reason – and I refer now to the so-called liquor investigations – we had had patrol limits with a certain number of liquor licenses. And that policy is fraught with problems, because it’s like medallions in the

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<sup>41</sup> West of downtown are bluffs, where the Saint Paul Cathedral sits. These neighborhoods have often been referred to as Cathedral Hill. In the 1970s, the greater area around Selby-Dale would have been referred to as the Hill.

cabs in New York. They become more and more valuable, because you can't build any more taverns. And the guy who owns the liquor license can get up to \$50,000 or \$75,000 for a piece of paper. People get crazy about that kind of money.

So, whatever, there came charges that there was some kind of collusion or improper conduct with our license inspection operation and the liquor owners and all of all that. And so, as a consequence, it was my job as mayor to review the personnel – some of the records – in order to support what, if any, discipline we would take administratively. And I've forgotten who brought it to me, but I ended up reading police reports. And since I was a civil lawyer, labor and worker's comp as a practitioner, I really never paid attention to criminal law. I never read criminal records or any of that until I was mayor.

And I started reading those and my respect for and my understanding of sympathy for the old school police tightlipped approach to talking about crime was greatly increased when I read those records, because those records were filled with every prominent name in the city sprinkled throughout it. And if you ever just published it raw, it would have been devastating. It would have been defamatory. And in many, many, most cases it would have been false, which is what makes it defamatory.

And I was very – it made me respectful, and I don't think the public fully appreciates this, and that is, the police are trained to gather whatever they can gather about an incident. And that goes, like garbage, undigested but thrown into that file. And it is only after the detective work of analyzing it and sifting it through, that those judgments are made of which allegations are totally without merit, and they're separated. But the job of a good cop is not to make those judgments at the front end, but rather only after all the allegations have been amassed and then see.

What I'm saying now is probably well known through all the detective stories and the movies and all that stuff. But at the time, it was an eye-opener to me about how

much professionalism is required by all of our police from the street cop all the way up to the chief, so that the privacy of innocent persons be protected as well as going after the bad guys.

When you think about the Rowan tenure, it was not perfect. Life is not perfect. But it was a pretty strong, solid record of professionalism, and it's not an accident that Saint Paul now, and over the past years, has demonstrated its faith and confidence in our police. And it's not true in every city. And I don't say it's true of everyone in this city, but by and large there's a trust level for our police in Saint Paul. And I've observed it from the time I landed here in the Sixties, and certainly while I was mayor with Rowan. And so Rowan's ten years certainly extended and deepened that reputation for professionalism, integrity, toughness, but fairness. I think that was his characteristic. That's the way the department and the offices were viewed.

And then successive chiefs and years, I think, have deepened that. Every once in a while, we fall into a pothole and a mistake occurs or wrongdoing occurs, but over time, compared to most cities in America, it's a pretty good record and Chief Rowan certainly deserves an important level of credit. The quality of people that he brought up and surrounded himself with and supported, and the integrity of his work. And so when he finally retired, he actually – I don't remember whether I only gave a windy long speech or whether I was the MC, but I certainly was welcome and sat at the table with him. In other words, when we parted at his retirement, it was not only with respect for each other, but also affection. But that isn't the way it began. [laughs]



**Toast to the Chief**  
**Retirement Dinner June 6, 1979**  
Minnesota Ballroom, Radisson Saint Paul Hotel

Chief and Mrs. Rowan kissing on left  
Mayor George Latimer clapping on right

## Retired Chief William Finney:<sup>42</sup>



Bill Finney  
1999

My name is William Kelso Finney, referred to as Bill Finney. Nickname's Corky. I'm a former Saint Paul police officer. I served the Saint Paul Police Department from January of 1971 to July 1st, 2004. My last twelve years, from 1992 to 2004, I was chief of police. I served in many functions of the police department and had a wonderful career serving my hometown.

I was hired by Chief Richard Rowan in 1971. Chief Rowan was chief of police from 1970 to 1980, and I can recall very, very vividly Chief Rowan walking up and introducing himself to those of us that had gotten through the screening process to what was then called The Demonstration School. It was a series of coming in on weeknights for four hours and being exposed for two weeks to what the academy was going to be. And at some point in those two weeks of evenings, Chief Rowan came in along with then-Mayor of the city, Charley McCarty,<sup>43</sup> Super-Mayor. And they addressed us and said they'd only wanted to hire thirty police officers and there were thirty-two of us present. So we were all concerned about which two were going to get whacked. But he said that since they needed the police officers, they had gotten counsel authorization and the mayor's approval to hire all thirty-two. If we all successfully graduated from the two week demonstration school, we'd all be going to the police academy in January of 1971.

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<sup>42</sup> William "Corky" Kelso Finney was appointed patrolman January 4, 1971; promoted to sergeant April 1 1978; the first Black male promoted to lieutenant March 8, 1982; captain February 23, 1987; and Saint Paul's first Black chief July 17, 1992; and retired June 30, 2004.

<sup>43</sup> Charles P. McCarty was Saint Paul's mayor 1970 - 1972

And so, at the end of that, we were all kind of funneling out. It was the family night and you brought your wife or your mother or your father and they all had a chance to kind of look over the department. It was a wonderful event. And as I was walking toward the door, Chief Rowan was standing there, as well as the mayor. And the mayor said, "Well, I suppose you'll be happy, Mr. Finney, when March comes around." And I said, "March, sir?" He says, "Well, isn't that when you get off risk insurance for driving." [laughs] And Chief Rowan said, "Yes, that is when he gets off." [laughs] I had a heavy foot in my teen years and, as a result of getting several tickets for speeding and hot-rodding, I had to pay more money for insurance. At that time, insurance was called SR22 insurance with cost about a dollar a day just to keep your license, which was a lot of money then. Pretty reasonable now, I guess, but it was a lot of money then. So they were very aware of who I was and what my background was.



Officer Finney  
1971

The chiefs of police, for those of us that are young, rookie patrol officers, was an entity that you really didn't contact with much. I mean, sergeant was probably the ranking officer you most had the contact with and occasionally a lieutenant, your platoon commander. But captains were in the watch commander's office. Unless you had an arrest, you didn't see a captain, you know. And those guys were way up there. But the chief of police? Oh, my God. So it was like whenever he walked through the hallway, those of us that were lesser beings, [laughing] patrol officers, kind of got out of his way real quick. Not that he was a mean person. He certainly wasn't. It was just that the title was just so awe-inspiring to young patrol officers.

But Rowan was always someone that would talk. I mean, I would walk down the hallway. I'd say, "How's it going, Chief?" And he's go, "Hello, young Officer Finney." And he says, "How're you doing out there on patrol?" "Just fine, sir." "Well, that's



good. You keep up the good work.” And he’d move on. From my earliest time on the job, when he first put my first badge—my silver badge said *Patrol Man* -- my patrolman badge on me.

And then, on April 1st of 1978, I got promoted to sergeant and it was Chief Rowan who put the badge on me. And that was kind of unusual. We didn’t have the formal ceremonies for



Badge 1940 -1985

promotion back then, especially as sergeant. Usually what happens is you got a letter from civil service that said that you’d been selected for sergeant, and then it said report to the chief’s secretary. Her name was Lorraine.<sup>44</sup> And you saw Lorraine and she’d open the drawer and she’d reach in there and hand you a sergeant badge and say, “Congratulations.” It wasn’t even the chief that handed you the badge back then.

But in my instance, Chief Rowan invited me into his office, and it was during the middle of the day. I had just come from my downtown foot beat, went into his office, and he pinned the badge on me. Took some pictures and it was an event for Saint Paul Police Department in that I was the second African-American officer ever to make rank in the history of the Saint Paul Police Department. So I was the second ranking [African-American] officer for the Saint Paul Police Department, Griffin<sup>45</sup> being the first. And he was sergeant and he made it in 1954, and then I made it in 1978. And so that was an interesting – Rowan did that. Chief Rowan put my badge on me.

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<sup>44</sup> Lorraine Flaherty was hired as provisional junior clerk steno September 10, 1963; certified junior clerk steno October 1, 1963; certified junior clerk steno II January 7, 1964; certified clerk III August 14, 1976; and retired December 31, 1980.

<sup>45</sup> James Stafford Griffin (July 6, 1917 – November 23, 2002) was appointed reserve patrolman August 6, 1941; full patrolman August 1942; the first Black male to be promoted to sergeant September 16, 1955; captain March 2, 1970; and deputy chief October 6, 1972; and retired August 31, 1983.

Now, there was probably – I have the most vivid memories of Chief Rowan after I became chief of police. And the reason being is that I never saw him as an equal. I still saw him as chief of police [laughs], but I saw him as a person that helped me with wisdom. I always was taught to respect elders and people that had earned their positions. One of the first calls I got after I made chief of police was a call from Retired Chief Rowan who said, “Congratulations, young officer Finney, on becoming chief.” [laughs] That’s a pretty good guy.

I had a perplexing time. I had an officer who off-duty had molested his fourteen-year-old babysitter in another city and he was arrested for it. I promptly suspended that officer, but he was a veteran, so he was entitled to get paid until such time as his case was dealt with. So I suspended him with pay, because that’s what I had to do and I would have brought him back to the department to work at some desk assignment, except that the women at the department, the civilian women, didn’t want anything to do with him. Didn’t want him around there and there was threatening to be quite a controversy. So we just let him sit at home.

That position went on for a bit and he plead guilty to a gross misdemeanor in the town of Cottage Grove, where the offense happened, rather than a felony he was originally charged with. And so that allowed him to still retain his badge. Not satisfied with that, I fired him. And it was a moral turpitude issue. A police officer has many opportunities to molest children and I just wasn’t going to put him back in a uniform.

We went to arbitration and there was an arbitrator by the name of Charlotte Nye who ruled in the case that he had done his penalty and there was no reason why he shouldn’t be a police officer. In fact, it was none of the Saint Paul Police Department’s business what happened to him in this situation and that I had to make him whole. Well, he was already being paid, so that wasn’t the issue. But she says, “You have to put him back to work as a police officer.”

And I was in a hand-wringing time about how to address that, because I was bound to honor that ruling. And I got a call from Chief Rowan who put steel in my back. He says, "I heard about your situation, Chief." I says, "I cannot believe this arbitrator ruled the way she ruled." He says, "Well! She did." He says, "Now, you have to pay this guy, but you don't ever have to put him back to work." And all of a sudden the light bulb went on and I said, "You're absolutely right." He says, "Do that. Continue to pay him," he says, "and move forward."

And then I realized, "You know, if this guy had molested a child in his home, he probably has done some other types of criminal behavior on the job." I brought out a soapbox and I stood on it and I complained very loudly to the media about the ruling of the arbitrator. "It was just unconscionable. How could a man plead guilty to molesting a child and expect to be a police officer?" And I said, "There's just no way—" I said, "This is my reasoning. I and the citizens of Saint Paul have to pay this guy because of her ruling, but I will never put him back in a Saint Paul Police uniform." And so he sued me.

Shortly thereafter, we got a call from a young lady who was seventeen years old who had been molested by him *on* duty. And so we were able to bring that charge and able to dismiss him on that one. But it was Chief Rowan who made me understand that. "Yeah, the ruling says you got to pay him, but it doesn't say you got to put him back in that uniform." He said, "Never put that guy back in uniform again." I says, "You're right, Chief. It'll never happen here. They're going to have to drag my dead body out of here over that one." And so, that's what it was.

And I got a lot of support from the police union who said, "There's no way in the world we'd want that guy wearing our badge and our uniform." And so, I didn't have any detractors from that except his attorneys and, as it was, we prevailed in that and we were able to dismiss him on the second charge. And Rowan was very, very helpful.

And so we regularly communicated right up until the time he passed about matters having to do with police work. Just seeking the wisdom of guidance of an old chief, of somebody who had walked in the shoes of Saint Paul police chief was very, very helpful for me. I had Deputy Chief Jim Griffin [personal friend to Finney since a young boy], but I had Chief Rowan also.

I would call him up and I'd say, "Did anything like this ever happen to you, Chief?" [Laughs] "Oh, yeah, yeah. Yeah, yeah." I'd say, "What did you do?" "Well," he said, "But this is now the 1990s, Finney." He said, "You got to figure out what's applicable for you." And I'd say, "Okay, but I want to run this past you. Let's have a cup of coffee." And so, we would. I never called him Richard or Dick. I always called him Chief Rowan. Chief, that was his first name to me. And so he was very good and very, very helpful for me. And, like I said, when I think of chiefs, I always consider him *my* chief of police. Still.