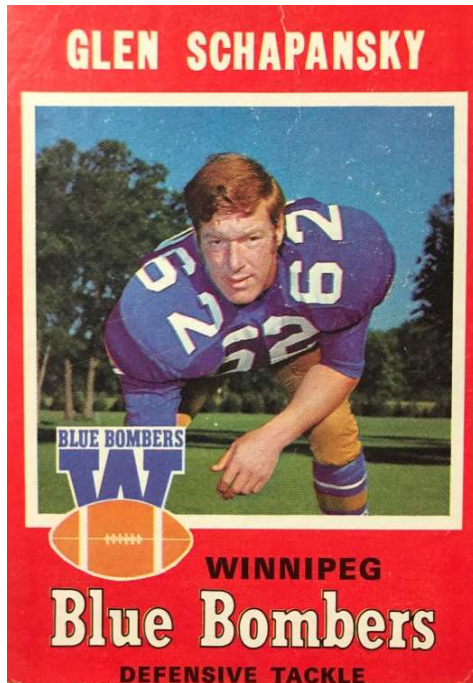

ALLEN (GLEN) SCHAPANSKY

Constable #941

*Written & researched by John Burchill
July 25, 2021. Winnipeg Police Museum*



1971 O-Pee-Chee Card #29. J. Burchill Coll.

On August 5, 2021, the Winnipeg Blue Bombers will return to IG Field for the first time in more than 20 months since winning the Grey Cup on November 24, 2019.

To celebrate the return of the Canadian Football League (CFL) champions to Winnipeg, I take a step back and remember one of our own who wore the blue and gold.

I had the opportunity to work on the same shift as Glen Schapansky after I started in 1987. He never brought in a lot of arrests, but standing 6'3" and weighing 255 pounds, I wonder if his size and gregarious nature quieted more than a few disturbances when he showed up.

Glen grew up in Fort Garry. With his size, he started playing football at age 11 with the Fort Garry Lions and remained with the club at the junior and juvenile levels for the next six years. At 17 he joined the Weston Wildcats in the Manitoba-Saskatchewan Junior Football League.

The Manitoba-Saskatchewan Junior Football League was formed in 1953, with the Winnipeg Rods (became the St. James Rods in 1959) and the Weston Wildcats, competing against the Regina Rams and the Saskatoon Hilltops. The winner advanced to the western final, and the Canadian Junior National Championship afterwards.

The Manitoba-Saskatchewan Junior Football League carries on today as part of the Prairie Conference of the Canadian Junior Football League. The Winnipeg Rifles is the only Manitoba team today, playing out of the same IG Field as the Bombers.

After a few winning seasons with the Lions, by 1965 Glen was making a name for himself as a defensive tackle with the Weston Wildcats, where he drew the attention of the Winnipeg Blue Bombers for his "brilliant" defensive play during the finals against Saskatoon. As a result, he was invited to the Bombers 1966 rookie development camp; however, he did not make the cut.

Juvenile All-Stars

Fort Garry Lions made a clean sweep of the individual awards in the Manitoba Juvenile Football League this season according to official results released today.

Rick Bracken was voted the league's Most Valuable Player, John Milne of St. Boniface Broncos runner up. Lion's Garry Hobson was named All-Star coach with Dave Laer of Fort Garry All-Star manager.

Missing from the pictures below is Larry Gernschieid of Hawkeyes who was voted an interior linebacking spot on the defensive team.

Lions and Broncos clash Sunday at 2 p.m. at the Norwood Flood Bowl in the first game of the two-game, total-point final.

Here's the offence ...



Blair Schapansky centre LIONS
Doug Falley guard BRONCS
John Mazer tackle HAWKEYES
John Hill end LIONS



Ross Richardson guard LIONS
Glen Schapansky tackle LIONS
Terry Angus end BRONCS
Bob Reye quarterback LIONS



Rick Bracken halfback LIONS
Henry Bryner halfback BRONCS
Al Colomy halfback TRANSCONA
Ernie Kuszyak halfback HAWKEYES

1964 Juvenile Football All-Stars
Winnipeg Tribune, October 31, 1964

benefit him for the rest of his life. He apprenticed with Winnipeg Metro Transit and, after he graduated, continued with Transit for the remainder of his football career (Glen's work schedule at Transit could accommodate the Bombers' strict evening practice and travel requirements. However, no police department with its 24/7 schedule including evenings and weekends could).

Unfortunately on July 26, 1971, Glen didn't make the Bombers' final cuts when they had to trim their roster down to 18 Canadians, and the team decided to go with younger players Bob Kraemer and Pete Ribbins. Glen was traded to the Montreal Alouettes, then to the Calgary Stampeders, and finally to Hamilton where he played four games before hanging up the cleats.



JUVENILE CHAMPS: Fort Garry Lions won their third juvenile football championship in four years Sunday when they defeated Winnipeg Hawkeyes in the final. Back row, left to right: Rick Bracken, Bill Dmitruk, Joe Andrews, Blair Schapansky, Bryan Lape, Brian Gibson, Grant Chadle, Glen Schapansky, Vic Temple and Ross Richardson. Second row: Bill Cessford, Brian Wood, Lannie Powell, Curt Krentz, Bernie Moore, John Hill, Garry Montgomery, Pete Little, Terry Grant. Third row: Glen Hallett, Larry Shields, Jim Wood, Wayne Wiser, Jim Roberts, Bill Malcolm, Ron Wilkinson, Wayne Elliott, Tim Fast, David Rowe, Alf Chapman, equipment manager. Front row: Jack James, president, Pete Nable, Scott Halmgren, Dr. W. Neal, assistant coach, Jim Saper, Ken McCullough, Bob Rye, Gary Hobson, head coach, Derek Miller, Bob Kaptain, Ron Guarino, Russ Meckling. Richard Ritchie is pictured above Coach Hobson.

**MADISON CLUB PRESENTS
ALL STAR WRESTLING
NOTRE DAME AUDITORIUM
TUESDAY NIGHT - 8:30 P.M.
MAIN EVENT - HEAVYWEIGHT TAG TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP**

1963 Fort Garry Lions, Juvenile Football Champions

In May 1967 Glen was back at the Bombers rookie camp and this time he cracked the lineup. He was one of the few players to make the jump from junior to professional football. He would compete in all 16 games of the Bomber's regular schedule but unfortunately missed the playoffs.

Glen was back for 1968, 69 and 1970 seasons, playing in a total of 64 Bombers games.

In the off-season, Glen was enrolled at Red River Community College taking their Automotive Mechanics Technician trades program. The skills Glen obtained during that program would benefit him for the rest of his life. He apprenticed with Winnipeg Metro Transit and, after he graduated, continued with Transit for the remainder of his football career (Glen's work schedule at Transit could accommodate the Bombers' strict evening practice and travel requirements. However, no police department with its 24/7 schedule including evenings and weekends could).

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*Glen receives expert advice from Bomber Veterans Sherwyn Thorson and Frank Rigney
Winnipeg Free Press, September 16, 1967*



*Glen (No. 64), lines up with Bill Whisler, John Neponick and Jim Avery,
Winnipeg Tribune, August 17, 1968*

In 1974 Glen attempted a comeback, although, in the best shape of his life, he could not make the cut. Another unsuccessful prospect, Rae Pratt, was at the same camp and the two became friends. Deciding their playing days were over, they looked for a change in their other careers. Now that they were not constrained by the ridged practice and travel schedule of the CFL, both decided to apply for the Winnipeg Police. Rae was hired on May 12, 1975 (badge #905) and Glen was hired away from Transit on August 11, 1975, graduating from Recruit Class #85.



A (Glen) Schapansky #941, centre back row
Winnipeg Police Recruit Class #85

While his playing days were over, Glen continued to stay involved in sports as a volunteer. He coached Senior Women's Fastball with the Fort Garry Flyers for over 20 years and served for a short period of time with Softball Manitoba. He was also a hockey coach and volunteer with the Westridge Community Club.

However it is probably Glen's work with Football Manitoba, starting in 1974 until present, variously working with the Fort Garry Lions, Garden City Collegiate, North Winnipeg Nomads (Wolf Pack), and St James Rods, that best reflects Glen's legacy, both on the field and off.

*Schapansky takes reins
of the Fort Garry Lions*

Glen (Secretary) and his brother Blair (President), take over the Executive of the Fort Garry Lions
Winnipeg Free Press, May 18, 1983

During his time as a football coach (and police officer), Glen made a lasting impression on many young players, several of whom chose to make law enforcement a career. One player in particular that I spoke to was Willy Williamson, who went on to work for Manitoba Justice as a corrections officer (and now works as an editor and writer for the Winnipeg Free Press). Willy played football for the Fort Garry Lions from 1979 until 1987. Now 53, Willy recalls first meeting Glen when he was about 10. *“My older brother, Allen [who was also coached by Glen], nowadays living in Ottawa and is a retired Chief Superintendent with the RCMP, joined the Lions to play in the Bantam league in 1978 and I tagged along whenever they’d let me,”* says Willy.

“Coach Glen”, Willy continued, “was larger than life to us kids and such an important man to us. He was not only a former Bomber player and a policeman, he was also physically huge and loud and very funny. When I was 12 and finally made the team, he took me out to the blocking sled and worked with me night after night, long after practice had ended. I was in terrible shape and afraid to get hit, but by the end of the season, I was named the most improved player on the team and it was all because of the extra effort Glen took to help me. I honestly can’t imagine how my life would have turned out without football and that mentorship from Glen and his brother, Blair, who was also a coach with the Lions.”



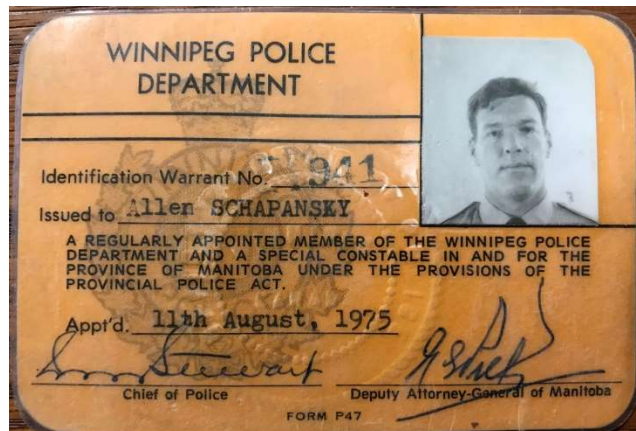
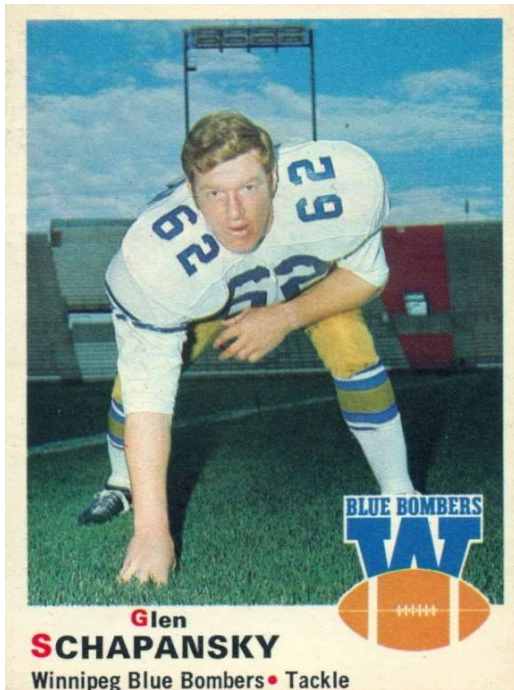
Willy with Glen reconnecting at the Wellness Centre,
Photo credit: Ken Gigliotti / Winnipeg Free Press

Willy stayed with the Lions until he was 21. He recalls Glen coaching him at all levels and how important it was as a young man to have that constant positive influence in his life. *“When I got older, in the Midget league and then in Junior, Glen became so much more than a coach, he’d taught me how to play football, then he taught me how to be a solid citizen, he kept his eye on me and if he suspected I was headed down a bad path he’d always set me straight in his firm but funny way.”*

Willy credits his years playing football for Coach Glen with inspiring him to pursue a career in corrections after football and now recognizes just how important it was to be mentored by a man so generous with his time and wisdom. *“Back then, I was a kid from the hood (St. Norbert) with divorced parents who wasn’t great in school and was, let’s just say, misunderstood, and I think Glen recognized that and that’s why he spent so much extra time with me. I just can’t say enough about what a great man he is and how great it was that he had such a positive impact not only to me, but hundreds of other young men – he was so much more than our coach, and that has stayed with me through life and is a big reason why I devote as much time as I can to helping others, the world needs men who look out for one another and help one another, and I learned that from Glen Schapansky.”*

Glen retired from the Winnipeg Police in 1996. Besides staying involved in coaching, Glen has also put his automotive skills to work repairing and rebuilding small engines and works as a small load owner/operator in Winnipeg and surrounding areas.

While I knew Glen as a police officer, he was not the only member of a Winnipeg (Metro) police department to grace the blue and gold. Others include Edward Ogelski (Winnipeg Police #44) in 1945-46; Rob White (Assiniboia Police) played 24 games from 1963-64; Dennis Leibrecht (St. James Police) who played 23 games from 1965-67; Errol Brown (Winnipeg Police #2201) played 66 games with Winnipeg and Saskatchewan from 1993-97; Riley Clayton (Winnipeg Police #2785) played one game with Calgary and made Winnipeg’s practice roster in 2007; and Shawn Gallant (Winnipeg Police #2907) played 148 games with Winnipeg, Saskatchewan, Ottawa and Montreal from 2000-10.¹



1970 O-Pee-Chee Card #69. J. Burchill Collection

¹ Dennis Leibrecht is the only one to have his name in the Manitoba Sports and Football Hall of Fames as a player for the St. James Rams (1963) and the St. Vital Bulldogs (1968-69). *With 68 games in the CFL maybe Glen is next?* Besides players, the following Winnipeg Police officers have also officiated in the CFL (referee, field judge, umpire) – Jack Ewatski, Brian Chrupalo, Al Bradbury, Ritchie Miller, Dave Wagner, Steve Dolyniuk, and Wayne Shorten.

1969 WINNIPEG BLUE BOMBERS



BACK ROW: Roger Hamelin; Gordon Brown; Paul Desjardins; John Atamian; Bob Houmard; Glen Schapansky; Ted Collins; Joe Critchlow; Rob McLaren; Ed Breeding; Ross Richardson
SECOND ROW: Nils Lindberg (Asst. Trainer); Glen Orris; Don Weiss; Paul Brule; Gene Lakusiak; Doug Strong; Peter Francis; Pierre Guindon; Paul Robson; Bill Whisler; Ken Nielsen; Dave Washington
THIRD ROW: Billy Humiski (Asst. Equip.) Wally Gabler; Bill Frank; Amos Van Pelt; Ed Ulmer; Chuck Harrison; Tom Busch; Tommy Grant; Butch Pressley
FRONT ROW: Larry Slagle; Bob Jones (Equip. Mgr.); Gordie Mackie (Trainer); Earl Lunford (General Manager); Ced Gyles (President); Joe Zaleski (Head Coach); Joe Faragalli (Asst. Coach); Monte Charles (Asst. Coach); Ernie Pitts

1969 Winnipeg Blue Bombers, Glen Schapansky #62, centre back row
 Courtesy Ed Tait, Winnipeg Blue Bombers