
KEVYN BOURGEOIS

Patrol Sergeant #1902 (retired)

*Written by John Burchill, President
November 18, 2021. Winnipeg Police Museum*

A rock pile ceases to be a rock pile the moment a single man
contemplates it, bearing within him the image of a cathedral.

—Antoine de St. Exupery



Kevyn Bourgeois brings words to life. For 22 years of his 25 year career with the Winnipeg Police, Patrol Sergeant Bourgeois was one of the few Forensic Sketch Artists in Manitoba.

“Discovered” in 1995 while drawing caricatures of his Sergeant in Recruit Class, Kevyn went on to become part of a small, select group of forensic artists in North America trained at the FBI academy in Quantico, Virginia.

Kevyn completed training in Forensic Facial Imaging with the FBI in Quantico, Virginia; the FACES Computer Composite Course hosted by the RCMP; as well as training in composite drawings from Stuart Parks Forensics. Kevyn also helped train and mentor two new officers to eventually replace him, creating most of the syllabus and the projects/assignments.

Forensic art is primarily used to present visual information to aid law enforcement in focusing on a suspect’s appearance through a witness’ description. Most often, a forensic artist is called upon to interview a victim or witness about the description of a suspect from a crime in which there are no other leads. The artist interviews the victim/witness on the various features of the face, documents these features, and creates a two dimensional likeness of the suspect involved in the crime using traditional both pen and paper and technological mediums.

The suspect image can also include objects such as tattoos, clothing, vehicles and jewelry to aid in the investigation. The police then work with the media and other agencies to circulate the resulting image to the general public to generate tips as to the identity of this suspect. The image or sketch is often an important tool in the investigation.



Forensic artists may also be called upon to assist with a post mortem drawing or facial reconstruction from a skull using 3D reconstruction and modeling. This is done when human remains are recovered but investigators have been unable to identify the body. The forensic artist's image can assist investigators in searching missing person's databases. The identification can then be positively made by DNA or dental comparisons.

In addition Kevyn lectured on Forensic Art to all ranks in the police department from recruits to senior officers, including the 3D reconstruction and modeling that is a very rare skill. He has lectured to university students and developed a 3 day program for the Northwest Law Enforcement Academy. He also did sketches for outside agencies, even a "wanted poster" for a movie set.

Kevyn has [testified in court](#) regarding his making and use of composite drawings by victims of crime. His career as a forensic artist has also been profiled several times in the media, most recently by the [Winnipeg Free Press](#) on September 28, 2017.

As noted in that article, Kevyn was one of a select group of officers across the country that was still practicing the craft, juggling his full-time responsibilities as a police officer with his part-time role as a forensic artist. At the time there were few *full-time* forensic sketch artists employed by police services across Canada. The RCMP had two, at opposite ends of the country – one in British Columbia, the other in the Maritimes. RCMP employees in other parts of the country take up sketch work only occasionally. In Manitoba, the RCMP had only one officer who drew composite sketches for detachments throughout the province on a part-time basis.

Little known outside of policing circles (and even by many within the police community), Kevyn "dabbled" in digital art, three-dimensional modeling, and painting, creating pieces of art that are seen every day by other police officers.

For example he completed a 20-foot long, eight-foot tall wall mural, which depicts the Winnipeg Police Service's current badge, as well as four of the city's crests or badges he designed for previous areas that now make up West District after the new station was built in 2016. Kevyn and the mural were profiled in the [Winnipeg Free Press](#) on June 6, 2016.

To complete the mural, Kevyn used a variety of tools and mediums. "*There's water-based, oil-based, airbrush, hand roller,*" he told the Free Press reporter. "*But I'm also a big proponent of digital graphics so I got the projector out. A lot of these images were cast on the wall after being carefully built on the computer.*" He pointed out that the blue flag pictured in the right of the

mural is not actually a flag; it is known as the WPS colours and features the names of officers who have been killed while on duty. “It’s a very powerful part of our tradition” Kevyn told the reporter.



Wall Mural, West District Police Station, painted by Kevyn in 2016

At the request of the Winnipeg Police Executive in 2018, Kevyn also created a similarly styled “Legacy Wall”, located outside the Training Division on the fifth floor of the new police headquarters building. He created all the artwork and supervised the development of all elements of the feature wall, centered on four branches of Training: Academics, Firearms, Officer Safety and Police Vehicle Operations.



Kevyn standing alongside the Legal Wall, outside the Winnipeg Police Training Division, 2018

Once the artwork for the Legacy Wall was approved Kevyn was asked if he could create the mural in 3 dimensions. Up to the challenge, Kevyn spent countless hours creating very precise vector diagrams in CAD to enable the use of computer guided routers to bring the designs to life in 4-foot diameter coins made of foam and plastic. Hidden in plain sight, on the Academic coin are two action figures of Apollo and Athena.

Kevyn also devoted countless hours of his own time, over several years, to meticulously recreate an exact replica of the 1911 Winnipeg Police, B-Division substation, from the original blueprints using mostly foamcore and balsa, some clear plastic, 30 well-hidden LEGO pieces, a GI Joe figure, and two marbles. Every piece was cut, painted and painstakingly assembled by hand. It is on permanent display in the Winnipeg Police Museum for all to see. A profile on the model and a history on the Winnipeg Police substations can be found in the [2017 Winnipeg Police Museum Annual Report](#) (pages 16-17).



Scale model of 1911 “B-Division” sub-station made by Kevyn from foamcore and balsa

High praise for Kevyn’s work comes from current museum board member and retired Deputy Chief Gordon Perrier, who said *“The works of Kevyn Bourgeois has been featured in the Winnipeg Police Museum, memorialized on more than thirty police challenge coins and celebrated through numerous police themed murals across Winnipeg. Working with the “Sergeant Artist”, Kevyn Bourgeois on a project, coin, crest, mural or dedication is enjoyable; his ability to bring life to ideas, keep you on track and make recommendations that showcase the final product is outstanding. His professional approach, attention to detail, creativity and customer focus always live up to expectations.”*

Indeed, not only has Kevyn designed wall murals, built replicas of old police stations, he has also in designed almost all of the thirty challenge coins in use by various divisions throughout the Winnipeg Police Service.

A challenge coin is a small coin or medallion, bearing an organization's insignia or emblem and carried by the organization's members. The origin of challenge coins goes back all the way to the Roman Empire, which rewarded soldiers for their achievements with special coins. Outside of the military, challenge coins have become increasingly popular team-building pieces and commemoratives.

Traditionally, while they might be given to prove membership when challenged and to enhance morale, they are also collected today by service members and law enforcement personnel and are often exchanged in recognition of visits to an organization.



Fifteen of the challenge coins designed by Kevyn and minted for different police units

Over the years, Kevyn expanded his creative talents, being cast as extras in many productions. His policing experience often got him selected to do certain tasks on screen. The biggest movie he was on was the 2005 Capote, starring Philip Seymour Hoffman. He was a prison guard taking a prisoner to be hanged.

Kevyn's name was also brought up to the art department for the movie The Horsemen. A thriller movie about a group of serial killers posing as the four Horsemen being shot in Winnipeg and starring Dennis Quaid. The art department asked him to provide a copy of a composite drawing. Sadly, its scene was sent to the cutting room floor and it never got air time.

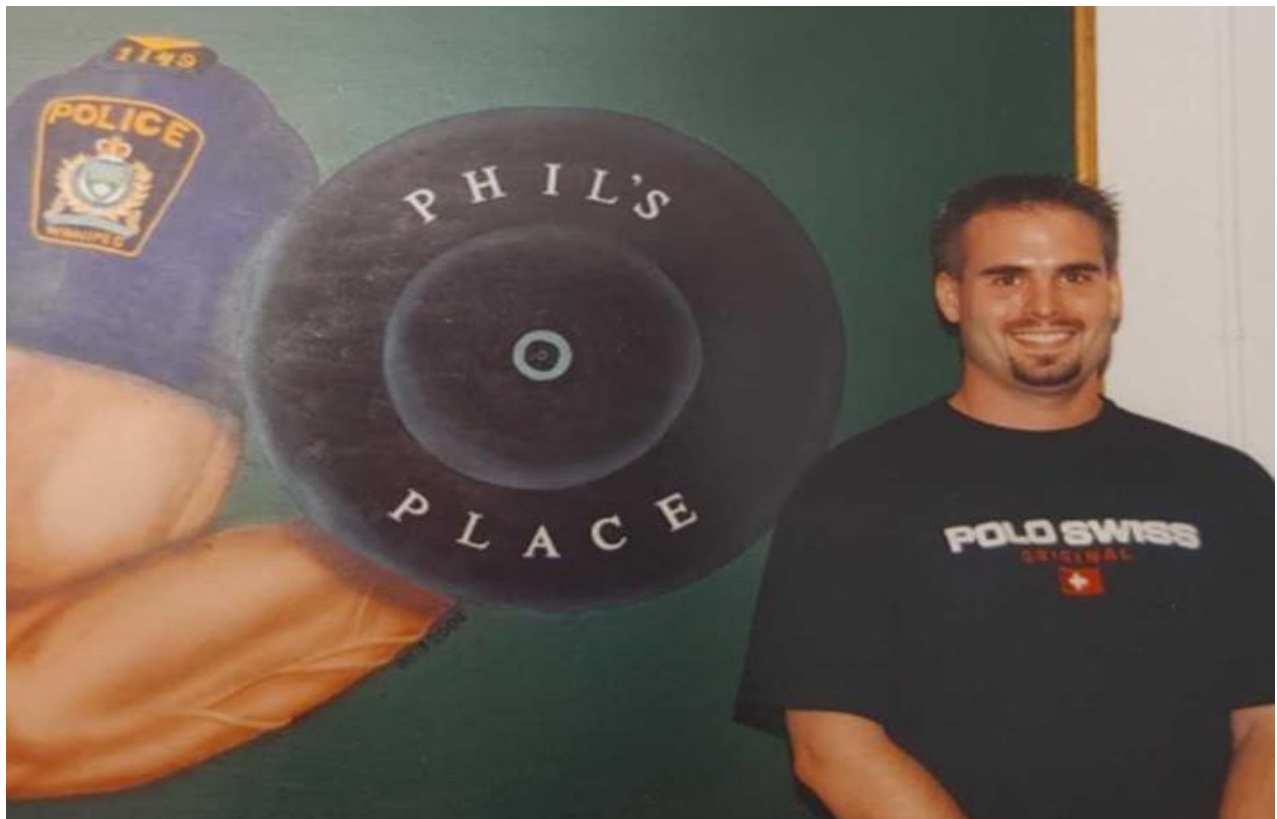
This week Kevyn was recognized for his long-standing contribution to the police community with the Attorney Generals Award for Excellence in Law Enforcement.

Kevyn came to policing naturally. He grew up in a Mountie household. His father was a member of the RCMP as was his uncle. His father, Harvey Bourgeois grew up in St. Pierre Jolys, Manitoba. He was the first in the family to join the police. Shortly after joining, his uncle Rene joined as well. Being a French speaker, the RCMP told his father that all French speakers would be deployed to Quebec when they graduated from Depot.

His father was sent to Montreal and later transferred to Ottawa, where Kevyn was born. After several years in Ottawa, his father was posted to Swan River, Manitoba, where he stayed for 8 years.

In 1991, Kevyn joined 402 Squadron, at CFB Winnipeg (now called 17 Wing). He was training to be an airframe mechanic, but longed to be a pilot. When that dream went unfulfilled, he changed paths and enrolled in University with a goal of joining the police. Originally joining the RCMP summer student program, Kevyn worked in Sprague.

Entering his final year of studies in 1994, Kevyn chose to submit an application to the Winnipeg Police and not the RCMP. He went through all the steps of the WPS hiring process, and within weeks of graduating from University, he received a call that he had been hired for the June 1995 recruit class. Kevin retired after 25-years of service in 2021 and now works as an investigator for the Manitoba Law Enforcement Review Agency (LERA).



Kevyn posing with wall mural he did for the police gym in the old Public Safety Building, c. 2000

NOTE: All hyperlinks are active and working as of November 15, 2021