
JOSEPH (JOE) LUCKI

Detective (Transcona Police)

Detective Sergeant #213

*Written by John Burchill, President
July 18, 2024. Winnipeg Police Museum*



Joe Lucki, who turns 90 this fall, was born and raised in North Point Douglas, the son of Ukrainian immigrants. He attended Norquay School and graduated from St. John's Technical High School in 1952.

After finishing school, Joe apprenticed as a machinist for the next five years with the Canadian National Railway in Transcona. Two years after finishing his apprenticeship, he was laid off. While he was offered a job in Montreal, he chose to stay close to his roots.

Fortunately, the Town of Transcona were looking for a constable, and Joe applied for a position. After being interviewed by Mayor Paul Martin and Council he was hired the same day – July 1, 1959.

At the time, Transcona was a small town that grew up around the railway. The town was incorporated in 1912 with a single officer, and by 1959 there were nine officers (including Joe). When Transcona obtained its City Charter in 1961, there were eleven officers.



**TRANSCONA
POLICE FORCE**

Seated — Left to Right: Sgt. H. J. Chudley; Chief J. Teres; Sgt. W. A. Shefchuk. **Standing** — Left to Right: Cst. J. A. Haack; Cst. J. Lucki; Cst. D. C. Pearson; Cst. A. Zaretski; Cst. D. M. Campbell; Cst. F. G. Holliday; Cst. J. R. Matheson; Cst. P. Perch.

Transcona Police Force, 1961. From Transcona, 50 Years of Progress, p. 101.

Like many of the small municipal departments, the police officers in Transcona were a jack of all trades. All the police officers, were also the fire fighters, supported by a voluntary fire brigade of ten members. For this reason, the police officers were all required to live in Transcona. Not only did this ensure every officer knew their community, but it also ensured a quick response by the small department to any emergency like a fire.

When Joe started with the Transcona Police, they were situated in a municipal building at [401 Pandora Avenue West](#). The building opened in January 1956 and served as the council chambers (upstairs) and the operational base for the Police, Fire and Public Works and the Transcona Parks Board until 1968, when a new Public Safety Building was opened at [730 Pandora Avenue West](#). The council chambers at 401 Pandora Avenue doubled as the courtroom where the police officers were also the prosecutor for all municipal and provincial offences, as well as other summary matters such as fatality inquests.



Transcona police courtroom and council chambers, 401 Pandora Avenue West.
Sergeant Hugh Chudley is on the right. Judge Charles N. Rubin is under the picture of the Queen.
Transcona News, January 17, 1963. Courtesy, Transcona Museum, TH99.38.1.58.

While the building at 401 Pandora Avenue had three holding cells, anyone arrested and remanded into custody on a criminal charge was taken to the old [Vaughan Street Jail](#) in downtown Winnipeg. Like today, the police officers in Transcona were also responsible for taking any individuals for an involuntary psychiatric assessment to Winnipeg's General Hospital (Health Sciences Centre). These transports were often done alone as the officers worked one-man vehicles. Less well known, is that the police were also responsible for swearing out warrants

and detaining anyone (again by themselves) under the Public Health Act that refused to be examined for Tuberculosis. ¹

As there were no public ambulances in Transcona (although there were two private services that operated in the larger metropolitan area), the police officers were trained in first aid and had access to medical equipment like resuscitators and a Scott Air Pak self-contained breathing apparatus for both fire and medical rescues. Later a rescue wagon was purchased for the department by the Kinsmen Club in 1966 that carried needed supplies. The Scott Air Pak also proved beneficial to Lucki when he personally entered the smoke-filled Apollo Theatre, on June 20, 1961, to locate the source of a fire and fell through some loose flooring (there was another serious fire at the same building eight years later in 1969).



Transcona police-fireman, Constable Monty Stolar assisting Constable Ed Zabowski putting on a Scott Air Pak before entering a burning house on Victoria Avenue West. Constable John Matheson looks on while holding a fire hose. Page 1, Transcona News, December 17, 1964. Courtesy, Transcona Museum, TH99.38.86.6.

As the police were always the first to arrive at any serious incident, such as a fire, traffic accident, or medical emergency, they often transported people to hospital in their cruiser cars.

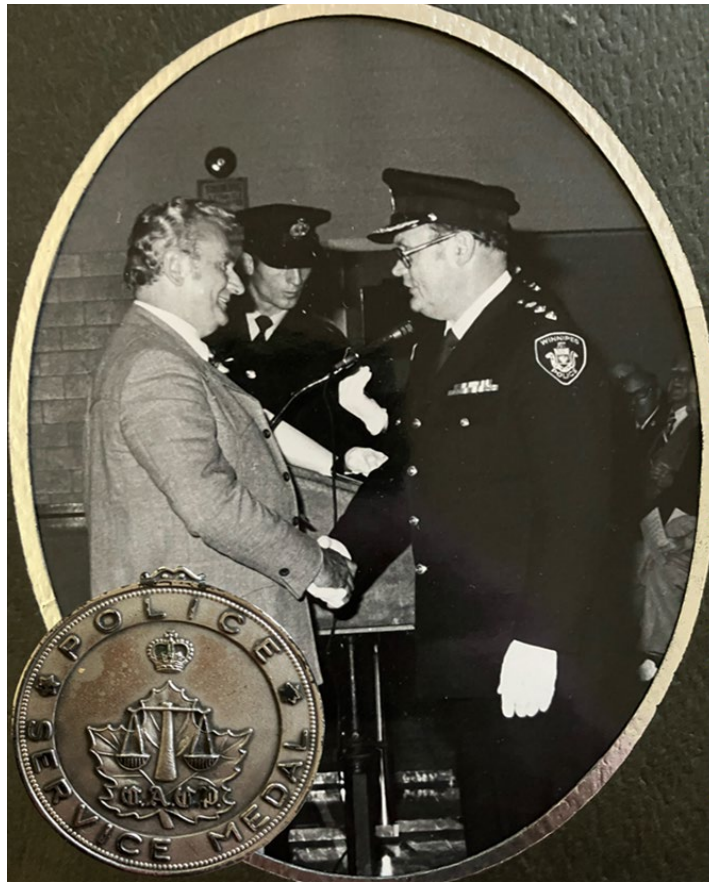
¹ Tuberculosis is a serious disease can be fatal if left untreated. It is caused by bacteria that first settle in the lungs and throat and can be spread through the air when a person who has an active infection coughs or sneezes. While most people who encounter someone with active Tuberculosis won't become ill, because their immune system can stave off the infection, long term exposure can but people at risk of getting the disease. Today, a Public Health Team tries to manage individuals and the spread of Tuberculosis in the community.

At night, one of the jobs as town constable was to walk the main street beat (Regent Avenue), checking all business properties to make sure they were secure. One interesting duty that Lucki recalled was to service and clean the revolver kept by the manager of the of the local bank in his desk drawer.

In the days before automated banking, businesses and banks kept large amounts of cash on hand and were the [targets of armed robberies](#). Lucki said they were always wary of criminals carrying nitroglycerin on them for use in blowing safe doors. As nitroglycerine was very unstable, they had to be careful when searching certain known criminals.

Lucki was promoted to Detective with the Transcona Police in 1971, a rank he held through amalgamation with the Winnipeg Police until his retirement in 1989. Retired Deputy Chief Joe Gallagher, who worked as a Detective alongside Lucki after amalgamation, then oversaw him as the Inspector and Staff Inspector of the Crime Division, told me that *“Joe was methodical and tenacious detective. He was excellent at his job, a gentleman with the public, and a skilled interviewer.”* Aside from work, one of the things that Gallagher remembered most about Lucki was *“he loved of Transcona”*.

In 1979 Lucki was presented with the Police Exemplary Service Medal, which recognizes any police officer who has served for 20 years or more in an exemplary manner, characterized by good conduct, industry and efficiency.

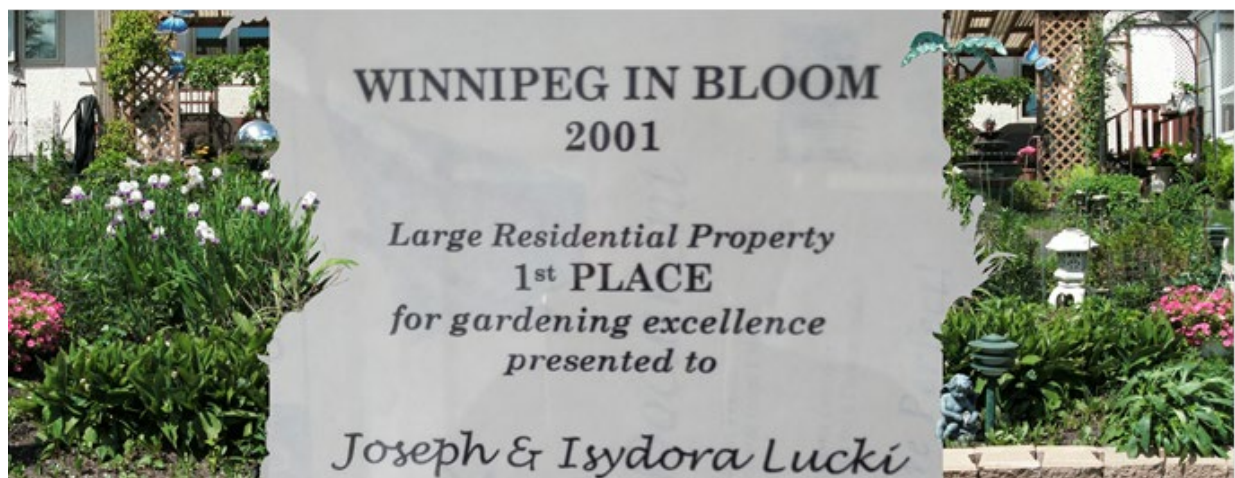


Joe Lucki being presented with the Police Exemplary Service Medal by Deputy Chief Ray Wilson, 1979
Courtesy Joe Lucki

On January 28, 1989, Lucki's only daughter, Patricia, along with her friend Kerri Campbell, was killed by a drunk driver at McMeans and Day, not far from their home in Transcona. The driver, who fled the scene on a snowmobile he had on the back of his truck, was later arrested and found to have a blood alcohol concentration of 270 mg%, well over the legal limit. Shortly before her death Patricia, who had a degree in Early Childhood Development, had returned from Indonesia where she had worked with Canadian Crossroads International and Amnesty International, helping the physically and visually handicapped.

Patricia's death devastated the family. It would still be a few years before the Winnipeg Police hired its own staff psychologist to help members (and the department) understand and deal with post traumatic stress, and Lucki decided to retire after 30 years of service.

Joe and his wife, Isydora, who passed away last year, took to community work in their retirement. They loved gardening and sought to beautify their neighbourhood, growing many plants, flowers and vegetables in their yard. They competed for many years in the annual Winnipeg in Bloom competition, winning first place for best large property in 2001 for Gardening Excellence.²



Winnipeg in Bloom, 2001. First Place Certificate surrounded by actual flowers from Joe and Isydora's garden. Blended pictures by Ayshia Burchill, courtesy Joe Lucki.

As a sports enthusiast, playing hockey and baseball in his younger years with the Transcona police, Joe also volunteered for the Pan Am Games, Canada Games, Indigenous Games, and for 25 years he was a Fan Ambassador for the Winnipeg Blue Bombers.

Kelly Keith, Director of Security and Event Day Staff for the Winnipeg Football Club, told me that *"Joe smiled and greeted people. He truly represented the word Ambassador. This is a volunteer position, which as he diligently did for 25 years. We use Fan Ambassadors all over the Stadium doing various things all of which result in the fan having a better game day experience!"*

² Isydora was born in Ituna, Saskatchewan, in 1935 and moved with her family to Transcona in 1942. She married Joe at the old St. Michael Ukrainian Catholic Church in Transcona in 1959. Isydora worked in the office at the Woolco store in Transcona and volunteered for many years with the Women's League at St. Michael's Church.



Joe Lucki with Grey Gup, 2015. Winnipeg Stadium. Courtesy Joe Lucki.

On May 1, 2024, Russ Wyatt, Councillor for Transcona, posted on Facebook that he would like to re-name Kildonan Meadows Park to “*Patricia, Isydora and Joe Lucki Family Park*” for their contribution to their community. Hopefully we will see that happen !



Joe Lucki with City Councillors Chambers, Eadie, Duncan, Wyatt, Lukes and Dobson, 2024.
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