

Albert Douglas (Doug) Palson O.O.M.
Chief of Police, Manitoba First Nations Police Service



It is with profound sadness that we announce the January 8, 2025, passing of Chief of Police Doug Palson O.O.M.

Doug was born January 23rd, 1964, and raised in Arborg, Manitoba. Predeceased by his mother, Inga Palson, and his father, Roderick Hokanson, he leaves behind his beloved wife Dr. Heather Hunter, her daughter Stepheny and partner Peter Sarty, and his MFNP family. Survived by his daughter Tanya Palson and his son Luke Palson, and proud grandfather to Tanya's children, Samuel and Rebekah, Doug is also survived by sister Laureen Palson and partner Willard Lea, and sister Leslie Palson-Escobar.

Chief Palson became a police officer in 1988 with the Brandon Police Service. Here, his work in the community was recognized and he advanced in rank to become a strong, contributing member of the BPS senior leadership team. He was an instrumental team member in a major homicide investigation which gained national attention that utilized a complex undercover operation known as Mr. Big. His dedicated service contributed to the arrest in 2005 of the accused and a subsequent conviction.

Ultimately, Chief Palson's leadership abilities propelled him to become a respected Chief of Police. His trust leadership approach responded to individual and community need as guided by the seven sacred teachings. Chief Palson advanced Indigenous-led, community-based policing first as Chief with the Dakota Ojibway Police Service for seven years and then as Chief with the Dryden Police Service for the next seven years ,

acting on his commitments to municipal policing as integral for the well-being and development of community at the local level. It was in November 2021, when he became Chief with the Manitoba First Nations Police Service. Doug would be deeply honoured to know that so many members from each of these police services have shown their respect and support to his family and colleagues at this time.

Chief Palson earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree from the University of Manitoba in 1988 and a Graduate Diploma in Educational Administration from Brandon University in 2010. He also completed numerous executive level courses throughout his career. This commitment to continuous improvement extended to his staff whose individual and professional growth he always encouraged and supported.

Chief Palson was the recipient of numerous awards, most notably the Child Find Recognition Award, the Manitoba Excellence in Law Enforcement Award, and the Governor General's Officer Order of Merit Award (O.O.M).

As a member of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACP), Chief Palson worked with several CACP committees. He was a past Chair of the Policing with First Nations, Metis & Inuit Peoples Committee, and past President of the First Nations Chiefs of Police Association (FNCPA). He was an active and valued member with the Manitoba Association of Chiefs of Police (MACP), CACP and FNCPA.

Chief Doug Palson will be remembered as a tireless advocate for the rights of First Nation communities to self-determination through their own police services. During his time as Chief of Police for the Manitoba First Nations Police Service, he led the organization with wisdom, truth, humility, honesty, respect, courage and love. Doug believed that trust was fundamental to the delivery of policing. He cared for the wellbeing of the members and staff of the MFNP service and was proud of their efforts to serve and protect First Nation communities. Doug understood how the delivery of police services could support social and economic development at the local community level, and beyond, with a profound commitment to working together around common goals to benefit all.

Most importantly, Doug Palson was a loving husband, father, and friend. His kindness has touched so many people from all walks of life. His dry sense of humour was one of his many gifts. If you had the good fortune to spend time with Doug, you quickly realized how positive and supportive he was. He was strong, yet gentle, stoic, yet sentimental, determined, yet humble and caring. He was one of a kind.

Heather and Doug's dogs, Wheeler and Malcolm, perished with their "Daddy Doug" that tragic early morning in January. There is solace in knowing that he is not alone on his final journey. They are together forever. Forever in our hearts.

"Your footsteps are the road, and nothing more; there is no road, we make the road by walking."

- Antonio Machado