

Badge 151 retires,



Staff photo by Fred Loek

Detective Sergeant Jim Craig has retired after 32 years as a police officer. He came up with the idea to use a teddy bear as part of an international award-winning program aimed at solving child sexual abuse cases.

but leaves teddy bears behind

By JIM ROBINSON
Staff

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Peel Regional Police lost a man who was for 32 years an innovative member of the force when Detective Sergeant Jim Craig — Badge No. 151 — retired last month.

Craig took with him an impressive list of accomplishments, including owning the first narcotics search dog in Peel.

He played an important role streamlining court cases for Crown prosecutors and, recently, Craig helped the Peel force win the internationally coveted Webber Seavey Award for quality in police enforcement.

The Webber Seavey Award recognizes quality in police work and promotes and recognizes quality performances by police agencies around the world.

Peel police won the award for the child sexual abuse program created by Craig, beating out 162 police agencies from around the globe. Dozens of police forces have followed Peel's lead in this area.

Born and raised in Toronto, Craig joined the Metro Toronto Police in 1964 at the age of 22. In 1972, he joined the Chinguacousy Township Police that was

rolled into the Peel Regional Police with the creation of regional government.

On his own time, Craig trained his pet border collie, Lady, to sniff out drugs. Lady became the first narcotics search dog in Peel.

"I actually taught my own dog to sniff out marijuana," he said. "The chief of police had no problem using Lady in an investigation — so we did."

Craig was posted to the Criminal Investigation Bureau (CIB) in 1974, made detective in 1976 was promoted to Detective Sergeant in 1980.

In 1983, he was assigned to the fledgling post of Crown prosecution co-ordinator. It was his job to review evidence in advance of upcoming trials to make it easier for the Crown to put on its case.

"I always tried to stay up on things. I realized that this was something that not only would help the officers, but would allow the Crown to prosecute more efficiently because they would deal only with the essential evidence contained in a police report," he said. "In the first year we saved something like \$100,000. That's something I'm very proud of."

Today, an entire department does the job that started with Craig.

In 1986, he headed the CIB office at 12 Division, where he worked until 1992. He and his officers boasted a 92 per cent success rate for solving robberies.

In 1992, he was assigned the task of developing a Peel police program for responding effectively to child abuse cases. His work combined specially trained CIB officers, the creation of special interview rooms and video taping interviews with victims to aid the Crown and ease the burden of appearing in court for the victim.

Located at 301 Matheson Blvd. W., the interview room resembles a living room, with soft, comfortable chairs. It was Craig's idea to give each child a teddy bear.

"We wanted kids who come here not to feel threatened. We made things as relaxed as possible," he said. "We have specially-trained people whose job it is to chat with the kids and get them to tell stories in their own way."

Craig is married and father to four children.

At the beginning of the month he hung up his badge, but he plans to put the expertise he has gained over 30-plus years to use on his new job — running J. Craig Enterprises.