

B.C. Law Enforcement Memorial Ceremony

Premier Gordon Campbell

September 26, 2004

Check Against Delivery

Standing here in Victoria, in this province, in this country, on a day like today, it's easy for us to sometimes take for granted the incredible work that our police and our peace officers do.

They create the foundation upon which we build all the other qualities of life that we at times take for granted in a great democracy like Canada.

When our heroes fall, it does not go unnoticed. When we hear that a law enforcement officer has fallen in the line of duty, we all stop. Each of us is touched by sadness, each of us grieves, because we know that in the instant an officer falls our whole society is weakened.

We call upon our police and our peace officers to serve. We call upon them to protect. We call upon each of you to uphold the ideals of justice and freedom and duty upon which our democracy rests.

We call and you heed the call, despite the knowledge that on any given day your duty may place your life in the balance. And your families serve behind you.

I hope that there will never be any doubt that the citizens of this province and this country and of each of our communities are grateful to you and to your families.

That's why, on behalf of all British Columbians, we are proud to dedicate the B.C. Law Enforcement Memorial today as a symbol of our appreciation.

It is a symbol that will reflect the living legacy that each of you and each of your fallen friends have left us.

There are almost a hundred names engraved here as a permanent reminder of the courage of the few who stand in defense of us all.

This is a tribute not just to your fallen colleagues, but also to the ideals that they uphold. It's a monument to people but also to peace, to heroism and humanity, to service and sacrifice.

Like you, the officers you remember here knowingly put their lives at risk day in and day out.

I was the mayor of Vancouver back in 1987 when, unfortunately, one of our police officers was killed in the line of duty, and I can tell you our whole city stopped. Our whole city wanted to find a way that we could reach out and touch the family and show them that we were supporting them.

Today, Larry Young's family is in Italy celebrating the marriage of one of their sons. And I know that the whole family of police officers and peace officers across the province reached out and allowed the Young family to carry on with their lives knowing that Larry Young would always be remembered in our hearts. And today, we are pleased to be able to reflect Larry's service as well as the service of ninety-seven other officers across our province.

The loss of men and women of such character, but no one is touched as deeply as the families that they leave behind-- the husbands and wives, the brothers, the sister, the nieces and nephews, the mothers and the fathers.

As we remember the officers killed in the line of duty, we also acknowledge the incredible sacrifice of their families.

There are no words and there are no monuments that could ever express the full sorrow and sympathy that we feel for your loss. But you should know that we share your pride in what your loved ones accomplished while in uniform.

That fate and duty tore them from our lives will never diminish the honour and integrity and the courage with which they served our entire community.

That is their legacy.

As we think of them, we should not only think of sadness and sacrifice, but also of the honour, the justice and the courage that they represent.

The memorial that we unveil today has been inspired by their service. It is a memorial in stone. That stone will last forever, as will our memory of the duty that they carried out, of the service that they performed and of the gift that they gave us all.

Thank you very much.