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ATTITUDE AT LATITUDE

F1



CALLING IT HOW THEY SEE IT

Manitoba's female sports officials earn their stripes
in the face of slurs, scorn and stereotyping / **F2-4**

BY MIKE SAWATZKY

MIKAELA MACKENZIE / FREE PRESS

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This *essential weekend read* is made exclusively available for readers of the Winnipeg Free Press and Brandon Sun

HEEDING THE CALL



Lori Turski signals during a Winnipeg High School Football League AAAA Division game last month at Dakota Collegiate between the host Lancers and the Grant Park Pirates. Turski has been a gridiron official since 2016.

Female referees take pride in managing the field of play, even amid continuing abuse from players, coaches and spectators

MIKE SAWATZKY

It was early in Carriera Lamoureux’s refereeing career. She stood on the court — frozen and fearful.

A tense varsity girls high school playoff basketball game had come down to the final seconds and Lamoureux had made a crucial call, whistling a contact foul.

The call set up a free-throw situation and the resulting shots forced overtime. In extra time, the aggrieved team lost.

Parents stormed out of the stands to vent their anger. Coaches left the bench area to rush at the officials.

“I was scared... I’m thinking, ‘What on earth did I get myself into?’” Lamoureux remembers. “I almost quit that day. I was so overwhelmed by just the sheer outbursts of anger. I was confused. I had to be escorted out of that gym by my partner.”

Lamoureux stood her ground and by the accuracy of her call that day — but the danger of the situation is not uncommon.

Male and female officials in many sports in Manitoba endure the indignities of verbal and sometimes physical abuse while plying their trade. But women surely have the tougher path, encountering slurs and challenges to their sanity and intelligence on an almost regular basis.

Lamoureux overcame that early trauma to referee again.

“I have never forgotten that moment and I never will, and it has helped me,” says the 31-year-old Winnipegger. “It gave me the biggest kick in the pants to become a little bit tougher, because by nature I’m a pretty easygoing person. It helped me find the value of being competent and strong, but also being kind and that’s the balance I look to navigate every time I step on the floor.”

How difficult is to be a female official in what used to be an exclusively male domain? The *Free Press* talked to six female officials in the sports of hockey, football and basketball to find out. Here are some of their stories:

CARRIERA LAMOUREUX, BASKETBALL

LAMOUREUX, a graduate from the University of Winnipeg and a former U Sports player, was looking for a way to supplement her income in 2017.

Her partner and now-fiancé, basketball referee Wyatt Anders, suggested she try officiating.

“There was absolutely no way,” recalls Lamoureux. “I was a headache to referees (as a player)... I was annoying. I had things to say all the time and was hand-checking everybody. And there’s no way I’m going to cross that threshold and become the very thing that I disliked.”

However, she decided to give it a try. Working middle-school games to start, Lamoureux didn’t fall in love with the new gig immediately, struggling early, but the lure of higher-stakes games eventually took hold.

She rose quickly in the ranks, staffing her first U Sports men’s game in 2022 and was tabbed for the 17U women’s basketball nationals last summer. Lamoureux now works more than 100 games at various levels every season.

She still struggles with the criticism and the implication referees are an “enemy of the game.” Sometimes the attacks get personal, sometimes she’s accused of being a diversity hire.

“As a player, you make mistakes on the floor all the time,” says Lamoureux, who is Indigenous and works as the director of special projects for the Manitoba Aboriginal Sports and Recreation Council.

“I don’t stand up at the free-throw line as the trail official or at the three-point line and yell at a player who didn’t use their left hand on the left side. There’s a humanity in the game. And I try to bring my humanity to the game.

“Now, does it bite me in the butt? Sometimes, sure. There’s some times where there’s no working with people. But if I can demonstrate to you that I’m human, I’m going to make mistakes, but I’m going to try my best every single possession and I’m going to run the floor as hard as I can. Is there anything more that you can ask me?”

Lamoureux, who is five-foot-four, has become more adept at defusing tense situations. She works diligently to maintain her fitness and takes pride in her ability to keep up with the play. But disparaging outbursts from male players are still part of the landscape.

“It happens less at an adult level and more actually at a youth level,” she says. “When I enter a gym — let’s say I’m doing a senior men’s game — many of the players, they do know who I am, because they know that I’ve played and I do get a little bit more respect, although I had to earn it. Sometimes I’ve ended games, often at a youth level, for being called inappropriate things, the C-word being one of them. And a lot of it has to do with (the fact) they don’t see me at that level often enough.”

Lamoureux has a deep respect for veteran female officials in Manitoba — trailblazers such as Stacy Hawash and Martha Bradbury.

“They’ve kicked down the door for female officials in the sport of basketball,” she says. “Not only have they kicked it down, they’ve held it open. And now it’s my job in my role to ensure that I also support the holding open of that door and now welcome younger female officials.”

MARTHA BRADBURY, BASKETBALL

WHEN Bradbury got her start in the winter of 1996, she was one of three female basketball officials in the province.

“Frankly, it wasn’t just boys’ teams that reacted like, ‘Holy moly, what’s happening?’” says Bradbury, 56. “It was every team. My first year I went to single-A varsity girls’ provincials in Treherne. I literally walked into the gym and I heard someone say, ‘Wow, a chick ref.’”

Creaky stereotypes continue to this day.

“I find it frustrating sometimes that it doesn’t matter how much you prove yourself and how capable you are, you almost have to be better than your male partner every time you go out,” she says. “No matter what you do to prove yourself, you are always a ‘female’ official.”

Twenty-eight years later, the numbers have improved considerably. Approximately 20 (about 17 per cent) of the officials currently in her sport in the province are female.



Basketball officials Carriera Lamoureux (left) and Martha Bradbury

Bradbury, whose husband Al was a longtime CFL referee and currently serves as the league’s supervisor of officials, has recently retired from working U Sports games and is devoting some of her time to assigning officials in the Manitoba High School Athletic Association’s South Central Athletic Conference (SCAC) and acting as a provincial supervisor.

Despite drawing more women to the officiating ranks, retaining officials, regardless of gender, remains an ongoing challenge.

“Frankly, it’s the abuse by the fans that makes it difficult to us for us to recruit and or retain officials,” she says. “What’s frustrating from an officiating perspective is that these fans don’t understand that without officials there’s no game. If you were in your everyday job, and every time you do something that they think is wrong, someone is saying, ‘What’s what’s wrong with you? Open your eyes.’ How are you going to perform? Are you going to increase your performance? Is it going to get better?”

Bradbury estimates the average age of officials in Manitoba is somewhere between 50 and 55. There needs to be an infusion of young blood, she says, because basketball is a fast game featuring extremely fit athletes.

While recruiting officials from the ranks of graduating university and college players seems logical, it rarely comes into practice.

“Every time I’m talking to high-level competitive university athletes (about refereeing), every single one of them says, ‘I can’t do that. I don’t want to get yelled at. I don’t want to be abused,’” Bradbury says.

“Even currently, the attitude is a little bit like the old-boys’ club — ‘you’re a woman and you need to be protected and I can’t put you in a situation like that.’ It didn’t take very long until my assigner realized that I was actually able to: A. keep up with the play; B. manage the coaches; and C. manage the players. And it didn’t matter that I was female. That was probably my first year.”

Minor-basketball officials are not getting rich. Referees were paid \$47.50 for high school games last season and the figure will rise to \$50 per game in 2024-25.

“The reality is we’re getting compensated because we’re getting abuse,” says Bradbury. “If a parent was yelling all the things to a coach that they yell at an official, the coach would have the administration remove them and they wouldn’t be allowed to be in the gym. But because we’re officials, (it’s just) ‘Oh, it’s part of the game and you get paid to get abused.’ Well, do you? I don’t think it’s acceptable.”

Change is coming at a painfully slow pace. In the SCAC last season, two parents were banned from attending games after abusing officials. One parent stormed an officials’ locker room post-game while another waited to confront a referee in the parking lot.

“I don’t think the parents and, in a lot of cases, I don’t think the schools are doing a good job of teaching respect when they allow that kind of abuse to happen,” adds Bradbury. “Which is why my conference — and we’re working on it provincially — has put in a strict discipline policy and parents know it and it’s shared with them.”

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PHOTOS BY BROOK JONES / FREE PRESS

Ally Wareham works the lines during Manitoba Major Junior Hockey League action last month in Winnipeg. With 15 years of experience, Wareham is one of nine female high-performance hockey officials in the province.

LORI TURSKI, FOOTBALL

TURSKI took an unconventional approach to the sport. She started playing football in 2015 and earned her official's stripes a year later.

If you see her on the gridiron, you'll know she's in her element. She's also a devoted student of the game.

"I have such a good knowledge of the game that I'm able to answer any of the questions that (coaches) have," says Turski, a user-support analyst for Agriculture Canada.

"There's even some male officials that I find, they don't want to take the time to answer a question that would take 10 seconds to answer to calm the coach down. I'll take the time, the extra 10 seconds, and say, 'Hey, coach, this is the answer,' or if I don't know the answer, 'I'll get it for you, and I'll get back to you.' And that's all they want. They want the respect, right? It's a mutual thing."

The women's football season in Manitoba runs from May to June, which leaves time to serve as a head referee or umpire for high school and major junior football in the fall, collecting \$70 per game. There are currently five female on-field officials and one timekeeper who are part of the Manitoba Football Officials Association, which governs high school level and above. Turski, who says she rarely encounters disrespectful behaviour on the field, also works on the support crew — the officials moving the down markers along the sidelines — for Winnipeg Rifles, University of Manitoba Bisons and CFL games.

"I love being able to be part of the game and being able to support these kids being able to continue playing," says Turski, whose youngest daughter will join mom and her two older sisters with the Manitoba Fearless of the Western Women's Canadian Football League.

"Because without officials, you have no game, right? I love the game... I really enjoy the game and the camaraderie of it and then just the relationships you build within the game with fellow officials and fellow players and the coaches that you see year after year."

The Lorette resident hopes to graduate to the Prairie Football Conference of the Canadian Junior Football League, U Sports and one day, perhaps, even the CFL. But at 49, she fears her chances at the big time are dwindling.

"I think in Manitoba we have a bit of an advantage with Al Bradbury (the CFL's supervisor of officials) being here, right?" she says. "Because he's part of the CFL's officials development. So I've actually been talking to him a fair amount this year about trying to move up. And he actually said to me, 'I just moved a 51-year-old up into the CFL last year.' So I'm like, 'Oh there's still hope for me.'"

'I love being able to be part of the game and being able to support these kids being able to continue playing. Because without officials, you have no game, right?

— WHSFL head referee Lori Turski

ALLY WAREHAM, HOCKEY

WAREHAM has one of the most physically demanding jobs in officialdom.

Primarily utilized as a linesperson, she has worked games up to and including last spring's Manitoba Major Junior Hockey League final. With that progress, comes additional layers of pressure.

"We earn our spots to do those but if we do poorly, it's a reflection of women in hockey," says Wareham, a 29-year-old primary-school teacher from La Salle. "If a man does poorly, it's a reflection of his performance."

Dealing with frustrated, sometimes enraged players is a hazard of the job.

"I've had fights," she says. "I've had a full-on line brawl. I've been involved in a goalie fight. I've been involved in scrums and altercations. I've been on the ice when my partner got taken out by a fight. I've been on the ice when people weren't listening to me. So, yes to all of it, but not every game."

After 15 years as a referee and linesperson, Wareham, one of nine female high-performance officials in Manitoba, relies on the camaraderie of her support group.

"My people are other female officials, where I will call one of them because I know they understand," says Wareham.

"You're gonna have unintentional injuries that are occurring and that's one of the reasons it's so important for any good linesperson, male or female, that you are talking while you're going in (to a scrum) like, 'Hey, it's me, it's ref, it's ref. Don't push, don't push. We're over.' Because I don't want to be socked in the face," she says.

"I'm five-foot-eight, so I'm not a huge female, but I'm not a small female. But if you have some of the girls (officials) that are five-foot-two, they actually don't have the physicality to move some of these men. And so that is a limiting factor in the hockey they can do in Manitoba. For myself, I've always been strong enough to line and do that, and you learn little tricks to kind of help you."

Cultural norms are slowly evolving into more modern thinking. Wareham remembers when she started as a 13-year-old that she was terrified to ask adult male referees to leave the changing area to give her privacy. Instead, she searched the arena for a women's bathroom to change into her gear.

"There's a lot less stigma to seeing a female on the ice because we see women at a high level doing those games now," says Wareham, who also serves as referee-in-chief of the U15 AAA Manitoba Female Hockey League. "It's still an abnormality and I think some of the stigma that we still end up facing — the norms of the game and the norms of the culture — are still a current work in progress... I'm not afraid to say, 'Hey, you need to stop talking about that.' Because I'm also established in leagues, I'm not afraid of that power



dynamic. Whereas, when you're 17, 18, 19, 20, and just coming up, you're still worried about your spot in the leagues. Just like the players. It's competitive for us."

Experience has taught Wareham to use a nuanced approach to communicating with players and coaches.

"On the ice, I'm using my body language, my voice, my positioning to help communicate to players and coaches in the arena," says Wareham. "But for me to have my voice heard, I have to lower my voice and be quite loud, right? Where, if I do that at a certain tone, I'm being, excuse my language, 'bitchy,' right? Or I'm being controlling. Where there are a lot of times where, if men use that same tone or that same language, they get told that they are being authoritative."

'On the ice, I'm using my body language, my voice, my positioning to help communicate to players and coaches in the arena. But for me to have my voice heard, I have to lower my voice and be quite loud, right?'

— Hockey referee Ally Wareham

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MIKAELA MACKENZIE / WINNIPEG FREE PRESS

Kennedy Molloy officiates a WHSFL AAA Division game between the John Taylor Pipers and Portage Collegiate Trojans in Winnipeg last month. She regularly works three to five high school games per week.



Amy Martin is Manitoba's most accomplished female hockey official.

AMY MARTIN, HOCKEY

HOCKEY players, fans and coaches often get a bad rep. Sometimes that's well earned.

"I would love to say that, 'Yes, they are respectful' but unfortunately it's not the reality," says Martin, Manitoba's most accomplished female hockey official. "I think, though, over the course of 15 or so years of being involved in it, that I do think the climate is improving. I think people are a lot more aware of it. But it hasn't always been that way and it's definitely not perfect. I think, specifically, hockey has a quite poor climate of how we address officials, compared to other sports."

Martin started her career in stripes as a 13-year-old and 16 years later, her workload includes refereeing various national tournaments, as well as games in the MJHL (starting in 2021) and Manitoba Major Junior Hockey League.

Last winter, she called four games at the Women's World Championship in Utica, N.Y., and four Professional Women's Hockey League games, including her debut on Jan. 6 in St. Paul, Minn.

Martin has a sterling reputation now, but she endured some hard knocks earlier in her career.

"I referee now, but linespersons are generally responsible for physically breaking up fights," says Martin, who is employed at MacDon Engineering in Winnipeg. "So I was involved in intervening, and I separated one of the (16-year-old) players and we made eye contact. He was aware that it was the official that had separated him and he still chose to punch me twice. We removed him from the ice and he was assessed an abuse-of-official penalty."

Did she consider quitting?

"It didn't really deter me too much," says Martin. "I guess the biggest thing for me from that experience was the fact that Hockey Manitoba dealt with it properly, and I felt like I was respected as an official. They supported me. So I think that's probably the biggest factor. If your association is there to back you up and support you, I think that would kind of be a make-or-break deal."

Martin is serious about her craft. She maintains her fitness as a competitive triathlete in the off-season and devotes vacation time away from work to refereeing at high-profile events.

"I guess the sense of community and the friends that you create through it," she says, of what drives her. "My first few years growing up, I had a female friend and we would do it together. So that was really helpful, having at least somebody else you know in the same boat. And then I moved to Winnipeg, and then met a whole new group of officials. They're honestly my closest friends. So the sense of community, I think, is a really big factor."

KENNEDY MOLLOY, FOOTBALL

MOLLOY has been officiating football since she was 12. In the early days, she accepted the verbal abuse on the field with silence and a steely resolve.

But now, having just graduated from the University of Winnipeg with degrees in business and conflict resolution, Molloy is putting her academic training into action.

"My default was just to avoid it and ignore it and kind of just pretend it wasn't happening," she says. "But then, having studied conflict, I've kind of learned that that's not necessarily the best approach. Sometimes you do need to face that conflict head-on and address it."

"And so I think now when a coach starts yelling, or a player, I'll give a moment to calm down, but I'll approach them and say, 'OK, you know, what is the problem? What's bothering you? Let's work together.' And I found you get a better response out of that, or, oftentimes it's a simple issue that you can then resolve."

During the football season, she works three to five games per week at the high school level, earning \$40 and up per game.

After playing linebacker and corner in co-ed football from the time she was eight years old until she was 11 in La Salle, her hometown, she guessed refereeing would be a great way to stay in the game. But it wasn't always easy.

"There's a different kind of level to it, especially being young and being a female," says Molloy, 23. "You have these grown adults yelling at you. They're bigger and older and so it can definitely be a little bit scary, but thankfully, you're not alone out there. It's a whole team of officials, and everyone does a really good job to take care of each other and look out for the younger people, especially."

Molloy regularly studies the rule book to stay sharp and game-ready.

"It's different going from a player to being a ref," she says. "Not only do you have to know the rule, you have to know the application of the rule. I definitely wanted to make sure, because people can question you and it becomes intimidating. I wanted to make sure I was confident and a lot of that came from reading the rule book and familiarizing myself and asking questions."

In 2022, she was chosen to travel to Ottawa to work with an all-female crew at the Football Canada Red-White game that concluded the senior women's national team camp, teaming up with Emily Clarke and Georgina Paull, two female officials currently working in the CFL. Clarke and Paull are considered role models for up-and-comers such as Molloy.

"I do aspire to do more," says Molloy. "I eventually want to make it to the CFL and ref there. That would be my dream, right? But I know there's kind of a path and you have to take it in steps. And so my next big goal would be to ref at the university level and I'm working towards that."

Despite recognition on a national level, she often wonders if it's all worth it.

"There's definitely been some days where at the end of it, you come home and you think, 'Why do I do this? I'm not getting paid very much and I'm practically just a punching bag for these grown men yelling at me,'" says Molloy.

"But often, what I tell myself is when I was a kid, I got to play football and part of being able to play was because there was people who were willing to come out and give up a day and officiate and make it possible. So I kind of remind myself of giving back to the community and back to the next generation."

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'NO REFEREE, NO GAME'

MORE girls and women are playing important roles in increasing numbers as officials on the field of play. This change is more consequential than just an uptick in participation.

"I do know that in the sports I see, I see more women refereeing," says Dr. Sandra Kirby, a former Olympic rower who studies sexual abuse and harassment as a sociology professor at the University of Winnipeg. "I see more women going to the Olympics as referees. I see more women running the clinics that train the referees. It's not only a male that stands up there and gives you the technical (explanation)."

"It's often a woman and that's important. So the more they do these things, the better the sport will be, because women, by and large, have a good influence on equity in the sport. And that radiates down to the players. The players are more likely to have a good experience and they're more likely to thrive in the sport."

Kirby says more individuals becoming officials should be a good thing and care should be taken in developing their skills.

"(Sport Manitoba) has a campaign that says 'No referee, no game,' which is quite true," adds Kirby. "I think part of the answer is having more girls and women referees, obviously. I think one of the answers is having more supports for young referees. So when they're 13, 14, 15, 16, they're not there by themselves. There's a senior referee who's mentoring them and who helps them. And I'm aware if you have a senior referee and a younger referee, then you have a power

dynamic, so you want to make sure it's not an abusive relationship."

Kirby, who does a lot of work on abuse in sport, touts education as the key to informing players about how to behave towards referees while also schooling those referees on how to manage the field of play.

Recently, Kirby made a presentation to basketball officials about their role in safe sport.

"I said, 'Have you been bullied on the court?' Yes. 'By players?' Yes. 'Have you been bullied by the audience?' Yes. 'Have you retaliated?' And a few hands would go up. Yes. And I said, 'If you're trying to be absolutely neutral, you can't retaliate,'" says Kirby. "And they retaliate either by not calling something for a period of time, so an athlete eventually gets hurt, or by calling a lot against that athlete, so the athlete is eventually expelled."

"I said, 'You need better rules to deal with that stuff. You shouldn't have to engage in retaliation in order to control your field of play.'"

Kirby, who has served as an umpire in rowing, suggests a system of yellow and red cards (meaning caution and expulsion) could help to protect officials.

"You have to respect the relationships that exist there, but you also have to enforce the rules of the game while you're doing it," says Kirby. "So it's very much being a good citizen. I've always said referees can't pick their nose in public. You have to be on your very best behaviour when you're out there and you're in uniform because you represent the game."

creators

49.8°

F5

FROM FRUSTRATION COMES INSPIRATION

‘Happy accident’ sparks creative pipe-carving venture

AV KITCHING THE CREATORS

The Creators series examines the ‘aha’ moment behind ideas, images and inspiration, and the people behind them.

JEFF Nelson describes his foray into pipe making as a “happy accident.”

Nelson, 69, creates hand-carved hardwood pipes, designed to smoke cannabis, out of wood sourced from all over the world as well as from Manitoba.

The “home handyman” has worked with wood for years but had never considered carving pipes until four years ago when, after an unsatisfactory smoking experience from a store-bought pipe, he decided to make a better one for himself.

“I wasn’t looking for a new hobby,” he says. “But some of my friends saw it, and they wanted one of their own. I made a couple more and it grew from there.”

Splitting his time between his basement workshop — “I do most of the planning in there” and the corner of his garage where the actual wood-working takes place — Nelson has made approximately 135 pipes since he started in 2020, and often has seven or eight on the go at any given time.

Developed as an alternative to glass pipes found in stores, Nelson’s hardwood pipes are not all created equal. He has four distinct styles on offer, ranging in size and shape.

Measuring a compact five inches with a small one-and-three-quarter-inch bowl, his classic pipes are simple and straightforward, with hardly any bend to the stem. The curved classic, is virtually identical but has a gentle bend to the stem.

Sherlock pipes, measuring six to six-and-a-half inches and modelled after the implement made famous by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in his Sherlock Holmes detective stories, have a dramatic curve to the stem and a slightly deeper bowl.

Nelson’s most stylized pipe, the churchwarden, also referred to as the Gandalf, is the longest one he makes, measuring nine to 12 inches.

“The bend in the stem doesn’t alter the smoking experience but the longer stem means the airway path is longer, so the smoke is cooler when you inhale, as opposed to the short pipes when the smoke comes out hotter,” he says.



Nelson shows off a finished pipe alongside one currently in progress.

When designing his pipes, Nelson gravitates toward natural shapes, preferring to carve uncomplicated lines with smooth curves that lead the eye along the body of the pipe.

“If I manage to make the pipe’s contours complement the wood and show off its grain, that’s even better and is pretty satisfying,” he says.

He sources his wood from across the globe, including four kinds — elm, paper birch, apple and maple — from Manitoba. He gets his supplies of exotic wood from Windsor Plywood in Winnipeg, which stocks his favourites such as West African Red Zebrawood, Ziricote from Mexico and Brazilian Jatoba.

“Some of the wood types have a property that gives them a 3D look. It’s called chatoyancy, and is quite sought after in lots of wood. It’s really, really appealing. Redheart from Paraguay is one of my absolute favourites because it has this quality, a 3D look beneath the surface of the wood,” he explains.

He’s recently started making stands on which people can place their pipes when not using them or if the pipes, like many have been, were purchased as decorative items.

“I don’t consider myself an artist at all. I am surprised people think (my pipes) are artistic. I am an engineer and for me it’s more ‘make it work’ and not ‘make it pretty,’ so when somebody says they like the look of it, I get a thrill out of it. If somebody is enjoying it one way or another, it makes me happy.”

The stands were first made from scrap lumber, but lately Nelson been using driftwood that he sources from around the shores of Clear Lake and Lake of the Prairies.

“I also find wood when I am on bike rides on the path along the Red River, keeping my eyes on the shoreline to see what’s there. If I see a part of a log I like, I make a note of its location and return later to pick it up,” he says.

He posts pictures of his creations on his Instagram account, @pegcitypipes, where people can contact him to place orders by sending him an email or a direct message.

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For his pipe designs, Jeff Nelson opts for natural shapes and uncomplicated lines, aiming to complement the wood’s natural grain.



MIKAELA MACKENZIE / FREE PRESS

Along with imported hardwood, Nelson uses local elm, paper birch, apple and maple.

PRESERVING PAST REMINDS US WHO WE ARE AS WE BUILD FUTURE

REBECCA CHAMBERS



CINDERELLA dances in the arms of her prince at one minute to midnight. Three bears hold empty porridge bowls and regard the girl sleeping in Baby Bear’s bed. Little Red Riding Hood stands by a bonneted sleeping wolf, a moment before the wolf awakens. Every scene teeters at some moment of discovery. They repeat their animated motions again and again, eerie and tattered from years of service on the 6th floor of the downtown Eaton’s store.

In my memory of the fairy-tale vignettes, they are at eye level, and

housed in shadow boxes in a darkened narrow hallway. I am particularly entranced by the Little Match Girl, who lights her final match over and over to try to stay warm enough to survive the cold night, even as families can be seen through warm windows behind her. Somewhere in my young mind, I fall in love with her tragedy: that in trying to warm herself she burns through the one thing she might have to sell to improve her lot.

Caught in time, these visions of Winnipeg’s past anchor me to this place. Even now, restored and nestled in their new homes at the Manitoba Children’s Museum, brightly lit and visible from all sides, I still see them as creaky and dimly lit dioramas of the dying days of a dying downtown department store. I like to think they, too, have a memory, and perhaps recognize me from their former home.

I’m getting older and I’m starting to see layers of time and streetscape

stacking up around my city. I can still see the old Winnipeg Arena and Stadium when I drive down St. James Street, and a snapshot of the “old” zoo entrance will never cease to fill me with childlike anticipation of a day out.

But there are more layers to unseen and vanished Winnipeg than in my short life. At the Manitoba Museum, in the Winnipeg Gallery, I marvel at the stone heads of newspaper boys, carved off the old Free Press building, and a stained-glass window salvaged from our “gingerbread” city hall. Both of these places are long gone, of course, yet somehow seeing these small shards of our history evokes the entire context in which they were originally situated.

Even the frame displaying a film montage of Winnipeg historical moments is made from a grand brass door frame that once admitted shoppers to Eaton’s, and generations of Winnipeg children on their way to see the vignettes.

Using relics like these as a theatre proscenium is fitting: These vestiges of our physical history are the pieces of set design upon which the story of Winnipeg continues to play out. They are not only the stage furniture, but the stage itself, and the costumes, the sets, the curtains and the lighting for the story of who we are. These broken but cherished pieces of our past are mementos arranged in a scrapbook that tells us, and those to come, who we are and how we live.

Our efforts at preservation of our past provide a small evocation of what once was and a way to carry some of the past into the future, a way to link our generation to those who already passed this way and those yet to come.

I don’t have personal memories of the McIntyre Block, the Devon Court Apartments or the Northern Crown Bank, but I still mourn the pieces of these ghost buildings that were pulverized in the remodelling of Air Canada

Park. The city’s defence is that public consultations yielded no sentiment toward preserving the shards. However, it also seems no one asked this question.

There is no going back, of course, not to the spooky vignettes of my childhood, no more than to the McIntyre Block or the Devon Court Apartments or the Northern Crown Bank.

In a Winnipeg vignette, dimly lit and creaking, again and again, the wrecking ball is an inch away from destroying a piece of our past. We are forever suspended in a moment of decision about how the rest of the story might play out. Like a mechanical Cinderella, spinning, glancing over the prince’s shoulder for a view of the clock, over and over, for more than a century, we, too, have had the mystical ability to stop time and preserve the pieces of our own story.

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intersection

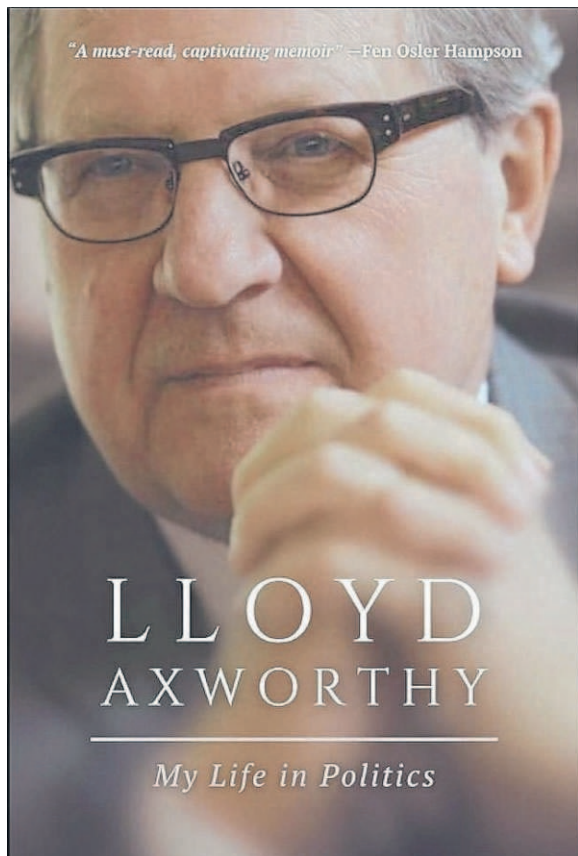


WAYNE GLOWACKI / FREE PRESS FILES

Lloyd Axworthy, a former Manitoba MLA and federal cabinet minister, served as president and vice-chancellor of the University of Winnipeg for a decade, starting in 2004.

A REAL EDUCATION

Reflecting on the challenges of making U of W an anchor institution of the inner city



LLOYD AXWORTHY

An excerpt from Lloyd Axworthy: *My Life in Politics (Sutherland House)*. A book launch will be held Oct. 16 at McNally Robinson Booksellers.

DRIVING east from Victoria on the Trans-Canada in April 2004, listening to Eric Clapton on the car's stereo system (before his anti-vax days), I had time to think about what being president and vice-chancellor of the University of Winnipeg had in store. It was not an unknown terrain.

I had been an undergraduate, assistant professor, director of the IUS (Institute of Urban Studies), honorary doctorate recipient and alumni donor at U of W. But, I never imagined becoming president for a 10-year, two-term tenure. How did that come about? Well ...

The university was coping with a crisis. Constance Rooke, who had become president and vice-chancellor in 1999, was dismissed by the University Board of Regents in December 2002 over concerns about finance and proposed plans for expansion. The government of Gary Doer had raised alarms and there were internal disagreements over the direction of the institution. Dr. Rooke, a highly regarded literary figure in Canada, had run into opposition from some faculty and board members over her ambitious plans to broaden the scope of the university's cultural and community reach and certain renovations to the president's house on Oak Street. I had dinner in Toronto with Connie several months after I had taken office when she was ill with the cancer that would soon take her life, but still engaged and anxious to talk about her time at U of W.

She admitted that she hadn't fully understood the local mores nor the politics of the university and ran afoul of pockets of resistance. Still, she believed that the university had the potential to grow beyond being a competent learning centre of undergraduate education into an engine of change in learning that reflected the reality of downtown Winnipeg.

I agreed. It may have been that need to find someone with local grounding who led the search committee headed by the Vice-Chair of the Board of Regents, Carol Wylie, to contact me to see if I might be interested in applying. My answer was that I was too old and other-directed to enter an academic beauty contest. A few weeks later Carol got back with the suggestion that I

forego the normal rigmarole and come to Winnipeg to meet with the board, the chancellor and key faculty.

In the meantime I had been receiving supportive messages from Premier Doer; Sandy Riley, the chancellor; and Susan Thompson, the new head of the University Foundation. On their urging and after talks with (my wife) Denise and with Paul Fraser, my longtime friend from United College days, I agreed to attend the meeting and discussions in Winnipeg. The exchanges must have worked. On Dec. 15, 2003, the Board of Regents unanimously passed my appointment and in April I was headed back to Winnipeg for a decade at the helm of my alma mater and a return to the city that I considered home. I viewed the job as one that offered the context and agency I was looking for — it was a microenvironment where ideas could be put into action, and it promised a culmination of my many years of interest in education in the inner-city.

Taking the reins as president in June, I decided to spend some time sussing out the extant situation of the university, starting with a canvass of faculty, staff and board members. This met with a mixed response. A faction in the faculty and admin were satisfied with the status quo.

There was a group with a far-left bias who didn't welcome a president with an obvious liberal pedigree and made their opposition clear. They continued to kvetch for the next 10 years. There were other faculty and admin people brimming with ideas who urged me to become proactive in making the university an anchor institution in the inner-city. Support for recasting the role of the university in the city and province was expressed in my meetings with the premier, the mayor, and members of the downtown business groups and social agencies. They respected the long history of the institution as a learning centre but were worried that it had become too insular — an ivory tower, in other words.

THE accuracy of that description was affirmed in what I heard from local residents when I went knocking on their doors. They saw the university as being aloof from them and their needs. Security restrictions prevented access by local people to the campus. There was a long-simmering resentment that the university's Duckworth Athletic Centre, which had received provincial funding on the basis of shared use with the community, no longer was open to them. There was skepticism about the university making much difference in their lives.

I saw firsthand that the neighbourhood had serious pockets of poverty and a lack of services, housing and recreation facilities, which seemed to have little relevance to the univer-

sity. Building trust with members of the community was a priority and a necessity.

Since the departure of Constance Rooke, the interregnum had been professionally handled by Patrick Deane, who has since gone on to be the chief officer at McMaster and Queens. He had started to rework the financial problem, especially paying back the pension fund. When I met with Susan Thompson from the newly formed University Foundation and its chair, Sandy Riley, they informed me of the parlous state of funding and the lack of any plans for a capital campaign. The Doer government had frozen tuition fees, capping any increase in revenue, and the university's campus was in serious need of refurbishment.

THE science labs were leaking fumes and in danger of city-imposed penalties. Classroom space was in short supply and there was limited student housing. The Wesley building and Convocation Hall were in dire need of renovation. Spence Street, a four-lane heavily trafficked thoroughfare bifurcated the west side of the campus — a risk to students crossing to the Duckworth and a barrier to any further development. (Ultimately, we had it closed and turned into a campus mall.) All to say that there was no lack of obstacles and muddles needing attention.

My experience with problem-solving in government over the years came in handy. I remember being challenged on what possible lessons I had learned in politics that had any relevance to the position of president of an academic institution. I was tempted to reply that I had learned to stoically put up with confrontational questions from pompous people. But I demurred and instead recited my academic credentials, my long association with the institution going back to being a student, and my support by way of being an annual donor and contributor to the institution. This cranky challenge reminded me that just as in politics, there would be those in opposition who would irrationally confront whatever they didn't like.

Lloyd Axworthy served as an MLA in the Manitoba Legislature for six years before embarking on a 21-year career in the House of Commons, serving in the cabinets of Pierre Trudeau, John Turner and Jean Chretien. He returned to Winnipeg to serve as president of the University of Winnipeg for a decade. He currently chairs the World Refugee and Migration Council.



MIKE APORIUS / FREE PRESS FILES

Axworthy led the U of W during a period when the institution was striving to rebuild trust with the surrounding inner-city community.

intersection

where life meets culture



PHOTOS BY MIKE DEAL / FREE PRESS

Deb Rogalsky, founder of Deb's Meatbuns, runs her home-based enterprise out of a commercial kitchen she had purpose-built adjacent to her home in Landmark.

PERISHKE, PYRIZHKY, PIROŠKA ...

Any way
you say it,
**SAVOURY
STUFFED
BUNS**
always sure
to be
a mouthful



Rogalsky deftly fills a batch of her buns.

DAVID SANDERSON

LANDMARK — Let's begin with a story about love at first bite.

Nyah Hiebert and Jordan Buys tied the knot in August at a ceremony in Niverville. Ahead of the big day, Nikki Hiebert, the mother of the bride, was tossing around ideas of what to offer guests as a late-evening snack at the reception. She wanted something that would be easy to serve and wouldn't require a lot of prep time when it suddenly dawned on her: what about a particular meat-filled bun her daughter and future son-in-law used to rave about, when both were students at Niverville High School?

"I remembered hearing about them constantly and how Jordan used to get as many as 24 at a time, because they were, in his words, amazing," Hiebert says, referring to Deb's Meatbuns, which Landmark resident Deb Rogalsky has been supplying to school lunch programs throughout southeastern Manitoba for close to a decade. "When I approached Nyah and Jordan about having their favourite flavours at the wedding, they were pumped."

Neither Hiebert's daughter or her fiancé ever knew Rogalsky by name, so when the savoury treats, which are also available at retail outlets in Steinbach, Mitchell and Winnipeg, were brought out, they announced into a microphone that they were "from the



The savoury yeast-leavened buns have always been part of Rogalsky's life.

meat-bun lady at school."
"They were a big hit, though we did have leftovers as we had ordered quite a few — 24 dozen," Hiebert says. "But the good thing was we were able to freeze the rest and have them for lunches and snacks another time."

● ● ●
Perishke. Pyrzhky. Pirazhki. Piroška.

No matter how you spell it, egg-shaped, yeast-leavened buns stuffed with a variety of fillings have been a staple in Rogalsky's household for as long as she can remember.

The youngest of eight siblings, Rogalsky used to "toss 'em back like candy," when she was a youngster growing up in Landmark, located 40 kilometres southeast of Winnipeg.

"My mom used to do them for special occasions like birthdays and holiday gatherings," Rogalsky says, seated in a commercial kitchen she had built in 2021, directly adjacent to her main

living space. "The only problem was, with eight kids, she had to prepare a ton of buns to fill all of us up, which is probably why she made them very occasionally."

Rogalsky is a school teacher by profession, but cooking and baking have always been her first loves. She chuckles, recalling how she once sold homemade cupcakes served in ice cream cones to her Grade 6 classmates, charging all of a dime for the confections, which was barely enough to cover the cost of the ingredients. (She never said she was good at math, she cracks.)

The mother of four was working as a substitute music teacher for the Hanover School Division in 2000 when she started a side gig that offered fully-cooked meals such as lasagna and shepherd's pie. A few years later, following a rehearsal with the Menonite choir she belonged to, the topic of conversation turned to perishke. More specifically, did any of them know someone who made the Eastern

European-flavoured foodstuffs? Up shot Rogalsky's hand.

"I went home and, following my mom's old recipes, made a bunch, which I brought along to the next practice for everyone to try out," she says. "I walked out of there with orders for close to 100 dozen, and told myself on the way home that I guess I was now in the meat-bun business, too."

Initially, Rogalsky was turning out a single sort of bun stuffed with ground beef, onions and mashed potatoes, which she dubbed the "original" in honour of her late mother. Her brother was munching away on them at her place one afternoon when he asked if she had ever considered swapping out the ground-beef mixture for farmer's sausage and cheese. Just like that, she had a second selection... then a third after people she square-danced with suggested she add sauerkraut-filled buns to her arsenal.

Pretty soon, she couldn't walk through a grocery store without wondering what would go good in a bun, she says, listing taco, pulled-pork, spinach-and-feta, bacon-and-egg and buffalo-chicken among the new flavours she came up with.

"I also did a beef Wellington bun for a while. Mind you, it was so labour-intensive — I'd lay out all the individual ingredients, and add them one by one — that it wasn't worth the effort, though people told me they were sorry to see it go."

In 2012 Rogalsky had a decision to make. She enjoyed teaching, but for mental-health reasons, she was finding it increasingly difficult to be in a prescribed place at a prescribed time, five days a week. She eventually switched gears by taking a position in the meat department of a local grocery store for two years. It was the same story there, however.

CONTINUED

intersection

If there were mornings or afternoons when she wasn't "feeling it," she still felt pressured to fight through whatever it was she was dealing with and show up for work with a smile on her face, she says.

Her only recourse, she felt, was to become her own boss. From the get-go, she had been selling her wares under the banner Deb's Delectables. Except when she went to the bank in the spring of 2015 to apply for a small-business loan, she listed Deb's Meatbuns as her official moniker, figuring she should concentrate fully on what had turned out to be her runaway best seller.

"Sometimes getting forced into doing something opens up all these other opportunities," Rogalsky says, noting because she could now afford to rent space in a commercial kitchen — previously, she cooked out of her home — she was suddenly eligible to sell her buns at farmers' markets, pop-up sales, and, as mentioned off the top, to ravenous school students looking for an alternative to hot-dog or pizza day.

Danielle Mondor is executive director of the St. Norbert Farmers' Market, where Rogalsky has been a regular vendor since 2016.

"For me, what's cool about the market is that one, it's a place where people can go for nutritious, fresh food and two, it's great for businesses that need to grow before they can start thinking about establishing a bricks-and-mortar or online store," Mondor says, when reached at home. "And even though Deb now has a retail presence, she still chooses to vend every week, which I'm sure she'd agree is a great opportunity to greet customers face-to-face, and get instant feedback about her products."

To Mondor, Rogalsky's tourtière buns, done with ground beef, onion, cinnamon, cloves and garlic, taste precisely like the spiced meat pies. One of her relatives, who is French-Canadian, is in full agreement.

"My auntie is always asking me to buy Deb's Meatbuns and I routinely stop by her booth to pick up a dozen to honour her Franco-Manitoban roots," Mondor says.

Mondor notes the weekly farmers' market has an information station, where visitors can inquire as to the whereabouts of a particular booth. "Where can I find Deb's Meatbuns?" is a common query, she says.



MIKE DEAR / FREE PRESS

Rogalsky launched Deb's Meatbuns in 2015.

"If there's ever a Saturday when she's not here, she is definitely missed."

Rogalsky is currently in the midst of what she calls her busy season, which generally lasts from mid-May until Christmas. The best investment she ever made was adding a commercial kitchen to her premises, which allows her to cook when it suits her, and to slip away for a mid-afternoon nap, if needed.

"And because I can pinch buns with my eyes closed pretty much, I spend a lot of time listening to audiobooks or watching my shows when I'm here," she says, getting up to place three-dozen freshly rolled buns into a pre-heated oven. "What's also been great is that all of my children have worked for me at some point, and it's been awesome that the business allows me to give them money without giving them money, if you know what I mean."

Last month, Rogalsky, who swears by a side of gravy with her "chicken dinner" bun (chicken, stuffing), travelled with one of her sons to Toronto to help him get set up in a new apartment before starting university. She shakes her head when asked if his mother's buns were among the belongings he packed for the road.

"To be completely honest, I'm not sure any of my kids crave them any longer, I've tested so many buns on them through the years. Mind you, when the cupboard's bare and there's nothing else to eat, they know who to call."

For more information, go to debsmeatbuns.ca

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FORTITUDE AT 40

MITCH CALVERT



I'M officially 40 years old.

As a kid, I always thought I had the worst birthday because I was months behind my friends. But now, it's just another day. However, this one holds a little more importance. I'm "ahead" of where I thought I'd be at this age, with plenty of room for improvement.

I don't feel old like Paul Rudd in *This Is 40* (except on the day after I play two hockey games, like last weekend). My fitness has never been better, other than finding there's less room for error if I misstep on my routine.

Life isn't a straight line, and I've learned growth happens in the detours and setbacks.

So, here are 40 lessons from 40 years — truths that have helped me become a better man, father, husband and coach.

40 LESSONS FROM 40 YEARS

1. Life is hard, but that's the point. Growth comes from discomfort.
2. Don't wish for easier; become better. Progress is greater than short cuts.
3. When in doubt, take the next small step. It's about momentum, not speed.
4. Life's too short for unnecessary drama. Choose peace.
5. No one's thinking about you as much as you think. Relax!
6. Pay off your credit cards every month. Debt is an anchor.
7. Make peace with your past. It's already over.
8. Stop comparing your Chapter 1 to someone's Chapter 20. Write your own story.
9. You're either getting better or getting bitter. Choose better.
10. Perseverance is greater than talent. You can get through anything if you keep going.
11. "No" is just a roadblock, not a dead end. Keep asking.
12. Happiness is an inside job. Own it.
13. In five years, will this really matter? Probably not.
14. Let go of resentment. Carrying it only weighs you down.
15. What others think of you is none of your business. Focus on your lane.
16. Everything is temporary — good and bad. Enjoy the ride.
17. Family comes first. Your job won't be there in tough times, but they will.
18. The hard things are the most rewarding. Keep going.
19. Getting older is a privilege. Celebrate it.
20. Your kids only get one childhood. Be there.
21. Nature heals. Get outside every day.
22. Your problems aren't as bad as you think. Perspective is everything.
23. Exercise is medicine. Consistency wins.
24. Own your life. Good or bad, it's on you to respond.

25. The best is always yet to come. Stay optimistic.
26. Take deep breaths. It calms the storm.
27. If you don't ask, you'll never know. Closed mouths don't get fed.
28. Gratitude is the foundation of abundance. Appreciate what you've got.
29. Don't be afraid to ask for help. It's a strength, not a weakness.
30. Moderation is greater than restriction. Especially with alcohol.
31. Stop watching the news before bed. Seriously, just stop.
32. Find device-free time every day. Clear your head.
33. Your health is your best investment. Prioritize it.
34. Get enough sleep. Rest is underrated.
35. Sleep and wake at the same time daily. Your body will thank you.
36. Growth isn't linear. It's OK to coast sometimes.
37. Winning every argument isn't worth it. Let it go.
38. There's never a perfect time to start. Just start.
39. Laughter really is the best medicine. Don't take life too seriously.
40. Celebrate the journey, not just the destination. Life's about the moments along the way.

REFRAMING THE DEFINITION OF FITNESS AFTER 40

What I wish I knew at 20 is how to properly define fitness.

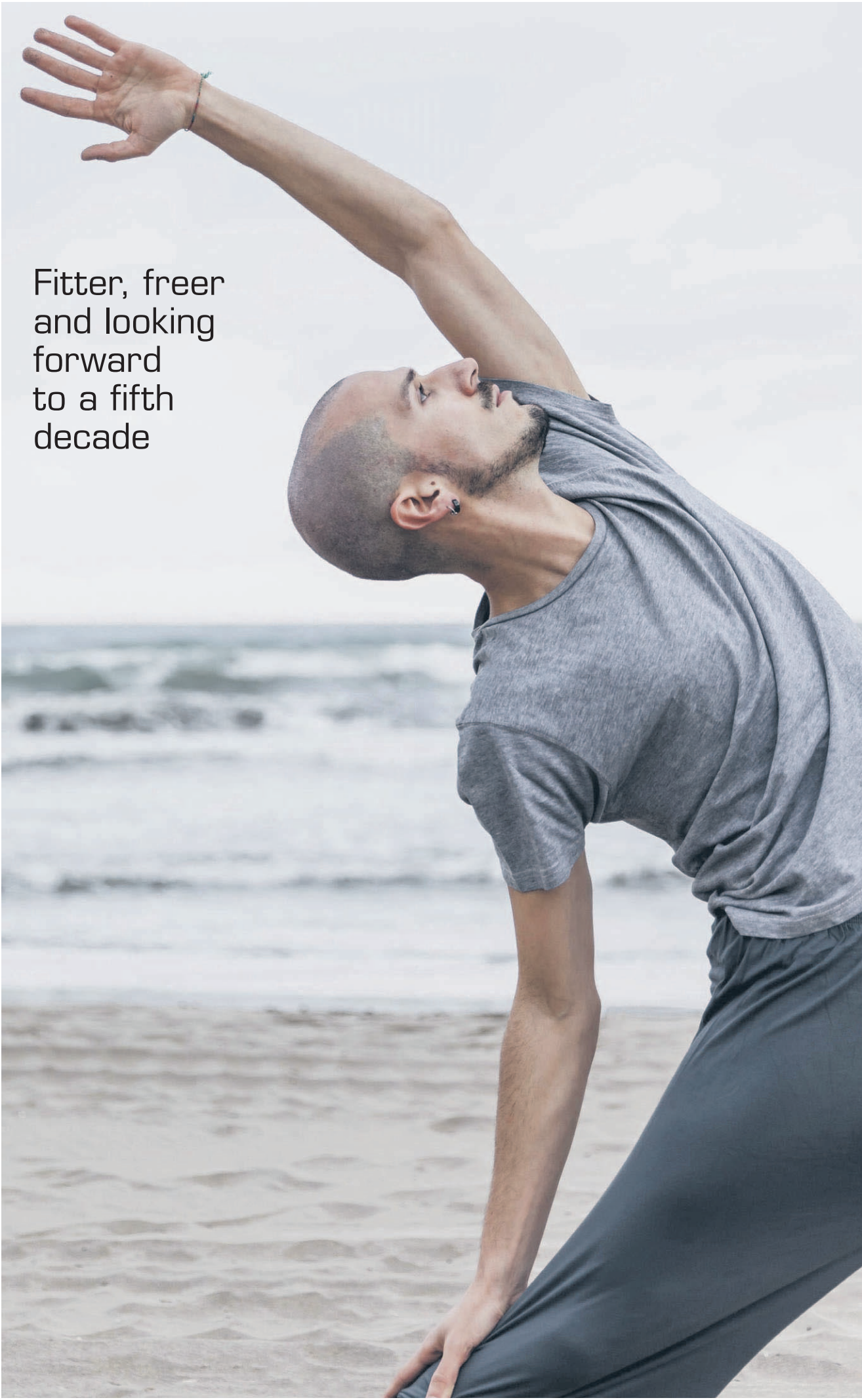
For many, the idea of fitness has been tied to achieving a "six-pack" or maintaining ultra-low body-fat levels, but this view often sets unrealistic expectations, especially as we age. The truth is, fitness isn't about being shredded — it's about getting your body fat into a range science suggests is optimal for overall health and longevity.

For most men, a healthy body-fat percentage falls between 18 and 24 per cent, while for women, it's 25 to 31 per cent. These ranges are higher than the ripped physiques people tend to associate with optimal health. But this level of leanness protects against chronic illnesses such as heart disease and diabetes, while supporting physical and mental well-being, without being obsessively food-focused. Going below these body-fat levels may work for some — especially athletes — but it's not necessary (or healthy) for the average person.

In fact, when you're extremely lean, you might struggle with low energy, poor sleep and irritability. Personally, I feel my best at around 18 per cent body fat, rather than pushing for sub-15 per cent.

Last year I dieted down to sub-190 pounds and 14-ish per cent body fat. My sleep suffered, my mood took a nosedive, and I found myself so focused on food and diet that I couldn't enjoy life. The truth is, being that lean brought more cons than pros for me. This is very much a genetic thing — you need to find your sweet spot. Some can easily maintain less than 14 per cent body fat. It's their genetic set-point, not mine, and that was a tough pill to swallow.

But the goal should be to build a healthy, sustainable lifestyle that supports both your physical and emotional health. By reframing the definition of fitness beyond appearance-based goals, you'll focus on what truly mat-



FREEPIK

Fitter, freer and looking forward to a fifth decade

ters — living a long, healthy and fulfilling life, no matter your age.

Here's a breakdown of the five key steps for living a longer, healthier life without ruining yourself in the process.

1. WALK MORE

Movement is medicine, and walking is one of the simplest ways to keep your body in top condition. Whether you're pacing during a work call or enjoying a morning stroll, aim for 8,000-10,000 steps a day. Studies show people who move regularly, even just through walking, tend to maintain healthier body weights, lower their blood pressure and reduce their risk of chronic diseases like diabetes and heart disease.

2. STRENGTH TRAINING

As we age, we start to lose muscle mass. However, research suggests staying active — particularly through strength training — can prevent this loss, helping you maintain your vitality well into old age. For example, a study

involving over three million participants between the ages of 35 and 85 showed stronger individuals were significantly less likely to experience early death. Building muscle not only protects you from injuries but also improves your metabolism.

3. GET SLEEP

Sleep is the unsung hero of health. It's easy to overlook, but consistently getting seven to eight hours a night is one of the most effective ways to keep your body and mind in peak condition.

4. STAY HYDRATED

Water is life. Staying hydrated helps regulate body temperature, keeps your joints lubricated, and aids in digestion and nutrient absorption. If you're looking to maintain or improve your health, aim for at least three litres of water a day. It's one of the easiest ways to boost your metabolism, reduce hunger cravings and feel more energized throughout the day.

5. CAP CONTROL: CALORIES & PROTEIN

The law of thermodynamics applies to all of us — if you consume more calories than your body burns, the excess is stored as fat. However, you don't need to go to extremes to control your weight. Instead, focus on maintaining a reasonable calorie intake while prioritizing protein-rich foods. Protein helps preserve muscle mass, especially as you age, and keeps you fuller for longer, reducing those late-night cravings.

These five simple habits are your foundation for living longer and healthier. Master the basics, and you'll be well on your way to enjoying a vibrant life filled with energy and, yes, even a side of fries if you so choose.

Mitch Calvert is a Winnipeg-based fitness coach who has helped more than 1,600 people transform their bodies and lives over the past decade. Visit mitchcalvert.com for more information.