**CONFERENCE SPEECH**

**FOR**

**CHIEF SEAN MARSCHKE**

Hello everyone and thank you, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for that warm and generous introduction. We’ve all probably heard, at one time or another, that “today is the first day of the rest of our lives...”. It’s also the day we turn the page at the Wisconsin Chiefs of Police Association, and the beginning of the tenure in which I have just sworn to do my best to lead, inspire, mediate, corroborate, and continue to promote the sense of brotherhood and mutual respect this organization has fostered since 1907. I’ve got big shoes to fill but thanks to the path that others have left over the past one hundred plus years, it is clear I am not alone. Together, we will continue to navigate and discover the routes to follow to insure the mission of the WCPA continues to strengthen and maintain the purposes we share.

As with most initiatives and efforts that have prevailed for many years, I am blessed to have been guided and thankful to have been mentored by those that have preceded me. With each successive term and year of history celebrated by our organization, we’ve all become more aware, more adept, and more proactive in serving the needs and addressing the issues that face our fellow members and constituents. If you’re in this room, somehow we are connected... bound together in blue, related by our pledge to honor our brothers and sisters in law enforcement. Whether you’re a fellow police officer or one who loves one, is related to one, or plans to be one, I want to thank you for your encouragement. I particularly want to recognize my wife Sara, someone who is always with me in spirit and is **actually** here tonight with us. Sara, I would like to thank you for your love, encouragement, and support. Police officers do what they do as an expression of care and concern for those they know best. For me, that’s been you, so on behalf of my fellow Chiefs, officers, and rank and file, thank you for inspiring me... and us... to serve. I would also like to thank all of the past presidents of the WCPA, fellow members of the Board of Directors, Executive Director, Don Thaves, Conference Coordinator Pete Peters & Treasurer Tim Styka. Each one of you that has stood here, or sat there..... (**point to where the other leaders are sitting**) has contributed invaluable wisdom, passion, and experience so that the rest of us might be able to function and serve more completely and efficiently in our own roles on our own forces.

It’s no secret to anyone in this room... or to anyone in the general populace, that a career in law enforcement is challenging... to put it mildly. With every successive year and through cultural, social, and political change, the members of law enforcement communities throughout the country face ever evolving, increasingly complex challenges that test the strength, patience, resilience, and conscience of our fellow officers. Thanks to organizations like the WCPA, we all have a platform... a forum... a laboratory within which to discuss those challenges and mediate and act on solutions that serve the public and the police force, all with the intention of advancing understanding, vigilance, and ultimately the safety and well being of all involved. For over one hundred years, this organization has served to be a guide and a clearinghouse for the unique issues and puzzles faced by each generation.

I stand here, before all of you, as your thankful, optimistic, and enthusiastic new President.... but don’t let this cool, calm, capable exterior fool you... (**Wait for the laugh**)... it wasn’t **THAT** long ago that I entered my very first conference as a newly sworn in police chief... That was in 2007 when I attended my first conference of the association, and hindsight gives me the perspective and courage to say that it was a bit overwhelming.  Since that time, the WCPA has continued to experience its own collective growth and adaptability. I’ve observed and participated in events and exercises that have been effective in allowing this organization to become increasingly more accessible to all of our membership, including more interaction with the Officers and Board of Directors, the New Chief Mentoring Program and many other resources. I believe that as we evolve as a society in general and as a community, more specifically, we recognize there are changing conditions that foster growing transparency. Whether thanks to, or because of, our continued immersion in technological advancements and general social connectivity, we find ourselves more actively involved in every aspect of our lives, and law enforcement and its attendant issues and possible solutions are absolutely no exceptions.... and as the society advances... as new and greater... bigger... more complex relationships and conditions take hold, our mandate shifts as well. Although our ultimate mission, to Protect and Serve remains, our reactions and responses must continue to evolve and adapt with the times.

M.H. McKee said, “Wisdom is knowing the right path to take. Integrity is taking it.” Every day, each one of us faces tests to our wisdom both within our station houses and outside, in the streets and highways of our communities. We are expected to be flawless leaders with unmatched precision judgement... on all calls, and yet I am sure we have all learned that perfection is an ideal just out of reach. We are all human and human lives rest in our hands. Thanks to our participation within and beyond the WCPA, we can each have a greater sense that we are not alone. While some issues that present themselves are unique to each of our territories, for the most part, we are dealing with the time tested conditions that contemporary humanity carries with it and presents. President Ronald Reagan has said, “Evil is powerless if the good are unafraid.”.... (**If you think it’s appropriate, you can say**).... I’d like to add to that.... and it’s something I’ve experienced throughout my career and more specifically, over the past eleven years, since I’ve been involved with this group.... it also really helps to work on your “**game face**...” (**Wait for the laugh**). By that I mean that we’re human... and so, by nature, especially in stressful situations, we naturally feel concern and apprehension, but being a part of this organization brings a certain confidence.... a confirmation that others are also out on the beat or in the field, sharing similar thoughts and finding increasingly effective responses to the problems we face, individually and as a team. The “blue line” may be thin but it’s strong and it stretches and connects each one of us. It tests us and grounds us and provides a forum and clearing house for us to discuss our challenges and consider solutions.

Did I have **ANY** idea, eleven years ago, that I would be standing here before you, newly sworn in, as the President of the WCPA??? Probably not... remember... I was overwhelmed, trying to process the input that faced me as a younger, less experienced police office of \_\_\_\_\_\_ years old. It’s not like I was **COMPLETELY** green... I mean... I’m **BLUE**... **REMEMBER**?? (**Wait for the laugh**), but I was just beginning to learn that I had **NO** idea all that I didn’t **YET** know. And here I am **NOW**... even **MORE** sure that I don’t know what I don’t know... how’s **THAT** for a confidence booster from your fearless president??? (**Wait for the laugh**) ... but what I **DO** know are the non-negotiable conditions, thoughts, and commitments that perpetually exist within me.... and have been there since I first realized and committed my self and my personal strength and professional resources to law enforcement. I am here to serve. I am here... and in my own precinct to lead.... to resolve... to bring a sense of community and confidence to those with whom I interact and lead. I am here to offer the wisdom of my mistakes... I mean **experience** (**Wait for the laugh**), and I am here to continue to own my pledge, to take responsibility, and to do whatever I can to foster the cause and understanding of law enforcement and safety for everyone. I’m here to learn from the experience of those that have preceded me, and I’m here to welcome the young men and women who look up to each one of us as they follow that calling that burns within.

I intend that my tenure as the President of the Wisconsin Chiefs of Police Association be one filled with insights, positivity, growth, and continued understanding and advancement of our actions and impact in our communities. I am very thankful for your expression of confidence and together we will continue to expand the efficiency of our forces and assurance of our constituents.

Thank you all!