

## **GRACE SAVAGE**

**NOMINEE:** Grace SAVAGE (Posthumously)

**MEMBER SPOUSE:** Leonard A. SAVAGE, # 683 (D)

**DETACHMENT(S):** Atikokan Detachment April 15, 1945 – October 1, 1946  
Atikokan Municipal OPP Detachment October 1, 1946 – August 1, 1951

**NOMINATOR:** Rick SAVAGE (son)

### **SILENT PARTNER STORY**

Located off Highway 11, 206 kilometres west of Thunder Bay and east of Fort Frances, the Town of Atikokan was originally established as a rail stop for the Canadian National Railway. It served as a supply centre for mining men, lumberjacks and Indigenous people who lived in the area. It was also a community centre for people who lived along the railroad line. Many of these people would descend on the small community on weekends.

Rick Savage was born in 1948 in Atikokan, when his father, OPP Provincial Constable Leonard Savage, Badge# 683, was posted there. Rick really can't remember anything about his family living in the town.

However, during his upbringing, his father Leonard would often reminisce about their time in Atikokan. Rick's mother, Grace also added her memories of her time there. The following is Rick's recollection of those stories.

OPP Constable Leonard Savage was first appointed to the OPP on August 1, 1941 as a Special Constable, posted to Ferland Detachment. In November of that year, he was posted to Fort Frances, where he received a commendation for his involvement in the "Hot Stove Murder" case.

From April 15, 1945 until October 1, 1946, Len served at Atikokan, when he was transferred to Atikokan OPP Municipal Detachment, where he remained until August 1, 1951 before moving to Red Lake.

While Len was serving at Atikokan Detachment, the Savage family lived in the detachment residence which also included the police office and prisoner cells.

Grace spoke about always having to answer the police telephone or answer the door to strangers who were looking for the police when Len was out of the office. She would also cook meals for the prisoners and would sometimes provide medical treatment to people who came to the door as a result of a fight at the local hotel.

As previously noted, Atikokan was the destination for large groups of workers on the weekends. Len had the reputation of being a very strong man, as he had to deal with so many fights during these weekends. In all cases, Grace was there to support her husband.

In 1951, when the Savage family left Atikokan for Red Lake, they received a joint letter from 14 members of the community acknowledging their contributions to the community during their time there. The letter reads:

*Dear Grace and Len,*

*It is with sincere regret that your countless friends in this community contemplate your departure from our midst.*

*During the last ten years you have seen Atikokan expand from a small hamlet of three hundred people to an expanding community of three thousand persons, which no doubt during the next ten years will no doubt become the industrial centre for the District.*

*You have played no small part in this accomplishment. Both of you have always been in the forefront of community affairs and there are few organizations who have not had the benefit of your leadership and support.*

*In the early days when law enforcement was a continuous battle, Len singlehandedly won the respect of the community and achieved results that few men have obtained.*

*In leaving us our loss will be another community's gain. The many signatures that accompany this address bespeak the high regard in which you are held.*

*We wish you both many years of happiness and every success in your new sphere of activity.*

In summary, Len spent over a decade as an OPP Constable in small towns northern Ontario at Ferland, Fort Frances, Atikokan and Red Lake. He spent his entire career in the northwest, retiring in 1976 as an Inspector in Thunder Bay. Wherever he served, Grace and family followed.

Of note, while living at the detachment in Atikokan, Grace was often left alone with her family while Len was on patrol, with limited means of communication with him. She was expected to answer the phone and the detachment door when people knocked. She acted as nursemaid for injured people who arrived at her doorstep, and made meals for the prisoners. Grace worked conjointly with Len, but she received no compensation for her services... the Silent Partner.

### **About Atikokan**

Located off Highway 11, 206 kilometres west of Thunder Bay, east of Fort Frances, the Town of Atikokan was originally established as a rail stop for the Canadian National Railway. It served a supply centre for mining men, lumberjacks and Indigenous people who lived in the area. It was also a community centre for people who lived along the railroad line. Many of these people would descend on the small community on weekends. In 2016, the population of Atikokan was 2,753. Today the town is one of the main entry points into Quetico Provincial Park and promotes itself as the “Canoeing Capital of Canada.”