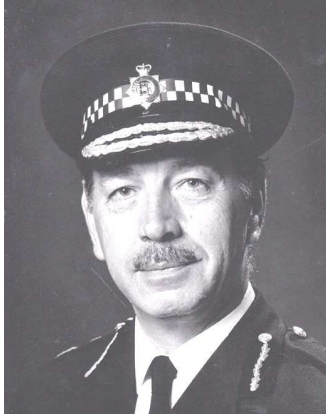


PHILIP, LORD KNIGHTS OF EDGBASTON

1920-2014

Patron of the Police History Society 1988-2014



Philip Knights in 1975 : and in 2014 at the fortieth anniversary of the founding of West Midlands Police when Birmingham City Police amalgamated with West Midlands Constabulary. With Lord Knights are Sir Paul Scott-Lee (Chief Constable 2002-2009) and the present Chief Constable, Christopher Sims. *(Photographs © and by kind permission of West Midlands Police)*

With the death of Philip Knights on Thursday 11 December last year, at the age of 94, the Police History Society has lost one of its earliest members, and one of its greatest supporters. In 1988, shortly after the Society was formed, Lord Knights agreed to become the Society's first Patron

Philip Douglas Knights was born on Sunday 3 October 1920 in Chertsey, Kent, and educated at King's School, Grantham where his parents had moved. Joining the Lincolnshire Constabulary as a Police Cadet in 1938, Philip transferred to the regular constabulary as a Constable in 1940. His 'call-up' to the Royal Air Force came in 1943, and after his 'demob' returned to Lincolnshire, where he was promoted to Sergeant.

A spell at the Home Office working on post-war police reconstruction followed, until 1950. From thereon, his rise was guaranteed : Inspector in 1953; Superintendent in 1955; and Chief Superintendent in 1957. Birmingham City Police then offered him the post of Assistant Chief Constable in 1959, and in 1962, he was seconded to the Police College, at Ryton-on-Dunsmore as Deputy Commandant. It was during his time here that he was the winner of the Queen's Police Gold Medal Essay Competition in 1965. On his return to Birmingham, he was promoted Deputy Chief Constable in 1970.

One of the new police forces created by the great spasm of police reorganisation of the 1960s, was the Sheffield and Rotherham Constabulary, and Philip Knights became its second Chief Constable in 1972, before presiding over its change of name to the South Yorkshire Police in 1974. His return to Birmingham City, by now a major part of the new West Midlands Police, came in 1975, and he was to stop as its Chief Constable for ten years before retiring in 1985.

He sat on many committees, and in 1978-1979, was President of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO).

He received many honours during his lifetime : QPM 1964; OBE 1971; CBE 1976; a Knighthood in 1980, and in 1987 was ennobled as The Lord Knights of Edgbaston, the first police officer to be so, and sat as a Crossbencher in the House of Lords.