

David Milgaard - Your long read

Continued from Page 17

his head over the toilet and put a towel on it to minimize the burning to his face and make breathing easier," wrote Joyce.

The hardships in prison led Milgaard to attempt suicide at least three times.

On Aug. 17, 1971, staff found him face down on his bunk with several self-inflicted slashes to both forearms, wrote Joyce Milgaard in her book.

"He had tried to take his life. He put sheets on the floor of his cell to soak up the blood. He noticed he wasn't dying so he "reached over and pulled a vein out of his wrist and cut it."

That fall he tried to kill himself again by swallowing wires in the hopes they would tear open his bowels, she wrote. He required emergency surgery.

In another suicide attempt, Milgaard drank leather cleaner, she added.

Twice, Milgaard tried to steal back his freedom.

Milgaard escaped in March 1972 with other inmates, wrote Joyce Milgaard. Their truck broke down and they fled into the woods. Dogs tracked them down.

"David told us the guards just stood there and let the dogs chew on them," wrote Joyce in her book. "He said that afterward when they got back to the prison the guards beat him. He said he had been beaten before, but never, ever, with such brutality."

Following another escape, Milgaard survived being shot in the back when fleeing from police after he had

escaped in 1980 for 77 days as he grasped at the freedom he deserved, Milgaard told SASKTODAY.ca in May 2021. Toronto Police shot him in the back while he had his hands up in the air after surrendering.

Prison destroyed his mind and soon he needed medications, said Joyce Milgaard.

Milgaard fights for others after being released from prison

After Milgaard was freed in 1992, he advocated for prisoner's rights, lectured law students at universities across the country, and spoke against Canada's punitive justice system advocating for a restorative justice system.

Milgaard repeatedly called on the federal government for an independent Criminal Case Review Commission to make it easier and faster for potentially wrongfully convicted people to have their applications reviewed.

Milgaard, and his group, met with Canada's Justice Minister David Lametti to discuss the commission, and in 2021, Lametti launched public consultations to create the commission. Two weeks after Milgaard died, Lametti announced the commission would be created.

In 2020 — 50 years after Milgaard's wrongful conviction — the University of Manitoba announced they were presenting him with an Honorary Doctor of Law degree.

Milgaard died three weeks before he was to receive his honorary doctorate of law degree from the University of Manitoba on June 6, 2022.

Winnipeg lawyer David Asper — who led the fight for Milgaard's freedom — also received an honorary doctorate that day.

"Dr. Milgaard...I'm humbled to be receiving this hon-

our with you," said Asper during his acceptance speech.

"If Canada ever gets an independent commission to deal with wrongful convictions it will be partly because of your advocacy. Your spirit will have not only got you through but it will live in the success stories of others."

Byron Christopher, a former CBC reporter who was the first to get an interview with Milgaard when he was released from prison, said, "Those at David Milgaard's funeral were hoping the commission would somehow carry David's name, and perhaps it will."

Milgaard's passing

On May 19, Christopher — who became close friends with Milgaard — attended David's private funeral of 50 of David's family and closest friends

"When I heard David Milgaard had died, my first reaction was shock and sadness — followed by a sense of peace. My old friend was finally free."

Christopher said even though Milgaard was released from prison — and later exonerated and compensated with a multi-million dollar settlement — he sensed he remained tortured by memories of his time behind bars.

"David was never truly free," Christopher told SASKTODAY.ca. "Up until his final breath, he remained a prisoner to some degree. In his last years, his 'escape' was to give a helping hand to others."

"David's ashes will be sprinkled in the Rocky Mountains," added Christopher. "That's fitting ... The man loved nature, especially fishing, horses, and camping in the Rockies."

For a video featuring never before released interviews with David Milgaard, please visit SASKTODAY.ca.



WHO DOES IT?

Professional Directory

Look for the RIGHT business for the JOB

DEADLINE FOR THURSDAY EDITION IS MONDAY BY 4:00 PM

ADVERTISING CONSULTANTS

Regional
NEWS-OPTIMIST
Serving the Battlefords since 1908

ADVERTISING CONSULTANTS

Candace Mack-Horton
Noah Cooke

Phone 306-445-7261 Fax 306-445-3223

CONTRACTOR ROOFERS

Todd Patterson
Owner/Operator
New, re-roofing
& roof repair

PATTERSON ROOFING

Where we always try to be the lowest price and best value.
- Guaranteed Workmanship -

FREE Estimates & Senior Discounts
**Phone: 306-445-8439
Cell: 306-441-3690**

ROOFING CONTRACTOR





Rene Michaud


"The Roofing Wizard"
Estimator

1272 - 106th Street
North Battleford Sk. S9A 1X2
306-445-ROOF (7663)
Email:
wizard4@sasktel.net

www.triumphroofing.com

AGRICULTURE PARTS

Bob Frolek's
AGRA PARTS PLUS
WRECKING



- Older Tractors
- Combines
- Swathers
- Balers & Tillage
- Other Ag Related Equipment

306-445-6769

3 miles N.W. on Hwy. 16, 2 1/2 miles west on Sunshine Road

GENERAL CONTRACTOR

Derrick Shynkaruk

General Contractor



- New Construction
- Renovations

306.441.1980
306.445.3144

djshynkaruk@gmail.com

SALVAGE

LAVIGNE SALVAGE

FULLY INSURED

- Scrap Cleanup • Demolition • Scrap Metal Removal
- Building Removal • Skid Steer Service
- Excavator Service (with magnet)

TREVOR LAVIGNE • (306) 291-6414
NATHAN LAVIGNE • (306) 370-0742
Serving Saskatchewan & Alberta

NO JOB TOO SMALL, NO JOB TOO BIG

CONTRACTOR ROOFERS

J&D ROOFING



"Quality that doesn't cost, it pays"

Serving Battlefords & Area...Locally Owned & Operated

Dion BelRose 306-937-2083

Insurance Claims Welcome

Take advantage of the Sask Home Renovation Credit

FREE ESTIMATES
SENIOR DISCOUNT AVAILABLE

Licensed/Insured WCB A263327

NEWSPAPER SERVICES

SASKTODAY.ca

your news all the time
and ONLINE

Regional
NEWS-OPTIMIST

Serving the Battlefords since 1908

TREE SERVICES



Raymond Oleshko Tree Services

- Tree Removal
- Trimming & Pruning
- Stump Grinding
- Fully Insured

PHONE
306-481-4465

GET YOUR BUSINESS GROWING!



FIND OUT HOW TO REACH

Over 26,000 readers
plus 99,152
unique visitors online

FOR ONLY \$39/week

To Book Your Space Now

Call

306.445.7261

ask for Candace