

Métis brothers all become docs

Brothers prove hard work and determination can lift anyone to endless heights

By Jamie Saari-Alvarez

Three Winnipeg brothers have proven that hard work and determination can lift you to endless heights, no matter where you come from. Raised by their father in a single-parent, low-income household, Conrad, Murray and Gerald Hoy rebelled in their school years and sometimes struggled academically. Murray and Gerald were even high school drop outs for a short period of time. Now all three brothers are doctors – an accomplishment even their former high school track-and-field coach finds surprising.

The youngest brother, Gerald, just graduated from the University of Manitoba in June and is in the midst of opening his own practice on Broadway Avenue.

“When I found out they were all becoming doctors I was a little bit shocked, to say the least,” said Bill McDonald, their former coach. “Academically Murray and Gerald really struggled, but they were amazing athletes with a determination that was visible even back then. It was just a matter of focussing their energy in the right direction.”

Now McDonald tells the story of “The Hoy Boys” to motivate his current students.

Reflecting back on their lives, even the brothers are in disbelief of how far they have come.

“If you would have asked anyone back in high school where I would be in 10 years, they would have said ‘in jail or dead’,” said 38-year-old Gerald. His graduation this June was a milestone he never thought he would accomplish.

Murray (the middle brother) has been practicing general medicine for two years now and works out of Four Rivers Medical Clinic on Main Street.

Conrad (the oldest brother) is a pain rehabilitation specialist with his own practice.

Looking back, being of Métis descent and from a low-income household sometimes left the brothers feeling like outsiders during their school years, something they now look back on as a positive thing.

“I think that is probably what gave us the drive to work so hard at what we have done,” said Conrad. “We had to work hard to get everything we have. We didn’t get anything handed to us on a silver platter.”

After dropping out of the school and working a series of dead-end jobs, Murray and Gerald returned to adult education in their early twenties and both eventually went on to nursing school (with the encouragement of their older brother). Murray and Gerald then worked as nurses for several years on reserves in Northern Manitoba. The oldest, Conrad was the only brother to enter medical school right after high school.

“After we graduated from nursing school, Conrad kept on encouraging us to go to medical school,” said Murray. “Because of the nature of the our work up North in isolated communities, we had an advantage.”

The University of Manitoba would give them special consideration because of their Aboriginal ancestry and previous medical experience. So Murray and Gerald decided to follow the same career path their brother had followed.

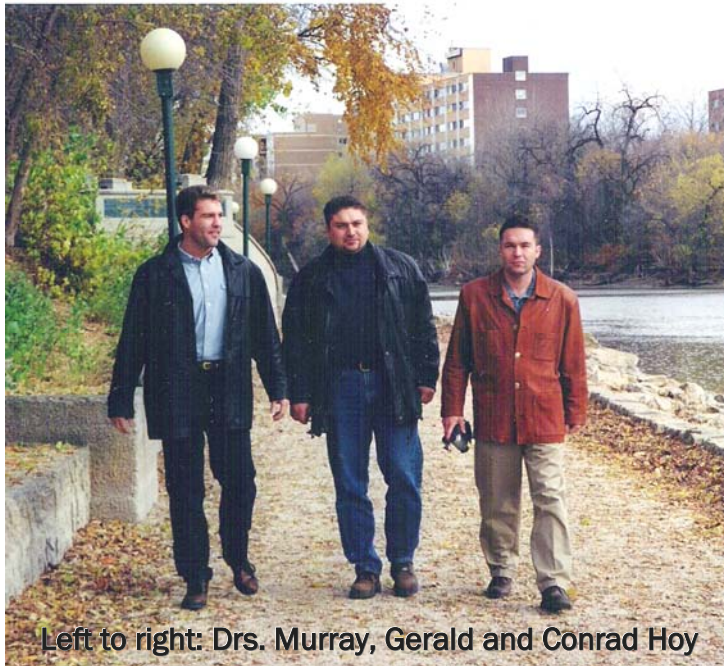
“It’s pretty exciting. In a lot of ways I put the idea into both of their minds,” said Conrad. “When people find out that we are all doctors they joke that we should start up a Hoy Brothers Medical Clinic. We’ll have to see about that, but it is something I would be very proud of.” Although working together is something they are not yet sure of, they do know their future plans include working with Aboriginal people. Murray and Gerald practice in the core and downtown areas of Winnipeg, where Aboriginal populations are largest

in the city. Conrad, the eldest, has a medical rehabilitation practice in the North Main St. area.

“I never thought we’d all be doctors one day,” said Gerald. “It’s too bad our father isn’t around to see this.”

Their father, James Hoy, passed away in November of 1998, just months before Gerald was accepted into medical school.

“Our dad was disappointed when we (Murray & Gerald) dropped out of school. He had a community college diploma and education was important to him,” said Murray. “I think he’d be very proud right now.” ♦



Left to right: Drs. Murray, Gerald and Conrad Hoy



The Manitoba Metis Community is proud of the accomplishments of Conrad, Murray and Gerald Hoy. We wish you good fortune while each of you serve the people of the Province of Manitoba.

From President David Chartrand and the Board of Directors of the Manitoba Metis Federation.