

# News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **ELECTIONS MANITOBA CELEBRATES 40 YEARS OF SERVICE TO MANITOBANS**

Sunday, November 15 marks 40 years since the establishment of Elections Manitoba, the office of Manitoba's chief electoral officer (CEO). The office came into being through an amendment to *The Elections Act*, which received royal assent on July 29, 1980 and was proclaimed into force on November 15, 1980.

To celebrate this milestone, Elections Manitoba has created a video timeline of the province's election history, from 1870 to the present, which can be found at [electionsmanitoba.ca](http://electionsmanitoba.ca).

Before 1980, the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly carried out the role of CEO on a part-time basis. In December 1979, Richard Trimble Willis was appointed to lead the newly independent office of the Legislative Assembly, establishing the office's commitment to conducting free and fair provincial elections in Manitoba.

Shipra Verma, the current CEO, is only the third Manitoban to occupy the role, following the retirement of Richard Balasko, who led the organization from 1989 to 2010. Ms. Verma was appointed Deputy CEO in 2009, taking on the additional role of acting CEO in 2010. In 2013, she was named CEO by unanimous recommendation of the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs.

Since it was established in 1980, Elections Manitoba's mandate to support the democratic rights of Manitobans has evolved through legislative change and innovation. From strengthening campaign finance provisions, through the expansion of voting opportunities and vote anywhere during advance voting, to the development of a permanent voters list, elections in the province have reflected the changing expectations and needs of Manitobans.

"The exercise of our democratic rights is not something that we as Canadians should ever take for granted," said Ms. Verma in reflecting on the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. "Elections Manitoba salutes the efforts of all Manitobans who participate in elections, whether as candidates, volunteers, election workers or voters. All of us have a role to play in ensuring the continued viability of our electoral system."

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