

Swanson retires today as Cro

County's top prosecutor saw good in everyone in

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Although you can't truly say Keith Swanson never met a criminal he didn't like, the retiring Crown attorney for Brant County admits believing, with some notable exceptions, "that there's a bit of good in everyone."

"I'm a social worker at heart," chuckled the 54-year-old prosecutor who's spent 26 years laboring to ensure crime doesn't pay.

Today is Swanson's last official day on the job but he'll be on call until his office adjusts to a new boss and a new routine.

His decision to retire came when a financial package was offered by the provincial government.

"I still enjoy the work and will regret leaving," Swanson said, but the government made an offer he can't refuse.

Swanson has no intention of "retiring in the world." Instead of digging into stacks of case files, he's looking forward to getting really dirty in his perennial garden as well as becoming more involved in environmental concerns. Developing a garden the size of a city lot has been a relaxing and therapeutic passion for years for the athletically inclined Swanson.

He will be missed by colleagues in the legal community.

Judge Ken Lenz, who was hired and trained by Swanson as an assistant Crown attorney in the 1980s, said Swanson is "a renaissance man" whose greatest strength was his ability to enthrall a jury.

EASY MANNER

His easy manner and habit of sitting on the edge of the prosecution table with legs lightly crossed made jurors feel as though they were sitting in a living room having a quiet chat, Lenz said.

"I always imagined that at any moment he would pick up a book and light a pipe," he said. "Juries ate it up."

Defence lawyer John Renwick agrees Swanson had a magic touch with juries.

"I always had a decent chance to win until he got up to make his arguments," Renwick said. "He could strike a chord with them."

Swanson, who was born and raised in Brantford, said his interest in law came naturally as his father, Wilf, was a city police superintendent.

Swanson graduated from Pauline

