Breakthroughs: Québec Science Top 10

A number of researchers from McGill’s Faculty of Medicine were named on Québec Science magazine’s prestigious “top 10 discoveries” list in 2009. Moshe Szyf, professor in the Department of Pharmacology and Therapeutics; Gustavo Turecki, PhD’99, and Michael Meaney, both researchers at the Douglas Mental Health University Institute; and Patrick McGowan, McGill post-doctoral fellow, were recognized for their world-renowned work on the epigenetic effects of parental care and childhood trauma. Jacques Galipeau, former associate professor, and his research team at the Jewish General Hospital Lady Davis Institute for Medical Research also made the top 10 for their research leading to a new experimental treatment for multiple sclerosis.

New McGill-St. Mary’s Program for International Medical Graduates

The Quebec Ministry of Health and Social Services approved a new program proposed by McGill University and St. Mary’s Hospital Center to help integrate international medical graduates into the Quebec health-care system. The training course, scheduled for implementation this year, is one of several recommendations made by a task force led by Dr. Vincent Echavé and involving the province’s four medical faculties, including McGill.

New Chair in Family Medicine

The McGill University Research Chair in Family and Community Medicine at St. Mary’s Hospital Center (SMHC) was announced earlier this year. The new research chair aims to build on the existing family-medicine expertise at the SMHC, which has been recognized as a leader in community care for more than 30 years. Jeannie Haggerty, MSc’87, PhD’98, was named as the first chair holder. Haggerty, an international expert in the evaluation of health-care services, has also been appointed associate professor of Family Medicine at McGill.

Successes Lead Faculty of Medicine into a Promising New Decade

Members of McGill’s Faculty of Medicine continue to attract national and international attention. Brenda Milner, PhD’52, DSc’91, Dorothy J. Killam Professor at the Montreal Neurological Institute and Hospital and professor in McGill’s Department of Neurology and Neurosurgery, was awarded a 2009 Balzan Prize in Cognitive Neurosciences, adding another remarkable achievement to her distinguished list of recognitions. Her winnings will be invested in the recruitment of post-doctoral fellows who will work under her supervision. Nahum Sonenberg, James McGill Professor in the Department of Biochemistry and full research member of the Rosalind and Morris Goodman Cancer Research Centre, was named Canada’s Health Researcher of the Year in Biomedical and Clinical Research for 2009. The award, given by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, is accompanied by unrestricted research funding that will allow Sonenberg and his team to continue their innovative inquiries into the biological processes involved in cancer and other diseases.

Also announced last fall was the induction of Phil Gold, BSc’57, MSc’61, MDCM’61, PhD’65, into the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame. In addition to his groundbreaking work in the fields of immunology and cancer research, Gold has been instrumental in establishing national programs aimed at inspiring the next generation of clinician-scientists. (See page 7 for a profile of Phil Gold.)

McGill Top Med School

McGill came in first among Canada’s medical-doctoral universities in the 2009 annual university rankings published in Maclean’s. In addition, for the sixth year in a row, McGill ranked among the top 25 universities in the prestigious Times Higher Education-QS World University Rankings, and again placed 10th in its Life Sciences & Biomedicine category.
Turn back the clock 100 years, and the view south from Duncan McIntyre’s “Square Mile” mansion would be appreciably different. The Port of Montreal and distant mountains dominate the vista, with one lone wrought-iron bridge spanning the St. Lawrence waterway. Dirt roads etched with rivulets of melting snow descend from our campus to meet the mercantile and banking district below, with its bustling network of streetcars and railways.

In that century, renowned educator Abraham Flexner created the landmark report for the Carnegie Foundation that would characterize the teaching and practice of medicine throughout the 1900s. And while the landscape looking out from our campus has also dramatically changed, the same Flexner recommendations serve as our guideposts across North America, and within the Faculty, to this day.

Our most famous graduate, Sir William Osler, said the great republic of medicine knows no international boundaries. And so, academies of the health sciences in Canada, North America and around the world are considering the future of medical education, 100 years later, in light of the recent revolutions in knowledge and technology, together with the promise of personalized medicine in a new and extraordinary molecular age. Is medical education of the Oslerian era, the Flexnerian era, still appropriate in the 21st century?

In the spring of 2010, the McGill Faculty of Medicine, including Nursing, Physical and Occupational Therapy, and Communication Sciences and Disorders, is preparing to share its reflections after more than a year of provocative deliberations about how best to map the future. Outstanding design teams accepted the formidable challenge in 2008 to “Think Dangerously” about education, research and the professorial lifecycle in the health sciences, to reinvent the Faculty, so that it remains not only internationally relevant, but also at the forefront in all tenets and practice of its mandate.

The strategic recommendations the design groups will make are the fruit of extensive research and benchmarking, expansive consultation with hundreds of academics, scholars, researchers, practitioners, administrators and students, manifold white papers and inspirational conversations with esteemed thought leaders, such as Drs. Molly Cooke, Jordan Cohen, Bradford Berk, Scott Wright, Arnie Aberman, Carol Herbert, Joe Martin and Alan Bernstein, as well as Arnold Steinberg, among many.

While these discussions were ongoing within the Faculty, we participated with the Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada in developing the pan-Canadian Future of Medical Education project, and we also reached out through the Medicine Alumni Global program to invite you, our alumni and friends, to join with McGill in defining the future of health care. During my Dean’s rounds, it has been a real pleasure to meet with many of you, and I have been inspired by the extraordinary stories and contributions our alumni are making around the world.

The McGill Faculty of Medicine has pushed the envelope since its creation, and we have just closed yet another decade with an impressive list of accomplishments earned by our outstanding faculty. We can draw strength from our past achievements as we enter into this new age, but we must be prepared to go well beyond. Winston Churchill said: “The price of greatness is responsibility.” As a custodian of the highest standards in education, research and patient care across the health sciences, it is our responsibility not only to be ready for the future, but also to create it.

“We can draw strength from our past achievements as we enter into this new age, but we must be prepared to go well beyond.”

RICHARD I. LEVIN, MD
Vice-Principal (Health Affairs)
Dean, Faculty of Medicine
Nursing

McGill’s Nurse Practitioners at the Forefront

With growing waiting lists and increasing delays to see a doctor, advanced-practice nurses are taking on roles and responsibilities – such as assessment, diagnosis and treatment – traditionally associated with physicians, says Franco Carnevale, BScN’78, MScA’83, ME’d’86, PhD ’94, MSc’97, director of McGill’s master’s program in Nursing. New demands call for new skill sets, and McGill’s School of Nursing is leading the way with nurse-practitioner programs in neonatology and primary care. The Neonatal Care program graduated its first cohort of students in 2007, and 2010 marks the graduation of the first students in Primary Care.

Developing and teaching new programs requires extensive infrastructure and support. A generous gift from Abbott Laboratories is providing the necessary resources to help the School of Nursing update course material and refurbish equipment and facilities for its Primary Care program, as well as develop training strategies to prepare students for clinical performance examination and hire staff to coordinate the program. “It’s highly sophisticated training,” says Carnevale. “We need top-of-the-line learning labs, with new equipment for computer-based instruction and videoconferencing.”

McGill’s Nurse Practitioner Primary Care program offers training in the Abitibi-Témiscamingue and Outaouais regions, as well as in Montreal, as part of McGill’s commitment to the Quebec government’s Réseau Universitaire Intégré de Santé (RUIS) plan. Nurse practitioners graduating from McGill’s Primary Care program will help meet the urgent need in these regions.

Communication Sciences and Disorders

Reaching Out to Special Kids

A shortage of trained professionals in speech-language pathology, physiotherapy and occupational therapy; a lack of clinical-practice opportunities for students in these professions; a group of children with mild to moderate disabilities falling through the cracks of the current health-care system: By examining these problems together, McGill’s schools of Communication Sciences and Disorders and Physical and Occupational Therapy were able to envision a unique solution. In collaboration with the Montreal Children’s Hospital and the Lester B. Pearson School Board, the schools developed a proposal for a project called the McGill Inter-Rehabilitation Outreach for Special Kids (MIROSK) that they hope will meet these and other needs.

Thanks to funding from Quebec’s Ministère de l’Education, du Loisir et du Sport, McGill is set to launch the MIROSK program in the summer of 2010. The program is designed for children four to six years old with unresolved developmental delays, who are scheduled to start school in the fall. The children will be treated by a team of senior McGill students under the supervision of clinical educators. Though the program is still in its initial stages, the proposal’s author, Susan Rvachew, from McGill’s School of Communication Sciences and Disorders, has high hopes that MIROSK will go on to serve as a model of interdisciplinary clinical education while providing valuable services to children and their families in the community.

Physical and Occupational Therapy

New Professorship in Rehabilitation Epidemiology

McGill University has received a $500,000 gift from the Canadian Chiropractic Research Foundation (CCRF) to establish a CCRF Professorship in Rehabilitation Epidemiology in the School of Physical and Occupational Therapy, with an associate appointment in the Department of Epidemiology, Biostatistics and Occupational Health.

“The Foundation has provided a gift that is a model for the development of health disciplines, and affords a method of developing and implementing the best evidence-based health care for Quebec, Canada and beyond,” says Maureen Simmonds, associate dean and director of McGill’s School of Physical and Occupational Therapy. “This is a gift of and for our future knowledge.”

According to the CCRF, less than one percent of the chiropractic profession is currently actively engaged in full-time health research. Consequently, the Foundation has focused on building the profession’s capacity to undertake credible research by establishing and facilitating the funding for a university-based Chiropractic Research Chair in each province in Canada. McGill is currently in the process of reviewing candidates for this exciting new position.
Renewing Ties Coast-to-Coast

Over 19,000 Faculty of Medicine alumni are scattered across North America, and Dean Richard I. Levin is intent on meeting with as many of them as he can, coast-to-coast, on his ongoing “Dean’s Rounds.” The tour is part of the Medicine Alumni Global program, which is designed to bring graduates together to engage in critical dialogue about the opportunities and challenges of today’s global health-care climate.

Dean Levin began his rounds mid-September with an ambitious itinerary, including stops in San Diego, Los Angeles, the Bay Area and Seattle. (California is home to over 900 alumni, and Washington State boasts almost 200.) These were the first Medicine-specific major alumni events along the West Coast in many years, and graduates from the 1940s to the 2000s (including many attending their first-ever alumni event!) were eager for news of their alma mater. At each occasion, Dean Levin talked about the evolving concerns and priorities in contemporary health care, the impact these issues have on medical education and research, and the role that McGill’s Faculty of Medicine is playing in mapping the future of our field. McGill Medicine, he stressed, is stronger than ever, and alumni not only share in the Faculty’s illustrious past but are critical to its future.

Throughout the coastal tour, Dean Levin was accompanied by John C. Beck, BSc’45, MDCM’47, MSc’51, DSc’94, Professor Emeritus of Medicine at the University of California in Los Angeles, who also served as chair of McGill’s Department of Medicine from 1969 to 1975 and physician-in-chief of the Royal Victoria Hospital from 1964 to 1974. Countless memorable moments took place at the stunningly beautiful reception at the Scripps Seaside Forum in La Jolla and at the Villa Taverna in San Francisco, where the generous and enthusiastic Haile Debas, MDCM’63, DSc’05, hosted a reception and dinner. (Debas, former dean of Medicine, vice chancellor of Medical Affairs and chancellor of the University of California at San Francisco, is a leader in global health research and director of the University of California’s Global Health Institute.)

Two weeks later, Dean Levin was in Boston, where alumni Annalee Abelson, BA’68, MSc’71, PhD’81, and Mark Abelson, BSc’66, MDCM’70, generously opened their Andover home to host their fellow graduates, among them David Hubel, BSc’47, MDCM’51, DSc’78, who shared the 1981 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for his discoveries concerning information-processing in the visual system. Dean Levin completed his autumnal rounds in late October, greeting Toronto alumni at the University Club alongside Arnold Aberman, BSc’65, MDCM’67, a member of the Dean’s Leadership Council and former dean of Medicine at the University of Toronto. This event was highlighted by a call to action from Neville Poy, BSc’58, MDCM’60, MSc’62, who urged fellow alumni to generously support McGill. As Dean Levin had underscored throughout his rounds, the Faculty’s future depends upon the goodwill, support, and vigorous engagement of all those who can boast a McGill past.
Reaching for the Stars

Energetic, determined and dedicated. These are just a few of the words that describe Med-2 student Laura Drudi, one of 25 Canadians chosen to participate in the 2009-2010 Order of Canada Mentorship Program. Established in 2008, the program matches promising young Canadians between the ages of 18 and 25 with mentors who are members of the Order of Canada. Drudi, passionate about aerospace medicine, is working with Dr. Thomas Brzustowski, a professor of mechanical engineering and a renowned researcher. “I was a little overwhelmed,” says Drudi about the moment she learned of her selection for the program. “I feel really privileged!”

Virtually everything that Drudi does is another step toward her dream of becoming an astronaut. It all began when she was nine. On a school visit to the Cosmodôme, in Laval, Quebec, Drudi saw footage of the 1998 flight of the Space Shuttle Columbia with Canadian astronaut and McGill alumnus David Williams, BSc ’76, MDCM ’83, MSc ’83, DSc ’07, on board. Williams became her hero, and space became her mission.

Then, when Drudi was in high school, her grandmother became ill with cancer. Going through this experience with her family instilled in Drudi an interest in health care. She did not, however, give up on her first love. Just maybe, she thought, she could find a way to combine her two passions. She is now pursuing her studies in medicine at McGill, with an eye to going into space as a mission specialist medical officer. In October 2009, she was invited by the Canadian Space Agency to participate in a youth plenary at the annual congress of the International Astronautical Federation in South Korea. In May 2010, she is planning to attend the annual meeting of the Aerospace Medical Association. With her mentor Dr. Brzustowski, she is working on a project about manned space flights. To top off this stellar academic year, Drudi was one of 11 students chosen from more than 600 applicants to attend the prestigious NASA Ames Academy this coming summer, bringing the aspiring astronaut a little closer to the stars.

McGill Says “Bravo!” to Researchers

Top researchers from McGill, including a stellar group from the Faculty of Medicine, were feted at the annual McGill Bravo Gala in February of 2010. Launched four years ago, Bravo celebrates the University’s exceptional researchers and highlights their achievements. Some 400 people attended this year’s gala at the Science Centre in the Old Port of Montreal.

Nine prizewinning professors from the Faculty of Medicine and its community of affiliated hospitals were among those honoured for their accomplishments. They were: Sam Daniel, MDCM ’96, MSc ’02, Vincent Giguère, Allan Sniderman, Roderick McInnes, PhD ’78, Mostafa Elhilali, PhD ’69, Mark Wainberg, Phil Gold, BSc ’57, MSc ’61, MDCM ’61, PhD ’65, Nahum Sonenberg and Brenda Milner, PhD ’52, DSc ’91. Milner, who won a 2009 Batzan Prize in Cognitive Neurosciences in the fall and was inducted into l’Ordre National du Québec last year, received a standing ovation.

The event also gave faculty members a chance to showcase their research to their peers and special guests. Among those exhibiting their work were Jorge Armony, Sam Daniel, Bruno Giros, Pejmun Haghighi, Christopher C. Pack, Moshe Szyf, Patrick McGowan, Michael Meaney and Gustavo Turecki, PhD ’99. Earlier in the month, the researchers had the opportunity to introduce their work to high school and CEGEP students, as well as local media, at the Excellence in Research Exhibition.
A Story of Inspiration and Optimism

As he finishes his final rotations, fourth-year medical student Alex Normandin, BSc’05, is weighing the options for his future medical career. It is a decision he wasn’t sure he’d have the chance to make. Two years ago, the McGill student felt a numb spot on the left side of his temple. He was on clinical rotations and regularly waking up for rounds at 5:30 a.m. “At first, I thought I was just stressed out from working,” says Normandin. “I couldn’t feel the left side of my face, and I lost taste on the left side of my mouth.” Following an MRI and a battery of other tests, he received the devastating news: He had multiple sclerosis. Normandin had a very aggressive form of the disease, and his condition quickly went from bad to worse. “I was likely going to be confined to a wheelchair within 24 months,” he says. Then, in December 2008, he underwent an experimental bone-marrow stem-cell transplant. Just over a year later, Normandin’s condition has stabilized, and he has noticed improvements in his hearing and eyesight.

The 26-year-old shared his story at the 2009 Dr. Joseph Wener “Donning the Healer’s Habit” Ceremony, where second-year medical students receive a white coat to mark the commencement of their clinical clerkships. Normandin’s message was one of optimism and humanity. “Stay open to new ideas in medicine,” he said. “You could change one of your patient’s lives.”

A Celebration of an Exceptional Career

“We have to tell the rest of the world why McGill is so extraordinary,” says Phil Gold, BSc’57, MSc’61, MDCM’61, PhD’65, director of the Clinical Research Centre at the McGill University Health Centre (MUHC), Douglas C. Cameron Professor of Medicine and professor of Physiology and Oncology. Gold himself is one of the reasons why. This April, he will be inducted into the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame in recognition of his exceptional career, including his 1965 discovery of the carcinoembryonic antigen (CEA), an important marker for cancer, and his enduring commitment to furthering medical research and education in Canada.

Gold arrived at McGill in 1953 as an undergrad. By 1976, he had been named the inaugural director of what was to evolve into the McGill Cancer Centre, and is now the Rosalind and Morris Goodman Cancer Research Centre, and in 1980 he became physician-in-chief of the Montreal General Hospital and chair of McGill’s Department of Medicine. He directed his energy toward recruiting the best young minds to McGill. “There is a wonderful Yiddish word, nachas, which is the pride and joy you take in the accomplishments of your offspring,” says Gold. “I have that with not only my biological offspring but also my academic children.”

Gold’s pride in McGill continues to this day. “We have the opportunity to be not just among the world’s top medical schools, but to be the best,” he says. “That is what I’m going after now.”
“You will be running a business,” said David Holbrooke, BSc ’64, MDCM ’69, at a special “Tea-Time Talks with Docs” seminar held during Homecoming 2009. “When you write a prescription, you have an impact on the economic system.” This pronouncement was greeted by nods and murmurs of assent from one side of the room and appreciation and interest from the other. Holbrooke was addressing an exceptional gathering of current McGill medical students and fellow alumni from the class of ’69 at the Meredith Annex. The series, featuring physicians from different specialties, is offered to Med-1 and Med-2 students each fall.

The focus of Holbrooke’s talk was medicine and entrepreneurship, a subject in which he is well versed after a long career in medical and financial management, and new-business development in health-care services. But the talk wasn’t all about business. Holbrooke and his fellow alumni had come to meet with students at the newly reopened Meredith Annex, a student space that members of the class of ’69 supported through their 40th reunion class gift.

The students asked questions and the graduates shared their stories. Winhard Bohme, BA ’65, MDCM ’69, talked about his family medicine practice in Oregon and British Columbia; Mary Trott, BSc ’65, MDCM ’69, a radiologist in Williams Lake, B.C., until her recent retirement, recounted meeting seven female McGill medicine graduates while practising in Yellowknife; still others talked about the changes in health care they had observed during their medical careers.

Ji Wei Yang, a Med-2 student, found the meeting inspiring. She came away from the talk with a new interest in primary-care medicine and a new understanding of the financial challenges of being a doctor. Yang is appreciative of the alumni’s advice. “I think it’s so great that these people who graduated, who practised their whole lives and are retired now, wanted to speak to students,” she said. “It really seems like they want to help us.”
Old Friends and New Ideas

As people filed into the R. Palmer Howard Amphitheatre on the morning of October 16, 2009, there were shouts of recognition, shared reminiscences and a palpable sense of camaraderie. The event was the annual 25th Anniversary Medical Seminar, a long-standing Homecoming tradition focusing on the remarkable contributions to the profession made by alumni celebrating this milestone reunion.

The seminar, “Society and Medicine – Taking It Personally,” was presented by the class of ’84. The first speaker was Anne-Marie J. Audet, BSc’79, MDCM’84, MSc’89, who began her talk by reflecting on the changes in health care over the last 25 years and the challenges that medical practitioners face today. “Life expectancy has increased, and there is a higher prevalence of chronic illnesses,” said Audet, who is vice-president of Healthcare Quality Improvement and Efficiency at the Commonwealth Fund in New York. Audet went on to highlight key issues in coordinating and integrating care for chronic illnesses and discussed the need to change current medical culture to focus more on teamwork.

Physiotherapist Valerie Bryan, BSc’84, agreed with Audet about the importance of teamwork. During the mid-morning break, she shared her experiences working at a pediatric centre. “We work together with the children and the families,” said Bryan. “They’re part of the team.”

Over the course of the morning, the speakers addressed different aspects of society and medicine, including the need to create elder-friendly hospitals, the applications of medical acupuncture and the problems with psychopharmacology. Vivek Goel, MDCM’84, the current president of the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion, brought the morning to a close with a timely presentation on the 2009 H1N1 influenza outbreak. “It’s been wonderful,” said Sushma Amin, BSc’80, MDCM’84, at the end of the seminar. “It’s so nice to see everyone. And the speakers this morning were amazing.”

Although Harold Lynge, MDCM’49, has been retired for 17 years, he still likes to keep up with the latest advances in medicine. Lynge was fairly sure that he was the oldest alumni in attendance, proving that it really is never too late to learn!

An Act of Remembrance

A couple of years ago, Frances Harrington Griffiths, BSc’65, MDCM’69, found herself thinking a lot about her fellow medical graduates. She had retired from family medicine and started to do “all the things [she] never had time for.” This included writing an autobiography to pass on to her children. When she reached her years in medical school, however, Griffiths found herself strangely at a loss. What had it really been like, all those years ago at McGill? “I knew I had loved it,” she says. “And even though there were mostly men in our class, I knew that I belonged.”

Griffiths set out to stimulate her memory. She studied her former classmates’ faces in an old yearbook. While looking at the photos, she had an inspiration: She was going to make a quilt of her graduating class, the class of ’69. Quilting was a relatively new activity for Griffiths. “I had 30 years worth of fabric from when I was in practice and didn’t have time to sew,” she explains. “I started stitching it together and, lo and behold, it became a quilt.”

With help from a neighbour, she enlarged and printed out the photos from her yearbook, and then transferred them onto fabric. She started putting the quilt together, with each photo sewn into a separate bubble. Almost six months later, the quilt was complete, just in time for her to present it at the 40th reunion of the class of ’69 at Homecoming 2009. As for the book, it’s still a work in progress.
This page: (top) Members of the class of '54; Mary Trott, BSc’65, MDCM’69; Benjamin H. Bonlander, BSc 53, MDCM 59; James A. Butler, MDCM 59, V. Michael Whitehead, MDCM 59, Agnes Schweitzer, BSc 55, MDCM 59; (below) members of the class of '84

Opposite page: (top) Members of the class of '89; Janet Anne Woodall, BScN’79, Carol A. MacDougall, BScN’79, Lynn P. Lowe, BScN’79, Allen Huang, BSc’80, MDCM’84, Uwe Goehlert, BSc’78, MSc’82, MDCM’84; (below) Maureen McDonald, BSc(OT)’80, MDCM’84, Daniel Bourgeois, BSc’80, MDCM’84; members of the class of '99
Save the date: September 30 to October 3, 2010

Homecoming 2010

Photos: Paul Fournier
Inspiring Others Around the World

Steven P. Miller, MDCM’95, was at home in Vancouver celebrating the birth of his second child, Sam, when he received a surprising phone call from Dean Richard I. Levin with the news that Miller had won an inaugural McGill Medicine Alumni Global Award. “It was exciting enough to welcome my son to our family,” says Miller. “Hearing [about the award] from Dean Levin was the icing on the cake.”

The Medicine Alumni Global Awards were established in 2009 by the Dean’s Leadership Council to provide a means for McGill’s Faculty of Medicine to honour alumni who have made extraordinary contributions to the University, the health-care professions and their local and global communities. Dean Levin presented the inaugural awards last fall at the annual Dean’s Reception as part of Homecoming, attended by 300 alumni and friends. With 86 nominations submitted from around the world, it was certainly challenging to select only three honourees. In addition to Miller, who received the Young Alumni Award, Frederick H. Lowy, BA’55, MDCM’59, LLD’01, was presented the Community Service Award, and the Lifetime Achievement Award went to Charles R. Scriver, BA’51, MDCM’55, DSc’07.

“It’s an amazing honour,” said Miller at the ceremony, looking as if he still couldn’t quite believe the good news. A pediatric neurologist and associate professor at the University of British Columbia, Miller has published 70 articles in refereed journals and supervised more than 20 trainees and faculty, most of whom have gone on to careers in academic medicine.

Lowy received the Community Service Award for his outstanding contributions to education, medicine, research, bioethics and the arts. He has been honoured many times throughout his career, most notably in 2000 when he was named an Officer of the Order of Canada, and has received honorary degrees from the University of Toronto, Concordia University and McGill. Lowy expressed his immense gratitude to McGill: “It’s only after graduation and after one does other things that one realizes what fine teaching we had at McGill.”

The Lifetime Achievement Award given to Scriver came as no surprise to anyone—except, perhaps, to Scriver himself. “I’ve had a job I love,” he said, “and it seems strange to be getting an award for doing something you love.” Scriver, an eminent pediatrician and a pioneer in the field of human genetics, is among McGill’s most influential scientists and teachers.

Sharing his outlook on his career, Scriver said, “One of the great questions to ask ourselves, especially in the medical profession, is, ‘Who do I serve and what can I do to serve? That’s a philosophy that I have found important to practice.”

---

2010 Medicine Alumni Global Awards
Nominate someone for a McGill Medicine Alumni Global Award!

Award categories:
- Lifetime and Career Achievement Award
- Alumni Award for Community Service
- Young Alumni Award

Nomination deadline: August 1, 2010
Announcement of winners: October 1, 2010, during McGill’s Homecoming celebrations

Nominees can be alumni from the Faculty of Medicine, including the schools of Nursing, Physical and Occupational Therapy, and Communication Sciences and Disorders.

For more information, visit www.medicine.mcgill.ca/alumnicorner/awards or phone 514-398-5924.
One morning in October 2005, Joan Draper, MDCM’84, opened her eyes in a hospital bed and realized that something was very wrong. She closed one eye; everything was completely black. For an ophthalmologist, this was particularly alarming. She switched eyes, and the world was horrendously distorted. That’s when she knew that her life had been irrevocably changed.

A few days earlier, Draper and her husband had returned home to Brookfield, Connecticut, from a holiday in the Bahamas. She soon fell ill with flu-like symptoms, and when her condition worsened, Draper’s husband convinced her to go to the hospital. Within hours of her arrival, she was delirious, suffering from encephalitis of unknown origin. When she came out of her delirium five days later, her sight was gone.

Draper was under no illusions about her situation. As an ophthalmologist, she knew how to interpret her symptoms. “In my left eye, the vision was totally black and I knew it was gone,” she says. “There was no doubt in my mind that it was permanent.” In her right eye, she had lost her central vision. She understood that she would not be returning to her private ophthalmology practice, nor would she be able to continue in her position as president of the medical staff at Danbury Hospital, a 370-bed teaching institute affiliated with Yale University. She didn’t know what would happen to her career, but first she needed to adjust to her new life.

With the help of her husband and three daughters, Draper relearned how to perform ordinary tasks. “Just putting toothpaste on a toothbrush – a lot of things can go wrong with that!” she says with a laugh. Most difficult for her to accept was her loss of autonomy. Luckily, Draper had the example of her patients to follow. “I knew many patients who had accomplished a great deal despite potentially insurmountable obstacles. I was very inspired.”

Draper soon realized that she was in a unique position. Every day she was learning first-hand about an area of ophthalmology that she had previously undervalued: the field of low vision. Many ophthalmologists, she explains, are so focused on maintaining or recovering perfect vision that they feel it is an admission of defeat to emphasize techniques for managing life with substantial vision loss. Now, thanks to technological advances, there are many resources available, such as text-magnifying computer software and new portable magnifying devices, for those with low vision. “I kept saying to myself ‘I wish I had known this when I was in practice,’” she says. “Then I turned it around and said ‘This is something I need to share with other people.’”

Draper told her story to her fellow alumni at the 25th Anniversary Medical Seminar at McGill Homecoming 2009. She focused not on what she had lost but what she had accomplished. Draper now spends her time as an advocate for those with reduced vision. “People with low vision are under-diagnosed, under-identified and under-referred,” she says. “I find that almost every person who hears me speak knows someone who needs help. I challenge each of us to reach out to those who may otherwise be left in the dark.”
The U.S. Navy Honours a Pioneer in the World of Medicine

On February 27, 2010, at the General Dynamics NASSCO shipyard in San Diego, California, the U.S. Navy christened a ship in honour of the American medical pioneer Charles Richard Drew, MDCM’33. The renowned African-American researcher, teacher and surgeon is known for his groundbreaking work on blood preservation, the results of which have helped save untold lives.

Drew started his research when he was a student at McGill, under anatomy professor John Beattie. At the time, blood could only be stored for a maximum of seven days before it began to spoil. Drew returned to the United States after interning at the Royal Victoria Hospital and completing a residency at the Montreal General Hospital. He continued to study the problems of blood storage, eventually developing a method to store and distribute blood plasma, which could be used as a substitute for whole blood.

During World War II, Drew was able to put his methods to the test when he was invited to be the medical supervisor of the “Blood for Britain” project, which supplied plasma to British and American soldiers. He was then recruited by the American Red Cross to manage their first efforts to collect and store blood on a large scale but was forced to resign after he protested a military directive to classify blood according to the race of the donor. In 1941, he became professor of surgery at Howard University and chief surgeon at Freedmen’s Hospital, both in Washington, DC. Two years later, he became the first African-American to serve as an examiner on the American Board of Surgery.

“Dr. Drew’s recognition by the Navy is very important to us,” says his daughter Dr. Charlene Drew Jarvis from her home in Washington, DC. “His contribution to blood preservation was responsible for saving thousands of lives during World War II.” The USNS Charles Drew is designed to transfer cargo to station ships and other naval warfare forces at sea.

Alumni Moments

Robert G. Marx, MDCM ’91, was appointed professor of Orthopedic Surgery and professor of Public Health at Weill Cornell Medical College. Considered one of the world’s top surgeons, Marx has published over 90 peer-reviewed publications and one textbook. His recent article “arthroscopic Surgery for Osteoarthritis of the Knee” was published in the New England Journal of Medicine.
A Leader in Global Health

Rosamund Lewis, BSc’83, MDCM’88, MSc’96, MMGMT’08, is committed to improving the health of populations in the poorest countries around the world. After six years in Uganda with the World Health Organization (WHO) and a year with the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization, Lewis was recently appointed project leader for the Global Yellow Fever Initiative at WHO Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. The goal of this initiative is to prevent the occurrence of devastating yellow-fever epidemics and to secure the vaccine supply. “While new pathogens are constantly appearing, ancient scourges, like yellow fever, continue to threaten the health of populations,” says Lewis. Yellow fever currently affects 45 countries in South America and Africa.

Now a community medicine specialist, Lewis was formerly a family physician and assistant professor in the Department of Family Medicine at McGill University. She was also a member of the inaugural class of the International Masters for Health Leadership, an innovative management program for health leaders created jointly by the faculties of Medicine and Management at McGill. Lewis says that, throughout her career, her primary motivation has been the desire to make a difference.

More information about the Global Yellow Fever Initiative can be found at www.who.int/yellowfever. To learn more about the International Masters for Health Leadership, visit: http://executive.mcgill.ca/leadership/imhl

Making Connections

Kendrith Bentley, BScN’71, is a people person and self-professed jock. Her interest in helping others, combined with her belief in physical fitness as preventive medicine, led the nursing alumna from a career in intensive care to running her own business. “I wanted to help people upstream, before they got sick,” says Bentley. Her Calgary-based company specializes in the design and management of fitness facilities and workplace health and wellness strategies.

Bentley had been out of touch with McGill for many years until another Calgary-based alumnus put her in contact with the local Alumni Association. Offered the task of organizing student send-offs – gatherings for local students heading out to their first year at McGill – Bentley put her skills to work. “I love connecting people,” she says, “and I love organizing.” She found a new venue for the event and called every prospective student on the list, making a point to get the parents involved as well. She then brought everyone together, along with the alumni committee and current McGill students who happened to be home visiting. The event was a resounding success.

Bentley continues to organize student send-offs in the Calgary area, and her model for the send-off has been adopted by other alumni branches across the country. She was recently named vice-president of her Alumni Association and awarded the 2009 McGill Alumni-Student Engagement Award for her dedication.

Despite no longer practising as a clinical nurse, Bentley credits her degree with giving her a solid professional foundation. In addition to being recognized by the McGill Alumni Association, she has received the Canadian Workplace Wellness Pioneer Award and the Mall Peepepre National Fitness Leadership Award. “Nursing is not just about being at the bedside,” she says. “It helps develop a whole lot of personal attributes, including confidence and a strong work ethic.”
Honouring a McGill Legacy

For the first time in the 30 years since she graduated, Jane Charters, BSc(PT)’78, attended Homecoming at McGill last fall. It proved to be an inspiring and energizing experience for Charters, now a family physician. “I felt like I was truly coming home,” she says.

Charters’ relationship with McGill began long before she attended the University. Both of her parents were alumni and her father, John Seldon Charters, BSc’43, MDCM’44, was a pediatrician and professor of Pediatrics at McGill. Charters followed her father’s footsteps into McGill’s Faculty of Medicine, graduating as a physiotherapist. She worked at the Montreal Children’s Hospital until she decided to continue her studies at McMaster University in order to become a family physician. She has had her own practice in Oakville, Ontario, since 1989.

Charters’ father co-founded the McGill/CIDA project in 1968 to help the University of Nairobi in Kenya develop its department of pediatrics. He also worked in Ethiopia and India after spending 17 years as executive director of the Montreal Children’s Hospital. When her father died in February 2009, Charters began to think about how she could get more involved in global health initiatives. “I was very fortunate to grow up with constant exposure to the global potential that a McGill education can afford,” says Charters.

Having renewed her ties to McGill, Charters is optimistic about the opportunities that lie ahead. She has become involved with the Faculty of Medicine’s Alumni Global group in Toronto and hopes to use her medical skills to serve a broader community in the future. She doesn’t yet know what form this will take but is keeping her eye out for the right opportunity. It is, she believes, the right way to honour her father’s legacy, while establishing her own.

Making a Career and a Home in Kenya

“It’s cold!” says Dr. Colin Forbes, BSc’51, MDCM’55, of London, Ontario, his new hometown as of three years ago. Forbes and his wife moved back to Canada after 47 years of practising medicine in Africa. “I’m a Jamaican, and at that time I was concerned about the plight of the black people of the world,” he says of his choice to practise in Africa nearly a half-century ago. “I thought the best thing I could do was go to the ‘motherland’ and work there as a pediatrician.”

Forbes began his African career in Tanzania, teaching at the Dar es Salaam Medical School. He then moved on to Lagos, Nigeria, before joining the McGill/CIDA program in Nairobi, Kenya, with McGill professors Alan Ross, MDCM’27, and John Seldon Charters, BSc’43, MDCM’44. (See accompanying article for a profile on John Seldon Charters’ daughter, Dr. Jane Charters.) Forbes and his family remained in Kenya after the program ended, although he continued to travel all over the world promoting primary care.

For medical students interested in following in his footsteps, Forbes has some advice: “Become the best doctor you can in Canada,” he says. He also recommends a trial period in rural Africa or South America. Forbes says he is still living off the emotional, intellectual and professional rewards of his time overseas.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Tell us about a career move, recognition you’ve received or a contribution you’ve made to the health field.
To submit an alumni moment, please email communications.med@mcgill.ca, phone 514-398-4400, ext. 09561 or send a letter to:

McGill Faculty of Medicine Communications Office
3640 de la Montagne St., Room 102
Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3G 2A8
McGill’s Latest Canada Research Chairs (CRCs):

- Antoine Bechara, Tier 1 (New), CRC in Decision Neuroscience
- Jean-François Cloutier, PhD’99, Tier 2 (Renewal), CRC in Developmental Neurobiology
- David R. Colman, Tier 1 (Renewal), CRC in Neuroscience
- John P. Dalton, BSc(Agr)’73, Tier 1 (New), CRC in Infectious Diseases
- Ali Pejmun Haghighi, PhD’00, Tier 2 (Renewal), CRC in Drosophila Neurobiology
- Jay Kaufman, Tier 1 (New), CRC in Health Disparities
- Arnold S. Kristof, BSc’88, MDCM’92, Tier 2 (Renewal), CRC in Pulmonary-Critical Care
- Jacek Majewski, Tier 2 (Renewal), CRC in Statistical Genetics
- Ashok K. Malla, Tier 1 (Renewal), CRC in Early Psychosis
- Julio Cesar Martinez-Trujillo, Tier 2 (Renewal), CRC in Visual Neuroscience
- Christopher C. Pack, Tier 2 (Renewal), CRC in the Neurophysiology of Vision
- Edward Ruthazer, Tier 2 (Renewal), CRC in Neural Circuit Development
- Alan Spatz, Tier 1 (New), CRC in Molecular Pathology
- Simon Tran, Tier 2 (Renewal), CRC in Craniofacial Stem Cells and Tissue Engineering

More Awards:

- Marcel Behr, MSc’95, was elected a member of the American Society for Clinical Investigation.
- Madeleine Buck, BScN’79, MScA’87, was the recipient of the 2009 Ethel Johns Award from the Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing.
- Rose De Angelis, MScA’95, was awarded the 2009 Award of Excellence from the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association.
- Vincent Giguère and Allan Sniderman were elected fellows of the Royal Society of Canada.
- Laurie N. Gottlieb, BN’69, MScA’74, PhD’85, received the Order of Merit from l’Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers du Québec and the Prix du Conseil interprofessionnel du Québec.
- Aurélie Labbe was awarded the 2009 IG Maud Menten New Principal Investigator Prize.
- Carmen Loiselle received the Jewish General Hospital Award for Excellence in Medical Research.
- Ann C. Macaulay was the recipient of the 2009 Maurice Wood Award.
- Jules Poirier received the degree of Docteur Honoris Causa and the Faculty of Medicine Medal from France’s Montpellier University.
- Judith Ritchie was the recipient of the 2010 Excellence Through Evidence award from the Canadian Health Services Research Foundation.
- Maya Saleh, PhD’01, was awarded the Burroughs Wellcome Fund’s Investigators in the Pathogenesis of Infectious Disease Award.
- Charles R. Scriver, BA’51, MDCM’55, DSc’07, received the 2010 John Howland Medal from the American Pediatric Society.

Olympic Congratulations:

Congratulations to McGill Medicine faculty and alumni who were part of the team of experts assisting at the Vancouver 2010 Olympics!

Gregory Berry, MDCM ’91, Robert Foxford, Pierre Guy, MDCM ’89, Wayne Halliwell, MA’73, Connie Lebrun, MDCM ’81, Suzanne LeClerc, PhD’04, and Tarek Razek, BSc’89, MDCM ’93.

Key Dates: For a complete listing of alumni events in your area, visit www.alumni.mcgill.ca/aoc/events-travel.
Save the Date
The Rosalind and Morris Goodman Cancer Research Centre of the Faculty of Medicine
McGill University invites you to reserve Saturday, June 5, 2010 for the inaugural Goodman Cancer Research Gala

Dr. Bernard Shapiro, OC, GOQ, Dinner Chair
Derek Drummond, Master of Ceremony
Penny Echenberg, Gala Chair
Marvin Corber, CM, FCA, Fundraising Chair

Help fund a cure for cancer!

Also, don't miss the final session in this year's Goodman Cancer Research Centre public forum.
Cancer: A Chronic Disease
Understanding developments that improve quality of life after cancer / Stem cells / Testimonies from cancer survivors
Wednesday, May 12, 2010
6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

For more information on the Gala or public forum, or to reserve tickets for these events, visit:
www.cancercentre.mcgill.ca