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**FALL 2023 / WOMEN WHO LEAD / 50 UNDER 50 / LIVING HAPPILY**



“The generosity of Concordia donors has given me the freedom to give back to my community. I have the pleasure of tutoring elementary, secondary and CEGEP students in math. I believe that math — and education — is for everyone, and I love doing my part to make that a reality.”

– *Damilola Ajala, student,  
Mathematics and Statistics*

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# CONCORDIA

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**50 UNDER 50 SHAPING TOMORROW**  
Celebrating alumni leading the way in 2023



fall 2023 volume 47 number 2  
[concordia.ca/magazine](http://concordia.ca/magazine)

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# Embracing the good and the difficult

What makes you happy — truly happy? It's a simple question, yet one that many of us struggle to answer concretely.

It's been tougher than usual to gather with family, friends and co-workers lately without discussing challenging and divisive issues at home and abroad. There's a lot happening so fast, and with so much turmoil and change it's easy to feel guilty about prioritizing personal happiness and well-being.

"Whenever a challenge happens, I ask myself what I can be grateful for," says Julie Hanck, BSc 04, a psychology teacher at Montreal's John Abbott College. She, along with fellow Concordia alumni and researchers, shares insight into how we can practise happiness in our own lives (p. 24), as well as some of the factors that might help determine it. "Our role is to embrace the ups and downs," she adds.

It can be easier said than done, but part of embracing both the good and the trying times is remembering that we can properly address the latter through collective action and co-operation. These challenges are beyond the capacity of any one person, group or country to solve alone, and a call for solidarity resounds profoundly.

Solidarity demands that we listen to one another, that we be patient and open to recognizing the value derived in viewpoints different than our own. We're living in an era defined by technological innovation and connectivity where it's easier than ever before to work together with people from all areas of the world, allowing us to be far better equipped to find solutions.

Nowhere is this more evident than on university campuses. If I think about what I can be grateful for — what makes me happy — one of the reasons is being immersed in a community where researchers, students, alumni, donors and staff join forces to

better society. Our cover story, "Clearing the air" (p. 28), is just one example. Across disciplines and industries, amid increasing and worsening wildfires, Concordians are conducting research to help improve the quality of the air we breathe.

In this issue, you'll also meet our latest cohort of Top 50 Under 50 Shaping Tomorrow (p. 38). These talented alumni are leading the way in their respective fields while helping to advance human rights, environmental protection, technological innovations and much more. You can read the full interviews online at [concordia.ca/alumni/50under50](https://concordia.ca/alumni/50under50). You will also learn more about Women Who LEAD (p. 34) — our revamped Women and Leadership program — and how our community is helping to empower our 116,000 alumnae around the world.

These stories remind me that despite the challenges, our planet is also brimming with opportunities to bring about positive change.

In just a few months' time, Concordia will be celebrating a major milestone — 50 years since the merger of our founding institutions, Loyola College



and Sir George Williams University. My thanks to those of you who took time to tell us your stories. If you graduated in 1974-75 and have some Concordia memories to share with us, you still can.

We've officially gone down to printing just two issues of *Concordia University Magazine* per year. That said,

we'll already begin showcasing some of our 50th-anniversary content in our next issue, spring 2024. I can't wait to share these stories with you and to start rolling out some of the exciting activities the university has planned for this golden year — I look forward to celebrating with you!

Before signing off, I would like to express my sincere thanks to our associate editor, Ian Harrison, BComm 01. I am always grateful for the central role he plays in our magazine's success, but his contributions to this issue, in particular, merit extra credit. Thank you, Ian.

Until the next issue, I wish you all the best.

**Marta Samuel**, GrDip 10  
Editor, *Concordia University Magazine*  
[magazine@concordia.ca](mailto:magazine@concordia.ca)

*All of our magazine content — and more — is available online at [concordia.ca/magazine](https://concordia.ca/magazine).*



## CONCORDIA AFRICA INITIATIVE

**Concordia President Graham Carr announced the launch of the Concordia Africa Initiative,** which will establish mutually beneficial relationships throughout Africa with a focus on youth employability and entrepreneurship. “Concordia has placed Africa at the heart of its international relations because of the endless opportunities for innovative collaborations, as well as the chance to learn from the people and institutions across the length and breadth of this dynamic continent,” said Carr.



THE FIRST **DOBSON SCIENTIFIC VENTURE AWARDS** TOOK PLACE AT DISTRICT 3, CONCORDIA'S STARTUP ACCELERATOR, ON APRIL 13. THE EVENT – ENABLED BY THE JOHN DOBSON FOUNDATION, A MAJOR CAMPAIGN FOR CONCORDIA DONOR CO-MANAGED BY **ARI KIRIAZIDIS** AND **RANDALL KELLY**, BCOMM 78 (SECOND AND THIRD FROM LEFT) – ALLOCATED FUNDS TO SUPPORT THE GROWTH AND MARKET EXPANSION OF FIVE BUSINESSES FOUNDED BY POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCHERS.

## STUDENT-BUILT SATELLITE LAUNCHED

In a Quebec first, a **satellite designed by students at Space Concordia to provide climate research data was successfully launched** on board a SpaceX rocket in June. The Canadian Space Agency subsequently awarded \$350,000 to a team led by **Khashayar Khorasani**, Tier 1 Concordia Research Chair at the Gina Cody School of Engineering and Computer Science, to construct and launch a second satellite in Quebec. “This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for Concordia students to take part in a real space mission,” said Khorasani.

## KEY BEE DISCOVERY

A published paper co-written by **Concordia researchers argued that the growth in urban honeybee-keeping could be harming wild bee populations.** Small bees with limited foraging ranges may be especially at risk. “We found that the sites with the largest increase in honeybee populations across sites and years also had the fewest wild bee species,” said **Gail MacInnis**, MSc 12, the study's author along with **Étienne Normandin**, Université de Montréal, and **Carly Ziter**, assistant professor in the Department of Biology.

## CLIMATE CONFERENCE ON CAMPUS

**One of Canada's largest conferences on environment and sustainability took place at Concordia** from August 7 to 11. Co-chaired by **Catherine Mulligan** and **Chunjiang An**, professors in the Department of Building, Civil and Environmental Engineering, the PEOPLE 2023 International Conference welcomed researchers and experts from around the world. “Concordia has joined the Decade of Action to achieve the United Nations' ambitious Sustainable Development Goals,” noted **Dominique Bérubé**, vice-president of Research and Graduate Studies. “We are thrilled to participate in this conference that so closely relates to our research priorities.”



**NEW UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN AMY BUCKLAND**, BA 06, BEGAN HER FIVE-YEAR TERM ON SEPTEMBER 15. BUCKLAND PREVIOUSLY SERVED AS ASSISTANT DEPUTY MINISTER FOR COLLECTIONS AT LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA, WHERE SHE LED A TEAM OF 500 STAFF AND MANAGED AN ANNUAL BUDGET OF \$50 MILLION.

## HOCKEY CANADA HONOURS STINGERS CAPTAIN

**Emmy Fecteau** — captain of the Concordia Stingers women's hockey team and a Department of Education undergraduate — recently **won the Isobel Gathorne-Hardy Award**, presented by Hockey Canada to an active player for exemplary leadership. The native of Saint-Odilon-de-Cranbourne, Quebec, led Canada to a gold medal at the 2023 World University Games last January. Fecteau was also named Concordia's 2023 Female Athlete of the Year and earned the university's 2022-23 Denise Beaudet Award in recognition of her accomplishments on and off the ice.



RHETT HAMMERTON

**LÉULI ESHRĀGHI**, A FORMER CONCORDIA HORIZON POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW, WAS NAMED THE FIRST CURATOR OF INDIGENOUS ARTS AT THE MONTREAL MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS. ESHRĀGHI WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND REALIZATION OF EXHIBITIONS THAT SHOWCASE THE EXCEPTIONAL WORK OF INDIGENOUS ARTISTS FROM QUEBEC, CANADA AND BEYOND.

**Concordia University Magazine** is published three times a year for alumni and friends. Opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of the university or its alumni association.

Please address editorial correspondence to:

The Editor, **Concordia University Magazine**  
1455 De Maisonneuve Blvd. W.  
Montreal, QC H3G 1M8

Email: [magazine@concordia.ca](mailto:magazine@concordia.ca)

Advertising: [magazine@concordia.ca](mailto:magazine@concordia.ca)

Editor: **Marta Samuel**

Associate editor: **Ian Harrison**

Lead designer: **Christopher Alleyne**

Designers: **Trevor Browne** and **Elizabeth Chan**

Editorial support: **Chris Walker**

Proofreader: **Christopher Korchin**

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### Keep in touch

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Join the conversation using **#CUmagazine** and by following **@ConcordiaAlumni** on social media.

## E-BUS FLEETS SLASH EMISSIONS

In a paper published in the international scientific journal *Transportation Research Part D: Transport and Environment*, **Concordia researchers showed how the electrification of bus fleets can reduce total greenhouse-gas emissions**, as well as maintenance and societal health-related costs. “When combined with other efforts to decarbonize energy systems, our research shows that from 2019 to 2030, cumulative GHG emissions of bus fleets in Toronto, Montreal, Edmonton and Halifax are projected to be [significantly] reduced,” said primary author **Xuelin Tian**, MAsc 22, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Building, Civil and Environmental Engineering.



FOR THE SECOND CONSECUTIVE YEAR, FOUR CONCORDIA STUDENTS WERE HONORED WITH THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC'S **LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR'S YOUTH MEDAL**. **MICHAEL LECCHINO**, **ASLI ISAAQ**, **SIERRA CAMPBELL**, **BENG 23** (ALL PICTURED ABOVE), AND **VANESSA MANROOP**, **BCOMM 23**, WERE DISTINGUISHED FOR THEIR LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY SERVICE.

**TEEANNA MUNRO**, BA 15, WAS NAMED INAUGURAL **MANAGER OF THE NOULA CENTRE FOR BLACK STUDENTS AT CONCORDIA**. AMONG OTHER ROLES, THE VANCOUVER NATIVE AND MASTER'S DEGREE HOLDER PREVIOUSLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE QUEBEC BOARD OF BLACK EDUCATORS AND IN THE COMMUNITY OF TASIUJQAQ, NUNAVIK, QUEBEC, AS A TEACHER AND CLASSROOM-MANAGEMENT COACH.



**A FIVE-YEAR PLAN TO DECOLONIZE AND INDIGENIZE CURRICULA AND PEDAGOGY AT CONCORDIA** WAS OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCED IN SEPTEMBER. THE INITIATIVE DRAWS UPON THE HISTORIC PRINCIPLES OF THE TWO ROW WAMPUM BELT, OR TEKANI TEIOTHA'TÁ:TIE KASWÉNTAH', A FRAMEWORK FOR COLONIAL-SETTLER CONDUCT IN THE HAUDENOSAUNEE SIX NATIONS CONFEDERACY. "THIS WILL PUT CONCORDIA ON THE MAP," SAID **DONNA KAHÉRAKWAS GOODLEAF**, DIRECTOR, DECOLONIZING CURRICULUM AND PEDAGOGY. "WE'RE TELLING THE WORLD THIS IS WHAT WE'RE DOING, AND THIS IS HOW WE'RE DOING IT."

## SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Thirteen pieces from the **Montreal Signs Project** — an initiative led by **Matthew Soar**, professor emeritus in the Department of Communication Studies, to preserve and collect iconic and culturally relevant commercial and civic signs — have been donated to and will be on display at the **Centre des mémoires montréalaises** in the city's Quartier des Spectacles. The new museum and civic space dedicated to the history of Montreal opened in September.







CONCORDIA'S **NEXT-GENERATION CITIES INSTITUTE** HAS PARTNERED ON SEVERAL RESEARCH PROJECTS WITH THE JIA FOUNDATION, A NON-PROFIT WITH A MANDATE TO **PROTECT THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF MONTREAL'S CHINATOWN**. THE PROJECTS INCLUDE **CITYPLAYER**, A VIDEO GAME BY **CHRISTOPHER GIBBS**, SENIOR ADVISOR FOR URBAN SIMULATION PLATFORM AND GAMIFICATION, AND **JIARU LI**, BCSC 22, LEAD GAMIFICATION PROGRAMMER, TO HELP CITIZENS VISUALIZE POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS FOR URBAN DEVELOPMENT.

## EMPOWERMENT FOR INDIGENOUS YOUTH

Young people from more than 10 Indigenous nations came together at Concordia and in Kahnawake, south of Montreal, for **Pathways of Indigenous Youth**, a weeklong summer institute. Organized through the Quebec Youth Network Chair — a position held by **Natasha Blanchet-Cohen**, MA 99, associate professor in the Department of Applied Human Sciences — in collaboration with Concordia's Office of Community Engagement and the Indigenous Futures Research Centre, the initiative was established to allow participants to share experiences, be inspired and build a network to support Indigenous youth empowerment.



**CAROLINE OUELLETTE**, LLD 19, ASSOCIATE HEAD COACH OF CONCORDIA STINGERS WOMEN'S VARSITY HOCKEY, WAS **INDUCTED INTO THE INTERNATIONAL ICE HOCKEY FEDERATION HALL OF FAME** IN TAMPERE, FINLAND, AS WELL AS THE **HOCKEY HALL OF FAME** — ONLY THE 10TH WOMAN TO BE INDUCTED INTO THE LATTER. AS A MEMBER OF TEAM CANADA FOR 20 YEARS, THE MONTREAL NATIVE WON FOUR GOLD MEDALS AT THE WINTER OLYMPICS AND SIX GOLD MEDALS AT THE IIHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS. OUELLETTE WAS ALSO **NAMED TO THE NATIONAL ORDER OF QUEBEC** THIS YEAR, AND APPOINTED ASSISTANT COACH FOR CANADA'S NATIONAL WOMEN'S HOCKEY TEAM.



CONCORDIA'S NEWEST **PUBLIC SCHOLARS** — A DIVERSE GROUP OF 10 GRADUATE RESEARCHERS — WERE ANNOUNCED IN JUNE. "[THEY] WERE CHOSEN FROM AMONG OUR MOST ACCOMPLISHED DOCTORAL STUDENTS AND HAVE BEEN ENTRUSTED WITH THE MISSION TO ENGAGE AND SHARE THEIR INNOVATIVE RESEARCH WITH THE WIDER PUBLIC," SAID **FAYE DIAMANTOUDI**, DEAN OF GRADUATE STUDIES.

# Filmmaker Karen Cho talks *Big Fight in Little Chinatown*

Cinema grad's doc chronicles 'recurring pattern of active erasure'

IAN HARRISON, BCOMM 01

A graduate of the Mel Hoppenheim School of Cinema, Karen Cho, BFA 01, is a Montreal-based documentary filmmaker whose work has given voice to people on the margins and, as a result, helped her make sense of her own identity and place within Quebec and Canada.

Her latest film, *Big Fight in Little Chinatown*, uses extensive archival material and first-person testimonials to tell a story of resilience in the face of expropriation, gentrification and racism.

Cho recently sat down to talk about the project.

**When you looked at the footage you had compiled for *Big Fight*, what were some of the common threads between the neighbourhoods you explored?**

**Karen Cho:** There's a recurring pattern of active erasure across all Chinatowns and all marginalized communities at the intersection of racism and urban planning. Every Chinatown is different, but the historic urban Chinatowns are located in the downtown core of cities. When they were set up it was often the most undesirable place in the city, but that land is now worth a lot. So there are gentrification pressures, but also a history and pattern of expropriation of the land, because of various government programs, cities putting freeways through these places, dropping stadiums on these communities or, in the case of New York, putting a prison in the neighbourhood. This pattern of gentrification, of urban-planning pressures and forces, happens in all urban Chinatowns.

STILL FROM CHO'S  
*BIG FIGHT IN LITTLE  
CHINATOWN*

**You have said that you wanted to penetrate the tourism façade as you filmed these neighbourhoods. How did you gain the trust of community members to be able to do that successfully?**

**KC:** I think a lot of it goes back to my first film, *In the Shadow of Gold Mountain*, about the Chinese Head Tax and Exclusion Act. And I should say, too, that I'm fifth-generation Chinese-Canadian on my father's side. I have very deep family roots in Montreal and Vancouver's Chinatowns. So I have personal connections to these neighbourhoods — and there was some general awareness about my previous film, which I shot in those two Chinatowns and also premiered in Chinatowns across Canada. There were previous relationships there I could draw on for *Big Fight*.

**Your films have touched on questions of who belongs and who gets to be considered Canadian. What have you learned about your identity as a result?**

**KC:** A lot of my exploring in filmmaking is uncovering untold histories or telling stories from marginalized points of



KAREN CHO, BFA 01

view. Being a woman and anglophone person of colour in Quebec, you never feel like you completely belong. And you never feel like your identity or history is reflected in the mainstream at all. My films are trying to always allow different people to speak their truths and be the experts of their own experiences. In this way, I kind of find myself and also challenge traditional narratives about who is a Canadian. ■



NATHANIEL BROWN

# Writer and producer Barry Julien helps lead *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*

It's gratifying to write jokes for 'the funniest man on TV,' says the Emmy winner

DAMON VAN DER LINDE, BA 08

For more than 15 years, Barry Julien, BA 94, has played key roles as a writer and producer on two landmark television shows: *The Colbert Report* and *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*.

Raised in the Montreal suburbs, the Department of Communication Studies grad performed at comedy clubs fresh out of high school, experiences he describes as invaluable.

"Audiences give the best feedback. They don't care about hurting your feelings — they just react honestly," says Julien.

After his time at Concordia, Julien found gigs on a number of animated and live-action television shows before he joined the writers' room on *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*. His stint on the popular CBC sketch-comedy show earned him two Gemini Award nominations. Julien also contributed to the satirical newspaper *The Onion* and racked up more than a dozen credits as an actor.

A move to the United States in 2006 to become a staff writer on Fox's *Talkshow with Spike Feresten* proved pivotal. *The Colbert Report* hired Julien as a writer a year later and eventually promoted him to co-executive producer, a role he would reprise on *The Late Show*.

## 'IT'S A TERRIFIC FEELING TO BE ACKNOWLEDGED'

The job has afforded Julien with extraordinary opportunities, such as visiting Iraq in 2009 to entertain soldiers and travelling to Sochi, Russia, for the 2014 Winter Olympics. Julien and his team consistently appear at top industry award shows, with accolades that include Writers Guild Awards, Peabody Awards and Emmy nominations nearly every year.

"It's a terrific feeling to be acknowledged by our peers and share a fun night with friends I've been writing jokes with all year long," he says.

Julien attributes *The Late Show's* success to his team's dedication and trust under the guidance of Colbert.

"Stephen is charismatic and a great performer. He's also the best writer I've ever worked with and incredibly fast at diagnosing script problems."

Julien also remarks that Colbert doesn't play favourites, setting a collaborative and supportive tone among staffers of all seniority levels.

"Stephen is a big proponent of the best joke winning," Julien remarks. "It doesn't matter who it came from or how it arose."

Beyond the success and recognition of helping lead one of the most watched late-night shows, Julien says his strongest career motivator is that he truly enjoys making comedy.

"The most gratifying part of the job is working with a great team to write jokes and see them performed that night by the funniest man on TV," he says.

"Then I get to come back the next day and do it again." ■



BARRY JULIEN, BA 94



# Director Sophie Dupuis wins Best Canadian Feature Film at TIFF

*Solo* explores the world of drag through 'universal themes of love, intimacy and healing'

RICHARD BURNETT, BA 88

Filmmaker Sophie Dupuis, BFA 10, has been garnering attention in recent years, both at home and beyond.

The Val-d'Or, Quebec, native's drama *Chien de garde* (*Family First*, 2018) was Canada's selection for Best Foreign Language Film at the 2019 Academy Awards.

More recently, *Solo*, Dupuis' third full-length directorial effort, was named Best Canadian Feature Film at the 2023 Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF).

The movie tells the story of a Montreal drag queen — played by Théodore Pellerin, in his third collaboration with Dupuis — and his toxic relationships with Olivier, a fellow drag artist and manipulative lover played by Félix Maritaud, as well as with his distant mother, a famous opera singer played by Anne-Marie Cadieux.

In a glowing preview, *The Hollywood Reporter* wrote that Dupuis had the “promise to follow Denis Villeneuve and the late Jean-Marc Vallée as one of the top creative voices out of French-speaking Quebec.”

Dupuis shared her TIFF honour with her cast and crew.

“[They] became my family while filming. *Solo* is a story of the universal themes of love, intimacy and healing that connect us all.”

## 'A POSITIVE SOCIETAL IMPACT'

Dupuis says she had Pellerin in mind as her film's star from the beginning.

“Théodore is a rare and incredible talent whom I saw grow into a magnificent human being and close friend since he was 18,” she says. “He truly is an artistic muse whose sensibilities bring an added dimension to the film.”



EVAN MAUDE TC

SOPHIE DUPUIS, BFA 10

Jean Marchand, Vlad Alexis, Tommy Joubert and Marc-André Leclair (the Montreal drag queen Tracy Trash) round out the cast as the film's drag group.

“The majority of our cast is queer, as are many of the people working behind the camera,” says Dupuis, who herself came out as queer in a September 2023 essay for CBC Arts. “This was important to me because they had the freedom to help shape this film. If they were not a part of the community, I never would have gotten that input.”

“Many cast and crew members told me they felt like they were involved in a project that could have a positive societal impact, and that they wished they could have seen films like *Solo* when they were growing up.”

The film's release comes on the heels of widespread protests and even legislation targeting drag shows and drag artists, with much of the vitriol, Dupuis notes, aimed squarely at the trans community.

“Queer people grow up in a heteronormative society and we become queer anyway,” she points out. “So it's not true that if we come into contact with queer people and queer culture that we will become queer. By presenting diversity to young people who are queer, they learn to accept themselves and know that there is a place for them in society.”

Dupuis adds that the Concordia community warmly embraced these guiding principles.

“The diversity of students with whom I studied and became friends showed me how I could approach film differently. We are all unique and there is no one way to create art.” ■

*Learn about our impressive network of 254,000 graduates at [concordia.ca/alumninews](https://concordia.ca/alumninews).*



LOU SCRIBBLE

FÉLIX MARITAUD PLAYS DRAG ARTIST OLIVIER IN SOLO.

# Véronique Pepin begins mandate as School of Health's interim dean

'I can't wait to see what the future holds'

UNIVERSITY  
COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES

Véronique Pepin has been named interim dean of Concordia's School of Health, a mandate the Department of Health, Kinesiology and Applied Physiology faculty member began on August 15.

"Véronique is a highly respected kinesiologist and researcher with extensive leadership experience," says Anne Whitelaw, BFA 87, GrDip 92, PhD 96, provost and vice-president, Academic.

"Her in-depth knowledge of the Quebec health-care system, her expertise in the area of cardiopulmonary exercise testing and her commitment to interdisciplinarity make her an outstanding candidate."

Concordia's Board of Governors approved the creation of the School of Health in June 2021. The school will offer faculty, researchers and students the opportunity to integrate learning, discovery, innovation and engagement through the university's existing, wide-ranging research expertise in health-related topics. It aims to build on Concordia's leadership in community and preventive health and health-technology development.

Pepin's mandate will include setting up the school's governance structure, defining its strategic plan and building partnerships within Quebec's health network.

## DECADES OF EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE

Pepin brings nearly 20 years of experience as a researcher and educator, with extensive insight on Quebec's health-care system. Her current research focuses on the effects of exercise interventions on



PEPIN'S MANDATE WILL INCLUDE THE SCHOOL OF HEALTH'S GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE AND STRATEGIC PLAN.

exercise tolerance, cognitive function, psychological status and quality of life in people with various chronic conditions, such as chronic obstructive lung disease and sleep disorders.

Pepin led the establishment of a research infrastructure for cardiopulmonary exercise testing and pulmonary rehabilitation at the Centre intégré universitaire de santé et de services sociaux du Nord-de-l'Île-de-Montréal, where she has held a researcher position since 2006.

She has been chair of the Department of Health, Kinesiology and Applied Physiology for the past five years. Pepin also served as chair of the Canadian Respiratory Health Professionals assembly of the Canadian Thoracic Society and is now a member of its executive committee.

She earned an interdisciplinary PhD specializing in exercise and wellness from Arizona State University in Tempe. Notably, Pepin held a postdoctoral fellowship in respirology, focusing on exercise and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, at the Institut universitaire de cardiologie et de pneumologie de Québec from 2003 to 2006.

## 'A PIVOTAL ROLE'

"I am excited about this opportunity and I am committed to leading the School of Health with courage and passion," she says. "I am conscious of its challenging nature, but I can lean on relatable past experiences and on a solid network, so I am confident that we will make good progress in the next two years. I can't wait to see what the future holds for the school."

As interim dean, Pepin will report to Whitelaw and Dominique Bérubé, vice-president of Research and Graduate Studies.

"I am delighted to welcome Véronique into her new role as interim dean of the School of Health," Bérubé says. "She will play a pivotal role in advancing our mission to become a leader in innovative health research and training, with a strong focus on serving and improving the well-being of diverse communities." ■

Find out more about the School of Health at [concordia.ca/schoolofhealth](https://concordia.ca/schoolofhealth).

# Concordia announces climate initiative PLAN/NET ZERO

Bold project will help campuses become carbon neutral before 2040

JAKE BRENNAN

In line with Concordia's pledge to have sustainability and climate action guide every aspect of its activities, the university has launched PLAN/NET ZERO.

The bold project aims to show how large institutions can work with diverse partners to target net-zero emissions now.

As one of Canada's largest urban universities, Concordia aims to achieve carbon neutrality before 2040. To do so, it will transform its two Montreal campuses into living labs that reduce energy consumption, optimize heating systems and encourage behavioural change.

"The need for a clean-energy transition to decarbonize our rapidly urbanizing planet is urgent," says Concordia President Graham Carr. "With 80 buildings across 62 acres on two very different campuses, Concordia offers a unique space to develop and test innovative, integrated, scalable decarbonization solutions that can be blueprints for cities around the world."

## CAMPUSES AS LIVING LABS

Concordia's campuses — Sir George Williams Campus in the heart of downtown and Loyola Campus in residential Notre-Dame-de-Grâce — contain urban green spaces and examples of almost every phase of Montreal's architectural history over the last 150 years. Its buildings include contemporary LEED-standard research pavilions, 20th-century office towers and low-rise heritage buildings.

Serving 50,000 students and 7,000 faculty and staff, as well as thousands of visitors each day, Concordia's campuses encompass a wide range of facilities and functions. These include academic and administrative areas, sports facilities,

research centres and labs, as well as amenities such as bike-share stations, car parks, retail spaces and more.

In the face of this complexity, Concordia is well positioned to lead a project at the scale of PLAN/NET ZERO. The university is ranked 20th in the world by the London-based *Times Higher Education* Impact Rankings for its work on Climate Action and fifth for advancing the UN Sustainable Development Goals related to Sustainable Cities and Communities.

The work of the Next-Generation Cities Institute and the university's expertise in areas such as energy-efficient buildings, electrification and renewables, sustainable mobility solutions, energy storage, applied AI and smart-grid security are recognized globally.

## 'UNRIVALLED EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES'

"Climate change is an 'all-of-humanity' challenge. It requires solutions that are actionable and inclusive," says Carr. "PLAN/NET ZERO is unique in this respect. Through its living-lab approach, small and medium-sized enterprises, globally recognized enterprises such as Hydro-Québec, financial institutions, community

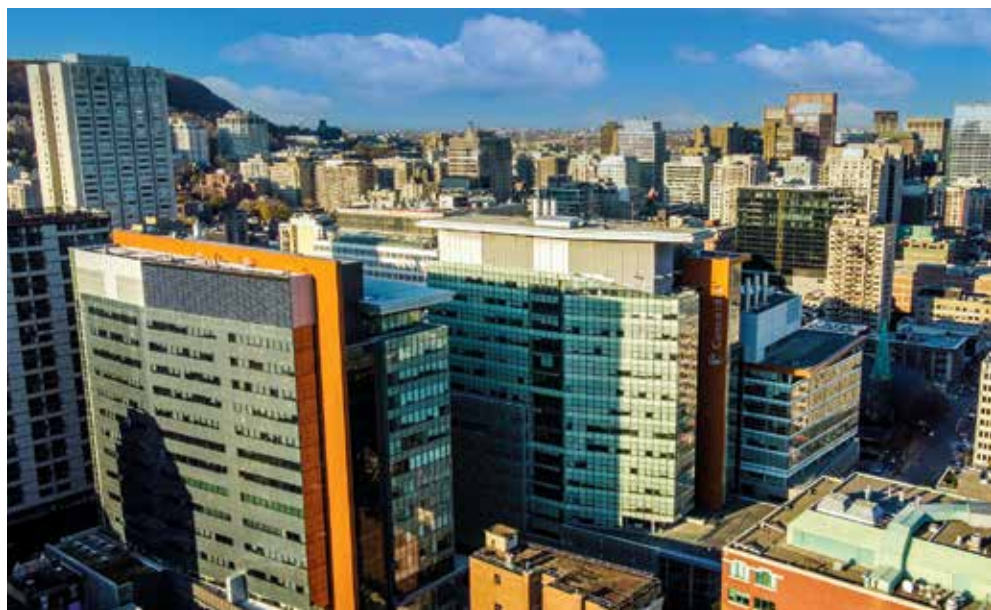
organizations, governments, researchers from other universities and startups from Concordia's District 3 Innovation Hub or Montreal's Ax-C will all come together to nurture an innovation ecosystem related to energy transformation.

"The plan will also offer students, faculty and staff from Concordia and elsewhere unrivalled opportunities to work alongside experts and stakeholders from these diverse sectors. Through these novel collaborations, PLAN/NET ZERO will inspire technological innovation, behavioural change and community evolution, and new, future-ready academic training programs for the green economy," Carr adds.

"PLAN/NET ZERO is an ambitious project that builds on Concordia's momentum to drive green solutions for a healthy planet. By sparking innovation in research, teaching and learning, expanding our networks, modelling social and environmental responsibility and rallying our extended community, we envision PLAN/NET ZERO as a beacon for what a next-generation university should be." ■

Discover more at

[concordia.ca/sustainability/net-zero](https://concordia.ca/sustainability/net-zero).





# \$123 million to electrify society and decarbonize communities

Government of Canada awards Concordia historic research grant

CHRISTIAN DURAND, GRDIP 06

**F**rançois-Philippe Champagne — the Government of Canada’s Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry — announced on April 28 that Concordia had received a Canada First Research Excellence Fund (CFREF) grant of \$123,160,035.

The grant — the largest in Concordia’s history — will be distributed over seven years to support the activities and initiatives encompassed in Electrifying Society: Towards Decarbonized Resilient Communities.

“Today’s research is tomorrow’s economy. Since day one, our government has taken action to re-establish the role of science and scientists in our society, allowing us to appreciate the true impacts of science and research in our lives,” said Champagne.

“Such is the value of Canadian institutions and researchers who think outside the box to tackle the greatest challenges of our time. The initiatives announced today will lead to breakthrough discoveries that will improve people’s lives, nourish our innovation ecosystems and shape Canada’s prosperity for years to come.”

## TRANSDISCIPLINARY, INTERNATIONAL AND INCLUSIVE

The research grant will amplify Concordia’s formidable expertise in several areas related to electrification, smart buildings and net-zero communities, furthering its leadership in helping Canada achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.

Officially named Volt-age, the initiative will bring together researchers from all faculties, as well as colleagues from partner universities across the country and internationally. They will



FRONT ROW: **PASCAL SICOTTE**, DEAN, FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCE; **KARIM ZHAGIB**, CEO OF CONCORDIA’S ELECTRIFYING SOCIETY INITIATIVE; **FRANÇOIS-PHILIPPE CHAMPAGNE**, MINISTER OF INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY; **MOURAD DEBBABI**, DEAN, GINA CODY SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING AND COMPUTER SCIENCE; **ANDREAS ATHENITIS**, DIRECTOR, CONCORDIA CENTRE FOR ZERO ENERGY BUILDING STUDIES; **DOMINIQUE BÉRUBÉ**, VICE-PRESIDENT, RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES. BACK ROW: **PAUL CHESSER**, BA 94, GRDIP 97, VICE-PRESIDENT, ADVANCEMENT; CONCORDIA PRESIDENT **GRAHAM CARR**; **URSULA EICKER**, CANADA EXCELLENCE RESEARCH CHAIR IN SMART, SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT CITIES AND COMMUNITIES; **DENIS FAUBERT**, CONSULTANT.

work with Indigenous, private, public and not-for-profit sector experts to deliver integrated, affordable decarbonization solutions focused on electrification. This includes energy systems and storage, transportation and smart buildings, deployment of digital twin technology, cybersecurity and the Internet of Things.

Together, the university and its partners will establish a world-leading research program designed to apply novel technologies to create innovative energy sources, secure critical infrastructure and deliver affordable, green energy under diverse conditions in municipalities and communities across Canada.

## ‘HISTORIC FUNDING WILL HELP CHART A COURSE’

Central to Volt-age will be a network of living labs to incubate novel ideas, test and bundle new technologies, nurture startups and mobilize citizen engagement to foster social adoption of the innovations developed through the research program.

The following themes will be at the heart of the program’s research activities:

**Smart, sustainable and healthy built environment:** The creation of infrastructure at the neighbourhood level to reach carbon neutrality and provide high air quality through electrified transport and active mobility.

**Resilient community energy and transportation systems based on renewables:** The development of technologies for electrified, smart and connected communities in diverse environments.

**Planning and governance for social equity and citizen engagement:** The creation of policy and technology roadmaps informed by social equity and citizen engagement.

“This bold investment from the Government of Canada speaks to Concordia’s reputation as a leader in sustainability research,” added President Graham Carr at the announcement.

“We and our partners are part of the fabric of communities across the country, and this historic funding will help chart a course for a more sustainable, resilient future for Canada and the world.” ■

Learn more at [concordia.ca/voltage](https://concordia.ca/voltage).

## \$2 million from Behaviour Interactive to spur innovation for Quebec's video game industry

IAN HARRISON, BCOMM 01

A \$2-million gift to the Campaign for Concordia: Next-Gen Now from Behaviour Interactive — the largest Canadian video game developer and publisher — will enhance Concordia's ability to develop new talent and innovation for a critical economic sector.

Now in its 31st year, Behaviour Interactive is known the world over for its bestselling multiplayer, *Dead by Daylight*, and its work with many of the biggest names in video games, including Microsoft, Sony, EA, Warner, Netflix and Take-Two, among others. The studio and its co-founder and CEO, Rémi Racine, are pioneers of the Canadian video game industry and play a leadership role in its promotion to future generations of talent.

The major support from Behaviour to the university — ranked among the world's best for art and design — will fund a new research chair in the Department of Design and Computation Arts and provide financial assistance to undergraduate and graduate students who aspire to embark on careers in the video game industry.

"This is a significant investment in leading-edge research and student training for our top-ranked Faculty of Fine Arts," says President Graham Carr.

"We thank Behaviour Interactive for such a generous gift. It will help prepare our students for careers in the fast-paced world of game development and enable our researchers to deliver new design ideas to an industry that annually



RÉMI RACINE, CO-FOUNDER AND CEO, BEHAVIOUR INTERACTIVE, AT A MAY 18 EVENT TO ANNOUNCE HIS COMPANY'S GIFT

contributes more than \$5 billion to Canada's economy."

Rémi Racine says that more targeted investment is needed to help ensure the future growth of Montreal's vibrant community of developers and creators.

"We have a healthy video game development ecosystem here in Montreal and Quebec, and across the country," observes Racine, whose company has consistently been named one of the best managed in Canada. "Whether the pipeline that nourishes that ecosystem can thrive and compete globally in the decades to come depends largely on the steps we take today to foster new talent and keep pace with new technology.

"This is what this gift to Concordia is all about. As a post-secondary research institution with strengths in concept art, design and experiential education, the university plays an important role in a sector with tremendous socio-economic benefits and promise. We take pride in our ability to help nurture more of this success."

### 'SUPPORT FOR A NEW RESEARCH CHAIR AND A RANGE OF RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS'

Thanks to undergraduate and graduate programs in design and computation arts, and a concerted emphasis on hands-on, practical experience, Concordia's Faculty of Fine Arts has flourished alongside the industry, both in terms of enrolment and reputation.

"There is great potential in digital game research and development," remarks Annie Gérin, dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts. "From cultivating communities to teaching new skills and revolutionizing storytelling, representation and entertainment, this industry has emerged as one of the most impactful cultural artifacts of our time.

"Through support for a new research chair and a range of resources for students, Behaviour Interactive's gift will help us explore the possibilities of the next generation of game design. We are particularly excited to see how our new Behaviour Interactive Chair in Game Design will provide opportunities for students, faculty and professionals to collaborate and experiment boldly."

Much of this collaboration and experimentation will be overseen and executed by faculty members Pippin Barr, Rilla Khaled and Jonathan Lessard.

“We’re in the Faculty of Fine Arts, so everything is framed up in terms of creative expression and experimentation — but because we’re in computation arts, a big thing we’re interested in is building the fundamental skills with which you do that creative expression,” says Barr, who serves as associate director of the Technoculture, Art and Games (TAG) research centre and chair of the Department of Design and Computation Arts.

Adds Khaled, director of TAG: “We want to support makers and thinkers that industry will want [to hire]. Behaviour, of course, they’re homegrown, they’re local, and I know that they’re very committed to supporting the growth of the scene locally.

“What was always very heartening for me was how open they were to exploration and experimentation, and also inclusion.”

Lessard is a long-time game-maker who serves as the primary investigator at LabLabLab, a research group supported by the Fonds de recherche du Québec. The group focuses on emergent narrative, playful natural language interaction and computational creativity.

“It’s really great that now there will be an ecosystem or a mechanism to allow for this free exploration [of ideas],” says Lessard of the gift’s impact. “So there will be support for this experimentation, which is also recognition of the value of this experimentation.”

A remarkable number of Concordia alumni have propelled Canada’s video game industry forward, notes Paul Chesser, BA 94, GrDip 97, vice-president of Advancement.

“This major gift from Behaviour Interactive is an endorsement of our Faculty of Fine Arts and a momentous opportunity to build on the industry’s future needs,” says Chesser.

“We are especially thankful that an industry leader located in our own backyard has made this generous investment. It will help to elevate Montreal as a nexus for video game design and development, supporting talent, inspiring creativity and generating cutting-edge advances.” ■



PRESIDENT **GRAHAM CARR**; **JONATHAN LESSARD**; **ANNIE GÉRIN**; **STEPHEN MULROONEY**, EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT AND CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER, BEHAVIOUR INTERACTIVE; **RÉMI RACINE**; **PIPPIN BARR**; AND **RILLA KHALED**



## \$2 million from Joyce Family Foundation bolsters students from rural areas of Quebec and Canada

Major gift to the Campaign for Concordia: Next-Gen Now endows new bursary program



IAN HARRISON, BCOMM 01

Students from rural communities in Quebec and Canada are at the heart of a new bursary program made possible thanks to a \$2-million gift to the Campaign for Concordia: Next-Gen Now from the Joyce Family Foundation.

Established by the late Ronald V. Joyce, co-founder of Tim Hortons, the foundation's primary focus is to provide access to education for children and youth with significant financial need or who face other socio-economic barriers to success.

That philanthropic mission aligns well with Concordia's values, says President Graham Carr.

"Our institution has a proud history of extending opportunities to a wide range of students," says Carr. "Rural communities have played an immense role in the development of Quebec and Canada. Many of those communities

are now under significant pressure. We deeply appreciate how the Joyce Family Foundation is empowering young people from remote regions across the country to have a positive impact on their communities and society as a whole."

The Joyce Family Foundation Bursary for Rural Students will allow for nine to 14 financial awards to be annually disbursed on a renewable basis to undergraduate students, regardless of faculty. Preference will be given to students who have fewer avenues for funding or support.

"We are proud to partner with Concordia University to help foster the academic and professional ambitions of students from rural areas in Canada," states the Honorable Ed Lumley, chair of the Joyce Family Foundation. "Our founder, Ron Joyce, firmly believed in education and hard work as a catalyst for change. He would have urged future

bursary recipients to passionately follow their dreams and leverage their talents to uplift their families and communities."

Concordia aims to identify an applicant pool for the new bursary that comprises two-thirds of students from Quebec and one-third from the rest of Canada.

Recipients will be eligible for and encouraged to take advantage of resources offered through the Student Success Centre as well as Beat the Odds, a donor-supported internship program that facilitates professional mentorships, workshops, peer networks and more.

Adds Paul Chesser, BA 94, GrDip 97, vice-president of Advancement: "We are deeply grateful that the Joyce Family Foundation has chosen Concordia to steward this bursary program to further the aspirations and goals of our rural-student population." ■

# Academic trailblazer encourages next generation of Indigenous engineers

SANDRA EVOUGHLIAN

Ever since he was a graduate student, M.N.Srikanta Swamy knew he wanted to give back. The Gina Cody School of Engineering and Computer Science research professor recently fulfilled that desire with a gift to the Campaign for Concordia: Next-Gen Now.

The Dean M.N.S Swamy Engineering Entrance Scholarship Endowment for Indigenous Students will support an annual scholarship for first-year undergrads pursuing a bachelor's degree in engineering at the university.

Swamy, an Honorary Concordia Research Chair in Signal Processing, came to Canada from India in 1959 to pursue his master's and PhD degrees in electrical engineering at the University of Saskatchewan. While studying there, he noticed the lack of Indigenous students in the department — an observation that continued throughout his teaching career in mathematics and electrical engineering.

“I don't remember seeing Indigenous students in engineering, and if they were there, there would have been few,” says Swamy. “This was always in my mind, and I felt that if I had any funds to be able to create a scholarship, my priority would be to create one for Indigenous students.”

Swamy later moved on to Concordia, where he served as founding chair of the university's Department of Electrical Engineering from 1970 to 1977, then as dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science (now Gina Cody School) from 1977 to 1993.

## 'I THOUGHT I WOULD DO WHAT LITTLE I COULD TO HELP'

When he began learning about the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and the devastation caused by residential schools, he wanted to do his part.

“The scholarship is nothing compared to the problems that persist, but I thought I would do what little I could to help,” says Swamy, who was awarded a special Alumni Recognition Award earlier this year for his service and achievements.

His experience reflects reality: Indigenous people are underrepresented in the field compared to other professions. According to Engineers Canada, less than one per cent of all engineers in the country identified as Indigenous as of 2019.

Swamy, himself a recipient of a scholarship in his student days, understood first-hand the impact of financial support on students' abilities to achieve their goals. He hopes that the scholarship will not only help open doors for recipients, but also inspire others to enter the field.

“Even though it is only one award per year, if one student moves into engineering because of it, their peers might see this and be inspired to do so as well,” Swamy remarks.

“If we can share this idea that engineering is an interesting field, a useful field, then I hope we can encourage more Indigenous students.” ■



M.N.SRIKANTA SWAMY AT THE 2023 ALUMNI RECOGNITION AWARDS IN MAY

## Grad turned donor aims to impact her community of Kahnawake

IAN HARRISON, BCOMM 01

When the remains of a Catholic priest were exhumed last summer from the grounds of a church in Kahnawake, Quebec — more than two decades after the alleged child sexual abuser was interred there without the consent of the Mohawk community — it was a testament to the activism of people like Melissa Montour, BA 16.

The Kahnawake resident has long served as a legal liaison and organizer. Driven by a sense that governance on the First Nations reserve — located across the St. Lawrence River from Montreal — should follow Indigenous knowledge and the tenets of the Iroquois Confederacy, Montour describes her university education as a pathway to credibility.

“I’ve always been a person who puts my people first,” she says. “And I was always interested in politics, because it affects everything.”

“When I decided to enrol at Concordia, it was because even though I had worked in the community for years, I needed that piece of paper to prove that I belonged in certain spaces.”

As an undergraduate and single mother, Montour found a second home in what is now called the Otsenhákta Student Centre, an on-campus resource for First Nation, Inuit and Métis students.



MELISSA MONTOUR, BA 16

“They had an elder advisor, Morning Star, who was there when you needed to blow your stack,” Montour recalls. “Just somebody you could talk to, who understood what Indigenous students often encounter in the curriculum with regards to our history and our practices.”

Financial assistance, in the form of the Laura Tilson Memorial Bursary, helped, too.

Created by long-time Concordia staffer Cameron Tilson, BSc 82, and his wife, Wendy Morse-Tilson, in honour of the couple’s second child who passed away in 1994, the bursary was a welcome source of encouragement, says Montour.

“I had my own house and my son to take care of. Every little bit helps when you’re a student and need to pay your bills and put food on the table.”

### ‘I’M PROUD OF HOW WE STUCK TOGETHER’

The sacrifices Montour made as a student at Concordia recently inspired her to pay it forward and establish her own bursary for Indigenous single parents.

Serendipitously, the first recipient, also from Kahnawake, was the younger brother of her childhood best friend.

A current Master of Public Safety candidate at Wilfrid Laurier University, Montour says she now depends on skills she honed at Concordia.

“We had great professors who showed us how to think critically and build strong counterarguments,” Montour recalls. “It’s what I ended up being good at.”

A specialized graduate degree, she hopes, will further foster her ability to effect positive change in Kahnawake. The painful saga of Father Léon Lajoie, the aforementioned priest, still has her galvanized.

“I’m proud of how we were united and how we stuck together,” Montour says. “It wasn’t easy. When we won the plebiscite that decided the fate of his remains, it took me a while to register the outcome. It had been such a long and difficult process. But in the end, it was a huge victory for the victims and a huge step forward for our community to be able to heal.” ■



# Concordia's Golf Classic tournament raises record-breaking \$600,000

DAMON VAN DER LINDE, BA 08

Concordia's Golf Classic celebrated 20 years on the links by fundraising a record \$600,000 for student scholarships.

Some 150 business leaders, alumni, donors and friends of Concordia gathered on September 5 for the only fundraiser in Quebec that unites executives from Canada's nine major banks. The annual tournament and dinner has now raised more than \$7.6 million since its inception.

"As members of the business community, we have a role to play in ensuring the next generation is well-equipped to face the challenges of tomorrow's labour market," said Golf Classic honorary co-chair Louis Tanguay, BComm 75, LLD 18, at the event.

"We must continue our efforts because the needs are still present and more pressing. When we all come together to help, we make a difference and contribute to the prosperity of our communities."

To date, the Golf Classic has supported more than 1,700 undergraduate and graduate students who rely on financial aid for books, tuition fees and living expenses.

"Golf Classic awards allow students to focus on their education, while also affording them more time to pursue what they love or need to do," said President Graham Carr.



CONCORDIA'S GOLF CLASSIC IS THE ONLY FUNDRAISING EVENT IN QUEBEC TO HOST REPRESENTATIVES FROM ALL NINE MAJOR CANADIAN BANKS.

More than 200 athletes, for example, have received Golf Classic awards, benefiting from extra financial support while training to represent Concordia in competition across Canada and around the world.

"Whether it's in reputation or a sense of community pride, Concordia gains in innumerable ways from the triumphs and successes of our student athletes," said Carr.

Sara Parker, an undergraduate student in exercise science, and president of the university's flag football club, says that winning a Golf Classic award has allowed her to chase after her goals and help promote fellow women in athletics.

"The award has provided me with emotional and financial relief, due to my numerous engagements with school and sports. It has allowed me to focus on school, flag football and my clinical internship in athletic therapy without having to worry about the financial stress." ■

*View videos and read about recent gifts to the Campaign for Concordia at [concordia.ca/campaign](https://concordia.ca/campaign).*

## THANK YOU TO OUR 2023 GOLF CLASSIC VOLUNTEERS!

### Honorary co-chairs

**André Desmarais**, BComm 78, LLD 07, deputy chairman, Power Corporation of Canada

**Luigi Liberatore**, LLD 18, president, Luigi Liberatore Foundation

**Louis Tanguay**, BComm 75, LLD 18, corporate director

### Co-presidents

**Tony Aksa**, vice-president, Strategic Markets Development, National Bank

**Sophie Boucher**, vice-president, Commercial Banking, Laurentian Bank of Canada

**Michel Cantin**, vice-president, Development and Partnerships, Western Quebec Division, Desjardins Group

**Viviane Croux**, senior vice-president and Quebec head, BMO Commercial Bank Canada, BMO Bank of Montreal

**Charles Douville**, BComm 84, senior vice-president, regional head of Commercial Banking – Quebec Region, HSBC Bank Canada

**Philippe Langelier**, managing director, Quebec Corporate Client Group, RBC Royal Bank

**Maria Mangiocavallo**, BComm 86, GrDip 89, vice-president, Commercial Banking, Quebec Region, Scotiabank

**Isabelle Ménard**, head of Quebec and Atlantic, Commercial Banking District and Commercial National Accounts Quebec, TD Bank Group

**Demo Trifonopoulos**, BComm 85, vice-president and region head – Quebec, CIBC Commercial Banking

# Covered in success

LEARN ABOUT FOUR ALUMNI  
WHO PLAY KEY ROLES AT SUN LIFE

## WILL PELLOUX

**F**ew landmarks in downtown Montreal stand out quite like the Sun Life Building.

After the first of three construction phases, the grand structure was inaugurated in 1918 and, upon completion 15 years later, became the largest in terms of square footage anywhere in the British Empire.

Close to 2,000 Sun Life employees still work in the building today. Founded in Montreal in 1865, the financial-services company provides asset-management, wealth, insurance and health solutions across Canada, the United States, Asia, the United Kingdom and more. As Canada's third-largest insurance company, Sun Life assists one in five Canadians on an annual basis.

In 2023, Sun Life ranked first among insurance companies globally on an annual list of sustainable corporations published by Corporate Knights. Multiple sources frequently name the company as one of Canada's best places to work and a top employer for new graduates.

Now headquartered in Toronto, Sun Life employs more than 400 Concordia alumni and — like its namesake building — remains a prominent fixture in Montreal.



## JACQUES GOULET, BSc 87 President

With such an extensive reach, Sun Life has to keep constant tabs on disruptions in economic markets, social policies and health-care access, says Jacques Goulet, president of Sun Life Canada. The COVID-19 pandemic and climate change are two major challenges faced by the industry, he adds.

At the helm of Sun Life Canada since 2018, Goulet sees his role as a “steward of strategy and culture.” He makes sure the right people are in the right roles, develops employee talent and rallies the company around a shared vision.

Goulet's introduction to financial services began in high school.

“I was good at math, and one of my teachers suggested I become an actuary,” he recalls. “I didn't even know what that was!”

On the teacher's advice, Goulet searched for actuarial science programs — there weren't many back then, he notes — and came to a decision between Université Laval and Concordia. Though the former's French-language courses would have been easier on the Shawinigan, Quebec, native, Goulet was keen to learn English.

“It was a risk, but I immersed myself, made anglophone friends and, by the end of my studies, considered myself more or less fluent.”

Goulet also jumped at the opportunity to get hands-on experience through Concordia's Institute for Co-operative Education.

“The program was highly valuable,” he says. “It gave me the opportunity to reflect on whether I could see myself in this career long-term. I did four work terms through Co-op, and it reinforced that financial services was for me.”

With his bachelor's degree in actuarial science, Goulet joined Mercer, the global consulting firm. He travelled extensively between Paris, Switzerland and New York for 29 years.



The mentorship of Dean Connor, the former president and CEO of Sun Life, was critical to Goulet's professional trajectory. When Connor moved from Mercer to Sun Life, Goulet followed in 2018.

"I've only ever had two employers, and was hired by the same person each time!" he remarks, adding that his move to Sun Life was also motivated by the company's prestige in Quebec.

"It was very attractive to become the head of such a marquee brand in the city and the province," says Goulet. "Sun Life also aligns with what I consider to be the two most important things in people's lives: health and financial security. It's a noble duty to provide that kind of security to people during unpredictable times."

It's fitting that Goulet's career in assessing risk started at Concordia — a gamble that he can now say paid off.

"When I look back at my time as an undergraduate, it was the first point in my life that I stepped out of my comfort zone," he says. "Concordia gave me the fundamental skills to problem-solve in business, which has been my whole career."

### **PUJA CHAUBEY, BComm O1 Director, Finance**

While she describes herself as a "numbers girl," Puja Chaubey is also a people person — a combination that serves her well as she leads digital business and financial solutions at Sun Life.

In her role as finance director, Chaubey oversees a broad portfolio covering financial planning and analyses for several departments. She also manages inter-company client relationships for business groups across the Sun Life network.

It's a dynamic position that she says underscores what attracted her to the company in the first place.

"The dual nature of my role enables me to provide value while helping me grow as a professional and a person. It might sound cliché, but every day at Sun Life really is different."

Chaubey has worked a variety of positions in financial-risk analysis since she joined the company in 2017. With the rise in concerns about digital security, cybersecurity risk assessment was also added to her portfolio.

"Sun Life is always adjusting and adapting its technology investments in light of new information and a changing cyberthreat landscape," says Chaubey. "This keeps my job interesting and allows me to use my financial, accounting and strategy acumen to help the company meet its strategic objectives."

Financial problem-solving wasn't part of Chaubey's original plan. She entered Concordia with an eye on the sciences — biology, in particular — but soon found her niche in accounting.

Concordia made it easy for her to make the shift, she says, and the John Molson School of Business gave her a solid foundation.

Professors Mahesh Sharma and the late Fasil Nebebe were particularly impactful, she recalls.

"They were very good at making me feel interested in the subject and had the know-how to apply the theoretical skills I had learned in earlier classes."

Like many of her fellow alumni, Chaubey says the supportive community at Concordia — and the networks she built there — were a tremendous source of encouragement.

"There is a strong social component to university life," she says. "Concordia provided me with numerous opportunities to improve my collaboration and communication skills, ultimately helping to shape me into a better director."





**KARIM REFAAT, BEng 09**  
**Director of operations,**  
**Financial Operations**

After he decided to move from his native Egypt to Canada to pursue his engineering studies, Karim Refaat had a choice to make.

“Industrial engineering was the most attractive specialization to me,” he recalls. “But there weren’t many programs in Canada at that time. After narrowing it down, it was between Ryerson [now Toronto Metropolitan] University and Concordia. Concordia stood out.”

Refaat has since made Montreal his home and now works with advisors to set up contracts, issue payments and offer support to clients. In a broad sense, he consults data and liaises with analysts to efficiently drive operations forward.

The role is a culmination of leadership and consultancy positions Refaat has held over the years at Sun Life. He previously served as director of operations for the company’s contact centre, where he

led a team of hundreds to contract with businesses on a range of services, from pensions to retirement accounts.

The passion he feels for the job marks a far cry from his entry into operations – sales, where his career began after Concordia at a different financial-services company.

“I hated it,” Refaat recalls. “It’s a miracle that I lasted as long as I did in the position, which was four years. My strengths came into focus when I shifted into operations, where I could make decisions based on data and facts.”

After a transition period to consultancy work, Refaat landed a job as a senior consultant with Sun Life in 2016. He has steadily worked his way up since.

Refaat says he loves the challenge of making Sun Life’s vast network of operations run seamlessly. His current role is “a good bridge between the operational side and the engineering side,” and an ideal application of the skills he acquired at Concordia.

“I was never very studious,” Refaat admits. “My first two years at university were more general in terms of the coursework, but during my last two years I was able to take more specialized classes in engineering. My grades really improved because I was so interested in the subject.”

Refaat says he still draws from his Concordia experiences on a regular basis.

“The professors I had and the classes I took gave me the underlying principles of how to approach operations. Concordia made me the problem-solver and critical thinker I am today.”



**MARIE-CHANTAL CÔTÉ, BA 97**  
Senior vice-president,  
Group Benefits

As a vice-president of Group Benefits at Sun Life, Marie-Chantal Côté helps to ensure that millions of Canadians can tap into health-care solutions through their group or employer plans. It's a responsibility that comes with being purpose-driven, something she says her alma mater nurtured.

"When you feel an emotional attachment to a place, like I do to Concordia, you feel equipped and inspired to do more," Côté observes.

That attachment began in the Department of Journalism. Between classes, Côté worked as the sports editor at *The Link*, the student-run newspaper, an experience she says served her well after she joined Sun Life as a technology consultant in 1998.

"Journalism requires you to go deep, synthesize information and put forth a distinct perspective while being open to what others have to say," she notes. "There are a lot of transferable skills that prepared me for the broad set of roles I've held and where I am today.

"The thought-leadership in the department was impressive. I recall conversations about diversity, equity and inclusion when I was a student in the 1990s. Concordia was ahead of its time."

At Sun Life, Côté has since made inclusive and equitable health-care coverage a priority.

For example, she has helped oversee Sun Life's recent Family Building program, which offers its clients adoption and surrogacy benefits, the first among major insurance companies in Canada.

Facilitating access to mental-health care is another cause Côté takes seriously.

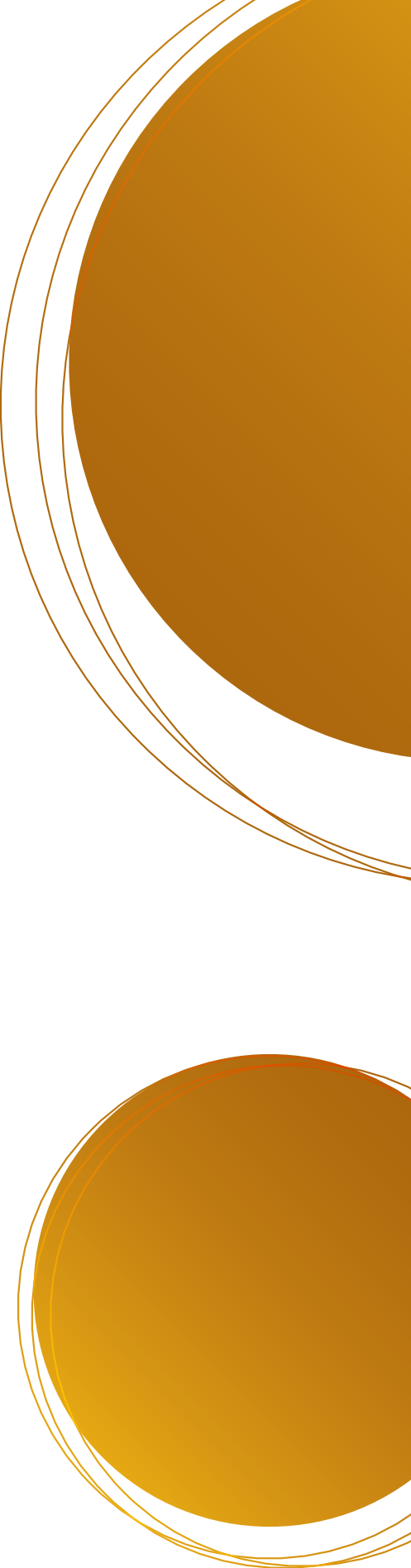
"During the COVID-19 pandemic, we found that people weren't using resources for mental health," she says. "The stigma around seeking help was so strong."

To help individuals receive access to mental-health care, Sun Life has put in place a Mental Health Coach solution that connects people with experts and resources.

While Côté knows there are no quick fixes, she is confident that she can do her part.

"I see a lot of desire among people to shape society and have a positive impact," she says. "People want to pursue meaningful goals. In my case, Concordia prepared me to be purpose-driven." ■

*In Good Company is a series on inspiring grads who work for corporations, non-profits or industries that employ a large number of Concordia alumni.*



# The good life



## EVERYONE WANTS TO LIVE HAPPILY. CAN SCIENCE HELP?



SAMANTHA RIDEOUT, GRDIP 10

When Gillian Leithman, BSc 00, MSc 05, PhD 16, was an undergraduate student in Concordia's Department of Psychology, she spent much of her time learning about mental illnesses such as depression and anxiety.

"That's really important material to study, because the more we know about it, the better we might be able to treat and help people who are suffering," she says. "But when I became acquainted with the positive-psychology movement, I found it exciting. We know a lot about illness; we don't know as much about health."

Developed in the 1990s, positive psychology examines the factors that help people do and feel well. Concordia

researchers and alumni are among those who are moving the field forward and encouraging others to apply its findings.

Leithman, now an adjunct professor in the Department of Management at the John Molson School of Business, teaches her students about cultivating happiness, among other crucial soft skills. She also leads a seminar called "The Art and Science of Happiness" through one of her training companies, Life Skills Toolbox.

"We should never discount life's difficulties, but if coping with them is our sole focus, that limits our vision of what life could be," she argues. "What about flourishing?"





“We should aim for a better balance between work and leisure at every age.”

- Gillian Leithman,  
BSc 00, MSc 05, PhD 16

#### CREATING A FOUNDATION FOR GROWTH

The first challenge in studying happiness is that it means different things to different people. In fact, it’s such a slippery word that positive psychologists tend to use other, more precise terms instead.

One of these concepts, subjective well-being (SWB), has three main components: high levels of pleasant emotions, low levels of negative emotions and overall satisfaction with life. Researchers use questionnaires to measure it.

“SWB is a bit meatier than happiness, partly because it leaves a place for negative emotions,” says Julie Hanck, BSc 04, who teaches in the psychology department at John Abbott College in the Montreal suburb of Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue. After receiving her bachelor’s from Concordia, Hanck earned a PhD in neuroscience from McGill University.

Another way of breaking down happiness into components is known as the PERMA model, developed by the positive-psychology pioneer Martin Seligman. Its name is an acronym that stands for Positive emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning and Accomplishment.

Like SWB, PERMA extends beyond pure pleasure-seeking. Staying up all night to comfort a crying baby may not necessarily evoke immediate positive emotions, for example, but it can hold profound significance and meaning for a parent. Both Hanck and Leithman find PERMA to be a useful framework.

“When I walk into a classroom, I’ll say, ‘Okay, write down 10 things that make you happy,’” Leithman says. “And then

we’ll see if people have listed something that speaks to each of the five categories. If not, that’s fine: That’s where you are. Maybe the exercise could help you think about which aspects of happiness you’re not currently tending to.”

No matter how we define happiness, it’s not entirely within our control, emphasizes Hanck.

Genetics play a role, as does our environment, including social systems. Some people, as a result, face a lot more stress and hardship than others.

“I don’t want to tell vulnerable people that they’re solely responsible for their own unhappiness,” says Hanck. “And I don’t want to oversell the interventions I teach, either, because they’re not always life-changing. I just want to empower people to better understand themselves and provide them with the direction they can take to grow.”

#### THE POWER OF POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Back in 1938, Harvard University scientists recruited hundreds of young men to take part in what is now known as the Harvard Study of Adult Development. The goal, unusual for the time, was “to help people live more contentedly and peacefully and well in body and mind through a better knowledge of how to use and enjoy all the good things the world has to offer them.”

Eighty-five years later, the project is still tracking the descendants of the original participants, making it an exceptionally long-running study. So far, it has consistently found that one factor impacts happiness more than any other: good relationships.

The influence of social interactions on well-being is a topic that also interests William Bukowski, a psychology professor and research chair in early adolescent development at Concordia. His work currently centres on children’s and teens’ experiences with peers.

“Everybody has a certain amount of stress in their life,” Bukowski says. “And some people have much more than others.”

Examples of childhood stressors could include transitioning into a new school year or getting bullied. “The question is, which factors minimize the negative effects of these experiences?” asks Bukowski.

The researcher and his collaborators have examined dimensions of peer friendship such as intimacy (how close you feel to a friend), security (how much confidence you have that you will remain friends no matter what) and companionship (how much time you spend together).

“It’s pretty clear that the factor that reduces the effects of bad experiences the most is security: believing that a friendship will continue,” he states.

For example, in a 2017 study of Montreal-based pre-teens, Bukowski and his co-authors concluded that secure friendships moderated the anxiety that comes with this transitional stage of life.

To adults eager to help young people benefit from these kinds of relationships, Bukowski suggests starting a discussion about choosing the kinds of friends they'd like to have — and being that kind of friend in return. Prioritizing loyalty and compatibility might be a good place to start, he adds.



“Everybody has a certain amount of stress in their life. Which factors minimize the negative effects of these experiences?”

- William Bukowski

#### THRIVING AT WORK

As adults, we typically spend around half of our waking hours working. It makes sense, then, that job satisfaction plays heavily into overall life satisfaction. Concordia graduate Jordan Ishak, BComm 07, aims to help improve both.

With a background in marketing and client services, Ishak found his way into the happiness field by accident.

“It all started when I was working for one of my former employers, a communications agency in Paris,” he explains. “I saw that there were expats scattered around who didn’t feel fully at home.”

Ishak volunteered to organize gatherings where foreign-born employees could mingle with each other and their native French colleagues. “They took off and turned out to be a nice thing for everyone,” he says.

Later, Ishak accepted a new client-services position at another Parisian company, Havas Health & You. This time, partly due to his prior event-organizing efforts, he also had an additional title: chief happiness officer (CHO).

More than 5,000 companies now have CHOs, according to LinkedIn, a figure that doesn’t account for titles such as director of well-being. It’s a trend that’s probably related to research linking happier workers to better retention, fewer sick days and higher productivity.

Taking on his current role was an eye-opening experience, says Ishak. Early on, he sat down with every employee for a confidential interview about what was and wasn’t going well for them.

“I quickly learned that although people appreciate fun events, other needs are usually more important,” he recounts. “Happiness often hinges on day-to-day interactions with your manager and your immediate team. For example, how do managers support their people? Do they give them the freedom to make decisions for themselves? Or do they micromanage them?”

Ishak soon plans to launch his own company and become “a full-time happiness man” providing training to businesses. His flagship course will be about becoming the type of leader that people want to work for. “It will cover gaining personal insight, developing practical management and coaching skills, putting your people at the heart of what you do and creating a supportive work environment that enables a highly productive team,” he explains.

To workers themselves, Ishak recommends doing some extra investigating during a job search.

“Zoom interviews are great, but if you can meet your potential manager and team face-to-face, that could help to give you a better idea of what the job will be like,” he says. “You could also reach out to people who’ve had the role that interests you and ask them questions about the company and its culture.”



“Happiness [at work] often hinges on day-to-day interactions with your manager and your immediate team.”

- Jordan Ishak, BComm 07

## THE THIRD ACT

How does our sense of well-being change as we transition from working life into retirement?

Getting older brings its fair share of challenges, but it can also bring perspective and resilience, says Gillian Leithman, whose research at Concordia focuses on aging and retirement.

“Just by virtue of having been on the planet for 60, 70 or 80 years, seniors tend to have more practice navigating difficult situations,” she notes.

Even so, it’s common to struggle after stepping away from full-time employment for good.

“So much of our identity is wrapped up in what we do for a living,” observes Leithman. “If you’ve been caught up in your career to the point where you’ve neglected other arenas of life — relationships, hobbies, interests — leaving it can be a really jolting experience.”

Leithman runs Rewire to Retire, a training and coaching business that helps people prepare for life after work. One of her tips is to reframe this stage: “Instead of focusing on what you’re retiring from, think about what you’re retiring to,” she says.

She also suggests planning to do more than just relaxing. Volunteering, working part-time or engaging in a passion project are all ways to positively direct energy and create a sense of meaning. Some seniors might even enjoy their job so much that staying on full-time would suit them best.

“Retirement becomes lopsided for a lot of people,” Leithman says. “The idea is that you worked and worked, and now you’re going to play. Arguably, we should aim for a better balance between work and leisure at every age.”

When it comes to relationships, older people tend to take a quality-over-quantity approach.

“For young adults, there’s often a focus on learning and developing skills and larger social networks for the future,” explains Leithman. “Then, starting around midlife, there’s a switch where being around people who contribute positively to your life becomes really important. Research has borne out that older people will frequently let their less significant relationships deplete and invest more in those they find the most positive and rewarding.”

## A PERPETUAL PURSUIT

Some evidence-based strategies for enhancing subjective well-being are suited to every stage of life. They include kind and generous behaviour, regular exercise, mindfulness and gratitude, the latter of which Julie Hanck has practised ever since she was a child.

“At first it was hard, but I’ve had that habit for so long now that it feels natural to me,” she says. “Whenever a challenge happens, I ask myself what I can be grateful for. In fact, I’m grateful just to be alive! I had a heart problem at one point and almost died. They literally had to stop my heart to reset it. I feel lucky to be here.”



“I want to empower people to better understand themselves.”

– Julie Hanck, BSc 04

Numerous studies consistently suggest that being in nature enhances subjective well-being. Leithman, for one, recently decided to move from the city to a wooded property to tap into this benefit. But even regular walks in your neighbourhood park can provide a mood boost, she says.

Hanck uses a similar approach. “When faced with a task I don’t like, such as correcting exams, I’ll take five minutes to look at the garden and appreciate its beauty,” she says. “And compared to, say, taking a break on the internet, that will fuel me a lot more.”

Although most happiness strategies sound simple in theory, it can be challenging to put them into practice. “Knowing about them is not half the battle,” says Hanck. “I know that going to the gym would be good for me, but I still don’t do it!”

Leithman doesn’t have the art of happiness down pat either. “I have a really meaningful career, and I feel grateful for it,” she says. “But integrating fun activities into my life, just for the pleasure of it, has been a challenge for me.”

Nobody has a perfectly happy life, she continues, not even the experts.

“Even if that happened for a moment in time, life is always changing. You might get married or divorced. You might have kids or change jobs or find yourself caring for aging relatives. Each of these changes would affect your emotions and life satisfaction in complex ways.”

According to Hanck, it’s helpful to think of happiness as an ongoing practice rather than a destination.

“I could be in a great mood one moment and then something could happen to wipe it out,” she says. “That’s life! Our role is to embrace the ups and downs — and keep practising.” ■



# Clearing the air

CONCORDIA RESEARCHERS AND ALUMNI ARE  
OUT TO IMPROVE EVERY BREATH WE TAKE

JORDAN WHITEHOUSE

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Twenty-two thousand.

That's the number of breaths the Canadian Lung Association estimates we take every day.

Most of the air we intake is made up of nitrogen or oxygen, but not all of it. The rest can consist of harmful gases and particles.

Take volatile organic compounds (VOCs), which are gases that can be emitted from a wide range of common household items like carpets, paints and even computers. Some VOCs can cause minor irritations like headaches — some have also been linked to cancers.

It's a similar story outdoors, where pollution from sources like diesel vehicles and wildfires can contribute to a hazardous cocktail of airborne chemicals. Some of these could include gases like carbon monoxide that interfere with oxygen delivery to organs, and aerosols like soot that make it hard to breathe.

Although Canada has some of the cleanest air in the world, 86 per cent of Canadians live in areas where air pollution exceeds World Health Organization guidelines.

It's estimated that air pollution in this country is annually linked to 15,300 premature deaths, 2.7 million asthma-symptom days and 35 million acute-respiratory symptom days. The cost of these health impacts is thought to be about \$120 billion per year.

One piece of good news, say experts, is that air quality has garnered more attention from government, industry and other stakeholders of late. The pandemic and the associated focus on indoor air quality is one reason. The wildfires that raged across Canada this past summer is another.

This renewed focus also means that the work of air-quality researchers and alumni from Concordia — one of the top centres of study in Canada on the issue — is getting increased attention and application in the real world.

It's still a tough battle to improve our air, they say, but progress is happening. The keys to making even further headway: more collaboration, more education and more hard work.



“One of the big issues is buildings themselves and the materials inside of them.” – Fariborz Haghighat

#### INTO THE LAB

Fariborz Haghighat, a researcher in the Department of Building, Civil and Environmental Engineering, has been on the air-quality front lines for decades.

In the wake of the September 11, 2001, attacks in New York City — an event that exposed the harmful effects of particulate matter and gas in the air, most noticeably at what became known as Ground Zero — Haghighat established his indoor air-quality lab at Concordia. It is now widely considered one of the top facilities of its kind in Canada.

Working closely with industry partners, Haghighat and his fellow researchers have two primary tasks: testing indoor materials to determine the source of contaminants, and developing technologies and methods to purify the air.

“One of the big issues here is the buildings themselves and the materials inside of them,” says Haghighat. “Look at your desk, the walls around you — they’re painted. Look at the carpet — it’s synthetic material. So many materials are synthetic, and if they’re brand new, they emit gases. If they’re old, they decompose and can also release gases.”

Other than VOCs, some of the more common contaminants found inside buildings include carbon monoxide brought in by air intakes, dust mites from carpets and fabrics, moulds and bacteria from damp areas and stagnant water, and ozone from photocopiers and electric motors.

Another big issue is what people bring inside with them, adds Haghighat.

Back in 2009, he co-authored a report for Public Works and Government Services Canada that included an in-depth analysis of the air quality in several office buildings.

No occupant had complained about the air inside these buildings, yet the researchers found that it was contaminated with a number of harmful gases. Their concentration levels were 10 times higher than what was found outside, says Haghighat.

The main culprit: personal-care items like deodorants and hair-care products.

Photocatalytic air purification systems — which use energy from light to clean the air — are one tool that more people are using to try to combat some of these contaminants. Haghighat and his colleagues have been looking at these too, with sobering results.

“Surprise, surprise, we find that most of them make the indoor air quality worse than before,” he says.

“For example, we’ve found that when a photocatalytic air-purification system is used to remove methanol alcohol from indoor air, it created formaldehyde, which is more poisonous than the original gas.”

In response, Haghighat and his team are currently working on developing new photocatalytic air-purification systems that don’t create hazardous byproducts.

It’s not easy work, he admits. “But we’ve done some preliminary studies that are reducing them. So, you’re always trying to remain optimistic.”

#### SMART MATERIALS

One researcher from Haghighat’s lab who provided quite a bit of optimism was Zahra Shayegan, PhD 21.

Now a postdoctoral researcher at the Institut national de la recherche scientifique, Shayegan developed a novel solution to help degrade indoor air contaminants as a Concordia student. She not only won the university’s Doctoral Prize in Engineering and Computer Science for her efforts, but a Governor General’s Academic Gold Medal as well.

“Imagine this: smart materials that reduce energy consumption and indoor pollutants. I think it’s going to happen soon.” – Zahra Shayegan, PhD 21





“The pandemic showed us that we need lots of different people from lots of different countries working on engineering solutions together.” – Lexuan Zhong, PhD 13



Thinking about two of the unique challenges to improving indoor air in a country like Canada helped set Shayegan on her research path.

“One is that as Canada continues to pursue its net-zero energy targets, buildings are becoming more airtight,” she notes. This reduces the ventilation that can move contaminants out of the building.

“The second challenge is that we can’t just open our windows in winter to improve ventilation and dilute the air.”

Part of Shayegan’s innovation came through the use of photocatalysts, which are used in a variety of applications, including eliminating pollutants in water. Photocatalysts work by accelerating specific chemical reactions like oxidation through the use of light.

The process doesn’t always work indoors, however. But, using the unique real-world conditions available in Haghighat’s lab, Shayegan developed photocatalysts that can remove indoor air pollutants in humid conditions and using a building’s own indoor light sources.

Materials like these still have to improve before they can be commercialized, says Shayegan. But she sees a near future where that is a definite possibility.

Right now, for instance, some windows are coated with smart materials that improve energy efficiency. “Why couldn’t that be done for improving indoor air, too?” she asks.

“Imagine this: The outside of the window is coated with a smart material to reduce energy consumption, and the inside of the window is coated with a material for the removal of indoor pollutants. I think it’s going to happen soon. We’re not far from it.”

#### ‘WE NEED COLLABORATION’

Lexuan Zhong, PhD 13, is another Concordia graduate who worked in Haghighat’s lab. Like Zahra Shayegan, Zhong was also interested in developing photocatalytic oxidation technologies, specifically ones that can remove VOCs from buildings. Her PhD thesis was also awarded a Governor General’s Academic Gold Medal.

She is now an associate professor of mechanical engineering at the University of Alberta, and has expanded her indoor focus to include other gaseous contaminants, as well as harmful particles and bioaerosols in the air.

Zhong does most of this work at U of A’s Built Environment Technology Lab, which she founded and still directs.

One bioaerosol that she has looked at quite extensively is SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. More specifically, she and her co-researchers have studied how the virus moves through ventilation systems and how these systems might be designed or adapted to control the virus.

For the past three years, Zhong has focused on exploring ultraviolet (UV) germicidal technology, which uses light to deactivate the DNA of viruses, as well as bacteria and other pathogens.

“This technology is already implemented in places like hospitals, but it’s not so commonly used in commercial and residential buildings,” says Zhong. “Part of my research work is focused on identifying the critical design elements that could expand its use.”

One of the big benefits of using UV technology like this is that it doesn’t use chemicals to disinfect the air. And because nothing is added, the process is relatively simple, inexpensive and requires minimal maintenance.

But this doesn’t mean that the technology is easy to develop at scale or that it’s easy to expand into commercial and residential markets. It’s critical for researchers working on air quality to partner with industry and other researchers, says Zhong.

“The pandemic showed us that we need lots of different people from lots of different countries working on engineering solutions together,” she adds. “These are not easy problems to solve, and so we need collaboration. That’s the only way we can make sure people beyond academia are aware of these problems and are protected.”





“Despite resistance to decarbonization, I don’t think we have a choice to act on this. If we continue to act, it will be for the benefit of all of us.” - Gregor Kos

## HYPERLOCAL AIR POLLUTION

Collaboration is at the heart of Gregor Kos’s research.

The Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry senior lecturer is interested in outdoor air quality, especially in urban areas.

“I’ve also always been interested in what’s happening out in the field, rather than in the lab,” says Kos. “And so that’s why now, for example, I’m working with the community of Kahnawake outside of Montreal. I’m talking to people, doing data acquisition and analysis and community science to understand their air quality and how it impacts their lives.”

Kos says that the two biggest concerns when it comes to outdoor air pollution right now are ozone (a key product of photochemical smog) and particulates, both of which are primarily produced by emissions from motor vehicles, solid-fuel burning and industry.

Wildfires can also be a significant source of pollutants, as they were across Canada this past summer.

Health Canada estimates the annual health impacts of wildfire smoke at \$5 billion to \$21 billion.

The silver lining, however, is that air pollution in Canada has been significantly declining since the 1970s.

According to the National Air Pollution Surveillance Program, lead concentrations in the air have decreased by 97 per cent, and sulphur dioxide levels by 96 per cent since 1970. Between 1970 and 2008, particulate matter decreased by more than 50 per cent.

But, as Kos notes, these macro numbers don’t tell the whole story. Certain communities and neighbourhoods can be impacted more than others.

“We’ve seen in past years that some streets might be quite badly affected by air pollution because of things like traffic and weather patterns, whereas just a few blocks away are showing much cleaner air,” he says. “This could make a big difference for someone deciding, for instance, if they want to jog on Sherbrooke Street in downtown Montreal, where there could be a lot of air pollution, versus just a few blocks away.”

These hyperlocal air pollution issues are Kos’s focus right now. To get a better understanding, he and his partners deploy several air-monitoring stations in specific areas of a community.

In the Mohawk Territory of Kahnawake, just south of Montreal, Kos has built and deployed about 20 monitoring stations with community members.

“They have been concerned about air-pollution levels for quite a while, and so our goal is to build this dense network of stations with them and then make that data available to the community so that they can decide what to do about it,” he says.

## THE SCIENCE ‘HAS TO BE COMMUNICATED PROPERLY’

Xianming Zhang is also going small in his pursuit to understand air pollutants. But rather than looking at the particular concerns of one community, he is taking a deep dive into the molecular level of thousands of chemicals we breathe in every day.

“There can be more than 10,000 chemicals in the air you breathe,” says Zhang, an assistant professor in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry. “My work is focusing on detecting and screening for this large number of chemicals in the complex mixture of our air and to determine what chemicals are of concern and what are their sources.”

“There can be more than 10,000 chemicals in the air you breathe.” - Xianming Zhang



Zhang also looks at specific groups of chemical compounds, most of which are used in various commercial products.

One example is the organophosphate flame retardants that are commonly found in furniture. Typically, when regulators assess the harmful effects of chemicals like these, they don't consider what is produced from chemical transformations in the atmosphere.

That's a problem, says Zhang.

In a 2023 study published in *One Earth*, Zhang and his collaborators found that the transformation product of an organophosphorus antioxidant is more stable in the environment and causes higher risk than well-known organophosphate flame retardants.

The researcher adds an important caveat about toxicity.

"Usually, when people hear that breathing in a certain chemical can be toxic, they get really concerned," he says. "But the toxic effect depends on the exposure — how much of the chemical can get into your body through different environmental pathways. Exposure and toxicity together tell you the final risk of the chemical, and that's what I'm also trying to study."

The World Health Organization and Health Canada publish details about the harmful exposure levels of various chemicals in its indoor and outdoor air-quality guidelines, Zhang observes.

As for the prospects of fewer harmful chemicals ending up in the atmosphere, he is cautiously optimistic.

"We're only going to see improvement if all of the different stakeholders are working together," he says. "The scientific evidence has to drive this, but it has to be communicated properly with policymakers as well as with industry actors that are producing some of these chemicals."

## A WAY FORWARD

Fariborz Haghighat says that another key to air-quality improvement is education.

"I honestly believe that in order to be able to buy a house or a building, people should be trained properly in how to use that building," he says.

It's not as strange as it sounds, he adds. Through Annex 35, an International Energy Agency initiative, Haghighat learned about how teachers in the city of Trondheim, Norway, were taught how to use a new school.

"They were able to provide a safe and healthy indoor environment for the children and themselves while reducing the building's energy consumption," he says. "They were asked to change their shoes and clothes in a room before entering the school's main building. They are trying to prevent contaminants from coming into the school from outside. We need that kind of thinking everywhere."

Gregor Kos says we need a similar type of thinking around decarbonization if we want to see continued improvements in outdoor air.

"The source of both CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and greenhouse gas emissions, as well as pollution, is to a large extent linked to fossil fuels and fossil-fuel combustion," he says. "My hope is that with the decarbonization of economic activity, of energy production, we will also see a considerable drop of toxic emissions and trace gases, but also particulates, and therefore an improvement in overall air quality."

One sign of hope could be the transition to electric vehicles (EVs). In a recent study out of the University of Southern California, researchers showed that as EV adoption increased within a given zip code, both local air-pollution levels and asthma-related emergency room visits dropped.

"Despite quite a bit of resistance to decarbonization, I don't think we have a choice to act on this," says Kos. "And if we continue to act, it will be for the benefit of all of us." ■





WOMEN AND  
LEADERSHIP  
BECOMES

# Women Who LEAD

## 'WHEREVER WE LOOK, THERE ARE WOMEN GRADUATES AT THE FOREFRONT'

IAN HARRISON, BCOMM 01

A program recently relaunched by Concordia's Alumni Engagement team aims to engage, elevate and foster affinity among women graduates of the university.

Named Women Who LEAD — LEAD stands for Learn, Empower, Aspire, Dare — the initiative marks the next chapter of what was previously known as Women and Leadership, a program established in 2016 to encourage alumnae to connect, share professional experiences and expertise.

"I'm very proud of how we were able — particularly through the COVID-19 pandemic — to unite members of the wider Concordia community to advance women's leadership through conferences, lectures, webinars and other special events," says Leisha LeCouvie, senior director of Alumni Engagement.

"The efforts of our enthusiastic volunteers and participants helped Concordia earn recognition as a place that encourages and promotes equity, diversity and inclusion, and provided our talented alumnae with a truly phenomenal array of ambassadors, role models, mentors and sponsors."

The relaunched program will be led by an advisory council whose chair, Christine Lengvari, BSc 72, helped shape the vision of what Women Who LEAD has become.

A major donor to the university, Lengvari, the president and CEO of Lengvari Financial, Inc., was named one of 50 women of influence in Canada's life-insurance industry in 2014.

In 2017, Lengvari had made a planned gift of \$1 million to support scholarships for female students in the Kenneth Woods Portfolio Management Program and to promote research at the PERFORM Centre at Concordia. She has since been honoured for her commitment to her alma mater with the Humberto Santos Award of Merit and the Benoit Pelland Distinguished Service Award.

"I think it's necessary to promote women and to encourage women to be involved," Lengvari remarked when her gift was announced. "To be able to give back to the university now — and into the future — is energizing."

### A GLOBAL COMMUNITY OF 116,000

"This is much more than a rebrand," LeCouvie notes. "This is an opportunity for us to reset and re-evaluate how best to serve and engage with a huge cohort of diverse graduates who are extremely motivated and driven to effect change."

"Wherever we look — across professions and society as a whole — there are women graduates of Concordia at the forefront. And I think our entire community should take pride in that fact."

Supporting the leaders of tomorrow is at the heart of the program and its outreach initiatives, explains Sylvia Otvos, an Alumni Engagement officer with University Advancement.

"That mission is also being fuelled by our Women Who LEAD Student Bursary fund, which has been generously supported by a group of dedicated volunteers and staff members," she says. "The idea for the fund was inspired by the stories and experiences of our incredible alumnae and women students, and was created to honour these trailblazers, past, present and future."

"Our donors have given close to \$43,000 in total so far, and our Women Who LEAD Shuffle team raises funds for the bursary every year. The award offers financial assistance to deserving students whose performance inside and outside of the classroom shows the kind of promise embodied by the program's ambassadors and mentors."

### 'NO SHORTAGE OF FIRSTS TO CHAMPION'

A series of webinars served as a de facto launch for Women Who LEAD earlier this year.

On March 23, stories of women in leadership from around the world featured panellists Maria Abi-Habib, BA 06, an investigative correspondent based in Mexico City, tech entrepreneur Fay Arjomandi, BEng 98, design director Ginette Caron, BFA 74, government delegate Isabelle Dessureault, MBA 99, and news anchor Maya Johnson, BA 06.

"More than 350 people registered to attend the webinar, making it one of our most successful to date," says Otvos. "We've since hosted others on everything from how to harness the power of storytelling to cultivating better negotiating skills."

WOMEN WHO LEAD AMBASSADOR **CHRISTINE LENGVARI**, BSC 72, FAR RIGHT, AT A WOMEN IN POLITICS EVENT AT CONCORDIA IN 2017





"WE NEED TO MAKE ROOM FOR DIFFERENT TYPES OF LEADERSHIP," SAYS LISA WHITE, BA 12, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CONCORDIA'S EQUITY OFFICE.

More such Women Who LEAD events are planned for the imminent future, adds Otvos. The goal is to strengthen networks in places like Toronto, New York and London, United Kingdom, among others, and complement in-person events — whether in Montreal or elsewhere — with a regular slate of on-campus and online initiatives.

A well-attended panel event held on October 24 on Sir George Williams Campus served as a good example of the program's reach and potential.

"Women Who LEAD: Creating winning teams on and off the playing field" featured Julie Chu, former Winter Olympian and head coach of Concordia Stingers women's hockey, Tenicha Gittens, head coach of Concordia Stingers women's basketball, Katrina Monton, BA 17, organizational psychologist and a former member of Canada's women's water polo team, and Emmy Fecteau, undergraduate student and member of the Stingers women's hockey team.

Moderated by Jessica Rusnak, BA 10, a sports journalist for CBC Montreal, the panel illustrated that success is about a lot more than gold medals and national championships.

Gittens, one of the first Black women to hold a leadership position in U Sports in Canada, has personified the values of Women Who LEAD ever since she assumed her coaching duties at Concordia in 2015.

"From faculty deans to Board of Governors chairs and administrators, women have led Concordia since its inception."

"Necessary to promote women and to encourage women to be involved"

"Representation absolutely matters," Gittens told the CBC in 2020. "I was put in a position where I could hire who I want to. And so I'm going to do my best to give Black people an opportunity. Because they don't get those opportunities."

### 'A CULTURE OF GIVING BACK'

"What we want to do with Women Who LEAD is offer a combination of professional development via webinars and in-person events that foster connection, mentoring via the university's successful CU Connect program, and opportunities to engage in philanthropy and build a culture of giving back," says LeCouvie.

The timing for the platform's rebranding is auspicious, she adds.

"As we start to execute on plans to celebrate Concordia's 50th anniversary next year, it's inevitable that the many milestones realized by our women builders will be proudly underscored.

"There is no shortage of achievements — and firsts — to single out and champion," LeCouvie remarks. "From faculty deans to Board of Governors chairs and administrators, women have led Concordia since its inception."

There are currently 19 women on Concordia's executive team of 29, and three of the university's four faculty deans are women, she points out.

"From our provost, Anne Whitelaw [BFA 87, GrDip 92, PhD 96], to Dominique Bérubé, our vice-president of Research and Graduate Studies, these leaders are paving the way to a brighter future for Concordia."





“Importantly, that future is also being shaped by the efforts of women like Manon Tremblay [BA 03], our senior director of Indigenous Directions, and Angélique Willkie, chair of our President’s Task Force on Anti-Black Racism.”

As a platform to encourage connection, civic engagement and philanthropy, Women Who LEAD can also count on a long-established track record at Concordia of accomplished women researchers as well as major donors.

The former includes Dajana Vuckovic, Concordia Research Chair in Clinical Metabolomics and Biomarkers, who was recently granted \$500,000 by the Government of Canada to improve how certain compounds are measured in the body.

Doctoral candidate Qi Feng recently won a major Quebec prize for her research on microplastic pollution.

What’s more, three faculty members were named to the Royal Society of Canada this year: Nadia Myre, MFA 02, Department of Studio Arts; Angélique Willkie, Department of Contemporary Dance; and Mireille Paquet, Department of Political Science.

### ‘A TREMENDOUS LEGACY’

Women donors who have recently bolstered the Campaign for Concordia include Miriam Roland, LLD 18, whose \$1-million gift, announced this past January, will fund sustainability pilot projects led jointly by Concordia’s Next-Generation Cities Institute and Ben-Gurion University’s Goldman Sonnenfeldt School for Sustainability and Climate Change.

Announced in May 2022, a \$1-million gift made by Sandra Chartrand, BA 85, LLD 23, and her husband Alain Bouchard, LLD 23, advanced projects led by the Concordia Arts in Health Centre and Concordia’s Centre for the Arts in Human Development.

“A new generation of dynamic, progressive alumnae who are breaking down barriers”

These stories — and the stories of alumnae like Samira Nasr, BA 93, the first Black editor to lead *Harper’s BAZAAR*, and Mandy Gull-Masty, BA 06, BA 08, Grand Chief of Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee — will greatly contribute to the development and success of Women Who LEAD.

“We have a tremendous legacy to draw from, and a new generation of dynamic, progressive alumnae who are breaking down barriers,” says LeCouvie.

“We’re really excited to show what Women Who LEAD can accomplish for the Concordia community.” ■

## MEET 6 WOMEN WHO LEAD

As part of the promotional launch for Women Who LEAD, testimonials and words of wisdom from six standout alumnae leaders were recorded for Concordia’s social-media platforms (see @ConcordiaAlumni).

### **Farah Ahmad, MBA 07, president, Life Sciences**

“We always hear about confidence, but I think an even more important quality [for leadership] is empathy.”

### **Ruma Ahmed, BEng 22, analyst, CHUM (Centre hospitalier de l’Université de Montréal)**

“Be open-minded and be curious. Trust in your own abilities and embrace risks and challenges, no matter what.”

### **Rana Ghorayeb, BA 97, MEng 01, president and chief executive officer, Otera Capital**

“I think it’s important to listen to the people around you. It’s extremely important to be curious and to always want to learn.”

### **Stacey Masson, BA 00, vice-president, Marketing and Communications, The YMCAs of Quebec**

“The qualities of a great leader are pretty simple. You need to have vision, optimism and strong communication skills.”

### **Salomé Villeneuve, BFA 20, filmmaker**

“Trust your instincts and follow your intuition, even if it doesn’t seem rational. Be passionate and willing to fail.”

### **Lisa White, BA 12, executive director, Equity Office, Concordia**

“We need to reflect on what we think leadership is, how gendered those notions are, and then make room for different types of leadership. Developing a skill set that’s robust and multifaceted is of benefit to everyone.”

To learn more about Women Who LEAD, watch our video at [concordia.ca/alumni/women](https://concordia.ca/alumni/women).

To support the Women Who LEAD Student Bursary fund, visit [concordia.ca/fundone/womenwholead](https://concordia.ca/fundone/womenwholead).



CONCORDIA'S  
**TOP  
FIFTY**  
**UNDER**  
**FIFTY**  
SHAPING  
TOMORROW

**Celebrating #CUalumni  
leading the way in 2023**

Concordia alumni continue to make significant contributions across diverse industries worldwide. Our 50 under 50 honourees for 2023 stand out for their determination, talent and shared aspiration to create a positive impact on society.

Learn more about their journeys and how Concordia influenced their success by reading their stories and watching the video interviews at: [concordia.ca/alumni/50under50](https://concordia.ca/alumni/50under50) or [concordia.ca/palmares50](https://concordia.ca/palmares50).

# MEDIA AND CULTURE

Artists, designers, thinkers and storytellers



**Lorraine Carpenter, BA 02**

Editor-in-chief, *Cult MTL*



**Mariloup Wolfe, BFA 03**

Actor and director



**Maya Johnson, BA 06**

News anchor, CTV News Montreal



**Lauren Kisilevsky, BA 99**

Executive vice-president, Hello Sunshine



**Patrick Daniel, BEng 99**

Managing partner, Blue Camel Design LLC



**Patrick Kwok-Choon, BA 06**

Actor



**Vincent Leclerc, BCompSc 03**

Partner, PixMob



**Sonia Bonspille Boileau, BFA 06**

Film director



**Emilie Goulet, BFA 01**

CG animator, Pixar Animation Studios



**John Christou, BA 01, MBA 17**

Director of production and operations, English Program, National Film Board of Canada



**Stefanie Bitton, BComm 02**

Co-owner and executive producer, TONIC DNA



**Jean-Francois Bélisle, BFA 04, MA 07**

Director and CEO, National Gallery of Canada



**Peter Knegt, MA 08**

Journalist, producer and host, CBC

“When I left Concordia, few women were working as directors in Quebec. My background at the Mel Hoppenheim School of Cinema provided me with the credibility and qualifications I needed to make my pitch.”

- Mariloup Wolfe, BFA 03

# NON-PROFIT, PUBLIC SECTOR AND LEGAL

Civic leaders, advocates, lawyers



**Holly Wagg, MA 04**

Partner and CEO, Good Works



**Ibrahim Haddad, PhD 06**

Vice-president, Strategic Programs (AI and Data),  
The Linux Foundation



**Julianna Fox, MBA 14**

Chief ethics and compliance officer, and general  
counsel, Global Legal Operations, WSP



**Marvin Mikhail, BComm 02**

Vice-president and senior managing counsel,  
Mastercard



**Zoe Salzman, BA 03**

Partner, Emery Celli Brinckerhoff Abady Ward and  
Maazel LLP



**Maya Toussaint, BA 05**

Diversity and inclusion champion



**Chantal Beaudoin, BComm 05**

Partner, head of ESG, Knight Frank Investment  
Management

“Representing people who have suffered an incredible injustice comes with challenges. It’s a weighty responsibility. At the same time, that’s exactly why it’s so rewarding.”

- **Zoe Salzman, BA 03**

“My work is part of the effort to improve employee experiences. Ultimately, I want to make positive impacts wherever I go.”

- **Maya Toussaint, BA 05**



# FINANCE AND CORPORATE LEADERSHIP

Executives, investors and advisors



**Aviva Klein, BComm 97**

Vice-president, Digital payments, Cyber and Intelligence, Mastercard



**Catherine Konidas, MBA 02**

Chief administrative officer, Altasciences



**Julia Cyboran, BA 03**

Vice-president, Marketing, North America, Valtech



**Maria-José Perea, BEng 02**

Finance, insurance and technology leader



**Arlin Markowitz, BA 03**

Executive vice-president, Urban Retail Team, CBRE



**Duc Huy Tran, MBA 04**

Chief commercial officer, Dirox Group, and CEO, Dirox USA



**Kathryn Kitchen, MA 07**

Vice-president, Human Resources, Platforms and Technology, TD



**Brian Leland, BComm 00**

Senior vice-president, Residential Underwriting, Home Trust Company



**Eric Bouchard, MBA 05**

Chief financial officer, Nestlé Health Science



**Marco Romani, BComm 97, GrDip 01**

Chief financial officer, Voysis



**Vincent Giove, BA 07**

Co-owner, vice-president and chief strategy officer, Rustica Foods



**Jennifer Hodgson, BA 99**

CEO, Solus Trust



**Omar Syed, MA 99**

Chief investment officer, Bahrain Mumtalakat Holding Company



**Rachael Golembuski, BComm 04**

Chief financial officer, Long View Systems



**Nodjame Fouad, BA 01**

Chair and CEO, Irish Distillers



**Tara O'Reilly, BComm 04, MBA 11**

Executive director, Commercial Operations, and interim president and general manager, Roche Diagnostics Canada



**Adel Haddadin, BA 03**

Managing director, Financial Advisory, Midas Advisory

“Concordia taught me how to think critically: how to assess situations, evaluate them and focus on prioritizing the most important elements. This prepared me to be a leader in the business world.”

- Nodjame Fouad, BA 01

# INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Disruptors, makers, founders and tech gurus



**Rabia T. Khan, GrCert 10, MBA 13**

Founder and CEO, Serna Bio



**Danielle Nguyen, BEng 04**

Site head, Haleon



**Behnood Gholami, MSc 05**

Co-founder and CEO, Autonomous Healthcare



**Jarred Knecht, BComm 07, MBA 11**

President, Promark Electronics



**David Li, BComm 02**

Co-founder and chief product officer,  
Wrk Technologies Inc.



**Jeffrey Scott Latchman, BEng 05**

Senior solutions specialist, Bell



**Michael Gozzo, BEng 06, MBA 12**

Chief product and technology officer, Ada



**Patrick Sartore, BSc 96**

President, Liminal BioSciences



**Paul Ortchanian, BSc 99, GrCert 03**

President, CEO and founder, Bain Public



**Farah Ahmad, MBA 07**

President, Life Sciences, Press Ganey



**Roberto Lara, BSc 03**

Vice-president, Digital Transformation and Analytics,  
Precision Medicine Group



**Cherif Habib, BCompSc 03**

Co-founder and CEO, Dialogue



**Bijan Bolouri, BEng 08**

Co-founder and president, b.cycle

“Like any creator, I’m proud of seeing something I brought to life in use and making a difference. Once you get it right, it’s magical.”

- David Li, BComm 02

Read full profiles and view video interviews with this year's cohort at [concordia.ca/alumni/50under50](https://concordia.ca/alumni/50under50) or [concordia.ca/palmares50](https://concordia.ca/palmares50).

## Learning Toolkit+ commemorates 20 years of success

Concordia-based project provides foundational skills for students across five continents



MAYA LACH-AIDELBAUM, BA 21

Learning ToolKit+ (LTK), a Concordia-based project housed in the Centre for the Study of Learning and Performance (CSLP), commemorated 20 years of success at a special event on August 31.

First created to improve English literacy among children in the province

of Quebec, LTK has since developed four more tools to improve a range of foundational educational skills, from math to information literacy.

The program has also expanded to support students and teachers in North America, Australia, Europe, Africa and Asia.

“The success of the CSLP and the projects coming out of and associated with the Learning Toolkit have really been at the vanguard of our success as a social science and humanities-oriented university,” said President Graham Carr at the celebration.

LTK has received more than \$20 million in research and development grants from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), the Fonds de recherche du Québec – Société et culture (FRQSC) and the Max Bell Foundation, among many others.

More recently, through investment from the SSHRC Partnership and Global Partnership for Education – Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (GPE-KIX) programs, LTK has investigated how to impact students in the Global South. In 2017, the CSLP was awarded the UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize for LTK’s successful implementation in Kenya.

The August 31 event also provided an opportunity to thank Philip Abrami for his lengthy tenure at the helm of LTK and to welcome Robert Cassidy, former director of the Centre for Teaching and Learning, to the role of project lead.

Observed Abrami, founder of the CSLP and a Department of Education professor emeritus and honorary research chair: “Learning ToolKit+ promotes Concordia as an international leader in cutting-edge education for the real world.” ■

## University of the Streets Café marks 20 years of neighbourhood conversations

Popular series launches engaging anniversary season to celebrate

ELANA WRIGHT, BA 93, GRDIP 97

A dedication to accessibility and civic collaboration was strengthened two decades ago when Concordia organized a range of neighbourhood events under the banner of University of the Streets Café.

The series has since presented more than 400 bilingual and spirited public conversations about a range of topics of local, national and global concern.

Alexandre Megelas, MA 14, headed University of the Streets Café for the Office of Community Engagement for more than five years.

“I have great memories of when we were focusing on neighbourhood mobilization,” recalls Megelas, now a manager with the Office of



the Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies.

“During one conversation, Rahul Varma, from the Teesri Duniya Theatre Company, denounced the lack of recognition given to BIPOC-led arts. It was a sobering exchange that led to a collective critique of institutionalized

culture in Quebec, and how it controls whose voices are recognized and represented in communities.”

To mark the 20th anniversary of University of the Streets Café, its current season will focus on the importance of civil discourse in nourishing democracy.

“Public conversations which bring neighbours, academics, activists and artists together are more important than ever,” says Susan Edey, MA 12, senior director of Community Engagement and Social Impact.

“Rather than staying isolated, we hope that this series can create connections that encourage dialogue, foster understanding and inspire positive social change.” ■



# She understands Blue Mountain



Marion Munday  
is the 2022-23  
winner of the  
Department of  
English Creative  
Writing Award  
in Fiction

*The following is excerpted from a longer work.*

My daughter drove away in my milk-truck when she was seventeen. I was playing my guitar in the parking lot outside of her swim meet. I couldn't come in because I'd been banned from entering the pool without shoes. I'm not sure why she chose that day to leave. I'd started a traffic jam by standing in a parking spot and cars were rolling down their windows to shout at me. She walked right up and unclipped the keys from my belt-loop. She didn't say a word when she left, but then again, she hadn't been speaking much to me for the past couple of years.

I didn't have my truck for the next year or so. People liked that I delivered milk in glass bottles and played my banjo or guitar on their porches. I made money that way. I didn't try to find her that year. I ran out of money and played only for myself and the coyotes to hear. I knew she would find me if she wanted to. And she did, she wrote to me a year later, simply where she was and that she was well. Then one day, she was pregnant. Then later, she gave birth. Then a week ago, she was coming.

"When did this happen?" my daughter's talking about the house. The mound of black in the middle. The ash around the edge that blows and sprinkles all over the girl's face so that she becomes freckled.

"Oh, months ago now," I say, pulling down the sleeves of my flannel.

"It looks like a grave," she says, not looking at me.

My daughter was a girl with her back turned. Always staring at some far-off point like she was waiting for a hand to claw itself up from the earth or a dolphin to jump up from the waves. She was concentrated and dismissive. I would come home with a case-full of coins and box of mint cookies with so many stories to tell and she would sit at the table, chewing her apple down to the core until it was finished.



The barn is one big room with a firepit in the middle and a grate over it with a kettle. The girl hugs the rocking horse and follows me around. I place a cast iron pot in her little fingers and she nearly collapses under the weight of it.

“We’re going to make jam,” I bend down. “Do you wanna hear some music, young one” I tap my spoon on her pot; “clang clang, rattle-bang-bang!” The girl laughs and I look over at her mother, digging for a coat in her suitcase.  
“Look! She likes music! She’ll be singing soon enough,” I shout.

The girl is curious when I pull out my violin. I open the case and her eyes flash gold like they’re reflecting a treasure inside. I show her how to rub the bow with rosin and she holds the piece of amber to her eye. I drag the bow along the A string.

The first time I heard the sound of a violin it was coming from an open window. It was a screeching, ugly sound and then it was beautiful. I love music like that, music bent as branches and twisted as brambles. I liked the violin and then the fiddle and then I liked the guitar. I liked everything with strings but nothing electric. I liked the softness of the strings on my fingers and the way the notes brightened when I took a pick to them.

I hear the girl’s voice in my head now. It sounds like a pebble dropped into a clear pond. She’s asking me something about the mountain, what’s on Blue Mountain? As if at every peak a lamb is perched, waiting to be fed.

Yonder stands Blue Mountain. I sing one of my songs to her and her pupils go big. Yonder stands Blue Mountain.

This girl is nothing like my daughter, no, this girl isn’t interested in other people. She’ll be happy out here in the woods, striking flint against steel. She’ll be satisfied just by watching the sky change color and tracing the patterns of the stars in the night sky. She’ll like to see her breath in the winter air and train a dog to walk beside her without a leash.

I pour three jars of blueberry jam onto a pot on the fire and let the smoke rise up through the hole in the ceiling. The sun is setting and little halos of light pattern the walls. The smell is sweet and then a note of sour and I remember it wasn’t jam in those jars but wine.

“Are you still drinking?” my daughter asks. She wraps the girl in a blue puffer coat with snowflakes on it.

I shake my head and look up to the ceiling, “Time to light some candles, the sun’s setting earlier and earlier,” I say, “You should see it in here at night it’s beautiful, nothing like it,” I like my candlesticks long and skinny, sticking out of green wine bottles.

I place one in front of them and hold a match to it.

“Jesus Christ,” she mutters.

“Tomorrow we can hike up the mountain,” I say, “Like old times,”

I missed her up here. I missed both of them even though I hadn’t known the girl before.

There’s a bruise on my daughter’s cheek that I didn’t notice and I know I should ask her why she decided to come. If I ask her why she’s here, I’m afraid she’ll leave again. My daughter makes it hard for you to speak to her, maybe that’s why the girl can’t talk yet. ■

*Marion Munday is a writer from Toronto. She is currently pursuing her Bachelor of Arts in creative writing at Concordia.*

## Graphic novels, memoirs, poetry and other new works by Concordia alumni



IAN HARRISON,  
B COMM 01

**We Meant Well** (ECW Press, 2023, \$24.95) by **Erum Shazia Hasan**, MA 06, a sustainable-development consultant, tells the story of an aid worker at a charitable orphanage faced with a terrible predicament when her former protégé, the daughter of a village chief, accuses a male colleague at the orphanage of assault. The novel was longlisted for the 2023 Scotiabank Giller Prize.

**Buster: A Life in Pictures** (Knockabout Media, 2023, \$25.99), a graphic novel by **Ryan Barnett**, MA 13,

and Matthew Tavares, chronicles the adventures — and misadventures — of Buster Keaton’s life and career and how the legendary filmmaker and silent-film star influenced everyone from Dalí to Disney.

In **Traveling the Old Ski Tracks of New England** (University of Massachusetts Press, 2022, \$24.95), **E. John Allen**, BA 65, tells of popular and lesser-known destinations that have contributed to the region’s landscape and ski culture.

Psychological thriller **The Last Unsuitable Man** (Signature Editions, 2022, \$17.95), by **Louise Carson**,

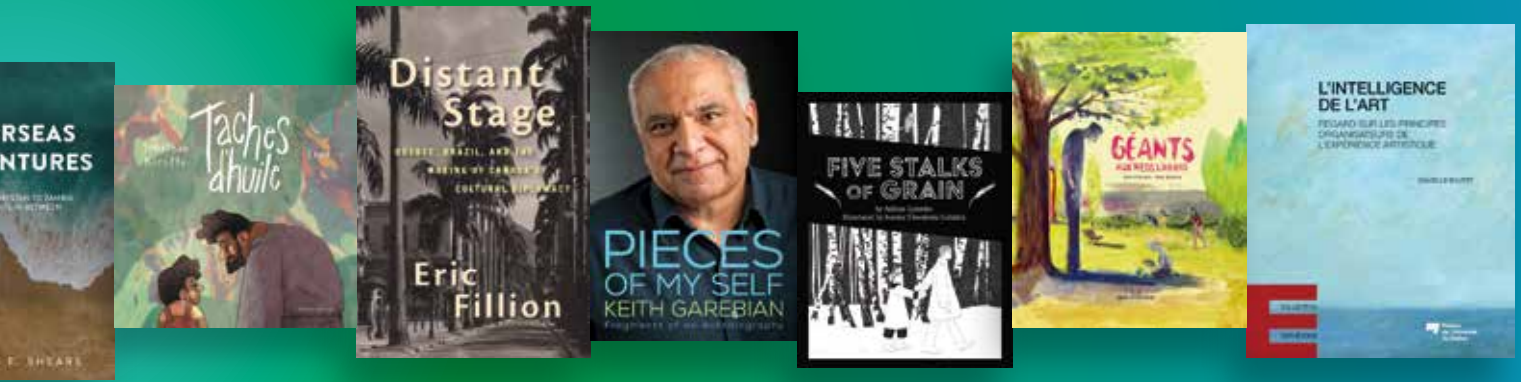
BFA 79, follows a mystery writer whose vacation on British Columbia’s Sunshine Coast takes a strange turn when objects begin to disappear and a woman is found murdered.

**Shirley Shoub**, BA 82, wrote and illustrated **Skipper’s Stories** and **Skipper’s Stories: Almost Twins** (Oxygen Publishing, 2022 and 2023, \$16.50 each), which chronicle the adventures of a beagle who yearns for love and acceptance among his adoptive family.

**Chiara Laricchiuta**, MA 09, wrote **Recollections of My Soul** (AOS Publishing, 2023, \$14.95), an intimate

collection of poetry largely focused on how personal hardships can impact and shape who we become over time.

**Overseas Adventures**, a self-published memoir by **Arthur Shears**, MA 78, formerly of UNESCO and the International Labour Organization, chronicles the author’s experiences in 16 countries as an international-development worker. Full of anecdotes, humour and photographs, the book spans five decades, from Shears’s first assignment as a Canadian University Service Overseas volunteer in 1971 to a role as a consultant in Malawi in 2021.



**Taches d'huile** (Québec Amérique, 2023, \$12.99) is the latest storybook from **Jonathan Bécotte**, BA 20, a multi-award-nominated writer who previously won Quebec's Prix Cécile-Gagnon for his first children's book, *Souffler dans la cassette*. Illustrated by Enzo Lord-Mariano, *Taches d'huile* narrates a sensitive and artistic boy's attempts to relate to his father, a car mechanic.

**Distant Stage: Quebec, Brazil, and the Making of Canada's Cultural Diplomacy** (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2022, \$39.95), by **Eric Fillion**, MA 12, PhD 19, examines the neglected history of relations

between Canada and Brazil, as well as the role played by francophone artists, intellectuals and diplomats in Canada's pursuit of an international identity.

In **Pieces of My Self: Fragments for an Autobiography** (Guernica Editions, 2023, \$25), **Keith Garebian**, MA 71, surveys his conflicted, multicultural journey from India to Canada and his reinvention as a critic, poet and editor who has come to accept life's joys and sorrows.

**Five Stalks of Grain** (University of Calgary Press, 2022, \$28.99), by **Ivanka**

**Theodosia Galadza**, BFA 15, is a powerful graphic novel about the Holodomor, the man-made famine that killed millions of people in Soviet Ukraine in 1932-33.

**Mark McGuire**, PhD 13, co-wrote a graphic novel with Alain Chevarier, **Géants aux pieds d'argile** (Moelle Graphik, 2022, \$45), that explores the implications of new research on intergenerational trauma, as well as attitudes about masculinity and fatherhood. The book, McGuire's first, was a finalist for French-language comic book of the year by the Festival Québec BD and selected for "Shoot the Book!" by a jury of

film producers at the 2023 Angoulême International Comic Arts Festival in France.

A new book by **Danielle Boutet**, MFA 00, **L'intelligence de l'art: Regard sur les principes organisateurs de l'expérience artistique** (Presses de l'Université du Québec, 2023, \$36), examines the creative psyche of the artist, as well as the participatory psyche of the observer. As a result, Boutet also profoundly underscores the vital human need for significance and to feel a sense of connection with others and the world at large. ■





CONCORDIA'S 2023 ARA RECIPIENTS, FROM LEFT: **CHRISTINE LENGVARI**, BSc 72; **M.N.S. SWAMY**; **CHRISTIAN BILODEAU**; **SKAWENNATI**, BFA 92, GRDIP 96 (FOR **JASON EDWARD LEWIS**); **KATRINA MONTON**, BA 17; **RAWANE SOBOH**; **SELENA MEZHER**, BEng 23; **DURAICHELVAN RAJU**; **ROBERT FRANCES**, BComm 87, MBA 91; **JENNISON ASUNCION**, BA 97, MA 01; **PAUL KARWATSKY**, BA 04; **AUTUMN GODWIN**, BA 21.

Concordia's **31st Alumni Recognition Awards** (ARA) ceremony — an annual celebration of students, staff and alumni — was held on May 30 at Maison Alcan in Montreal. Presented by the Concordia University Alumni Association (CUAA), and emceed by **Sudha Krishnan**, BA 99, host of CBC Montreal *News at 11*, with remarks from President **Graham Carr** and **Linda Donnini**, BSc 91, immediate past-president of the CUAA, the event honoured a dozen notable Concordians: **1**

**Christine Lengvari**, BSc 72  
Humberto Santos Award of Merit and Service

**Katrina Monton**, BA 17  
John F. Lemieux Young Alumni Medal

**M.N.S. Swamy**  
Honorary Life Membership Award

**Jennison Asuncion**  
BA 97, MA 01  
Benoît Pelland Alumnus of the Year Award

**Paul Karwatsky**, BA 04  
Benoît Pelland Alumnus of the Year Award

**Robert Frances**  
BComm 87, MBA 91  
MBA Alumnus of the Year

**Christian Bilodeau**  
Outstanding Staff and Faculty Award

**Jason Edward Lewis**  
Outstanding Staff and Faculty Award

**Selena Mezher**, BEng 23  
Outstanding Student Leader Award

**Duraichelvan Raju**  
Doctoral candidate  
Outstanding Student Leader Award

**Rawane Soboh**  
Undergraduate student  
Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Award

**Autumn Godwin**, BA 21  
Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Award

**2** The **2023 Henri P. Habib Distinguished Speaker Series on Peace, Conflict and Global Politics** featured the **Honourable Allan Rock**, former ambassador to the United Nations, Minister of Justice and Minister of Health. The April 4 event included a post-lecture reception.



**3** DEAN ANNIE GÉRIN (FAR LEFT) WITH ROSEMARY HOPPENHEIM, WIDOW OF THE LATE MEL HOPPENHEIM, AND MEMBERS OF THE HOPPENHEIM FAMILY.

**3** The **Mel Hoppenheim School of Cinema Awards** took place on April 27 with remarks from **Annie Gérin**, dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts, **Martin Lefebvre**, BFA 85, department chair, and filmmaker **Salomé Villeneuve**, BFA 20. The event included a video tribute to the late **Mel Hoppenheim**, LLD 09, Canadian film-industry trailblazer and namesake donor to Concordia's cinema school.





NEW HONORARY DOCTORATES WERE COMMEMORATED AT DINNER RECEPTIONS AND FACULTY CONVOCATIONS IN JUNE. LEFT TO RIGHT FROM TOP: **VIKAS SWARUP**, LLD 20; **KATHY BAIG**, DSC 23; **SANDRA BOUCHARD**, BA 85, LLD 23; **ALAIN BOUCHARD**, LLD 23; **CLARISSA DESJARDINS**, DSC 23; **DEBORAH ESTRIN**, DSC 23; **ELISAPIE ISAAC**, DFA 23; AND **JAMES DONALD MCCULLY**, BA 75, BSC 78, DSC 23.

**5** Two *The Walrus Talks* events held in Toronto and Ottawa in April and May, respectively, featured receptions for alumni, remarks from President **Graham Carr** and presentations from Concordia experts. On the topic of sustainable design, the Toronto event showcased **Natalie Voland**, member of the Next-Generation Cities Institute, and **Carly Ziter**, University Research Chair in Urban Ecology and Sustainability. An event at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa on climate change and public policy saw talks from **Alexandra Lesnikowski**, Department of Geography, Planning and Environment, and **Aphrodite Salas**, MA 99, Department of Journalism (pictured).



A MAY 4 RECEPTION HONORED THE GENEROSITY OF THE HERITAGE SOCIETY, MADE UP OF DONORS WHO HAVE MADE PLANNED GIFTS TO THE CAMPAIGN FOR CONCORDIA. THE EVENT INCLUDED REMARKS FROM PRESIDENT **GRAHAM CARR** AND **DIMITRIS ILIAS**, BFA 92, GRDIP 99.



7

7 Vernissages held in May and September by the Faculty of Fine Arts **showcased works of recent graduates who are members of Art Volt**. Launched in 2020 with support from **Leslie Raenden** and the Peter N. Thomson Family Trust, Art Volt is a platform that encourages the artistic careers of recent graduates.

8 A fundraiser for the **Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 in Halifax**, Nova Scotia, was co-presented by Concordia on May 24 at Maison Forget in Montreal. Keynote remarks were delivered by **Hardy Grewal** (third from right), BComm 83, founder and CEO of Ohcal Foods and a major donor to the Campaign for Concordia.



8

9 More than 1,000 students and family members — a record total — gathered on Sir George Williams Campus for Concordia's annual **Parents Welcome Reception** on August 26. The celebration included remarks from proud Concordia graduate and parent **Paul Chesser**, BA 94, GrDip 97, vice-president, University Advancement.

10 Organized by the NouLa Centre for Black Students, the Black Perspectives Office (BPO) and the Black Alumni Network, Concordia's **Black Graduation Celebration** took place on June 17. The event, which honours generations of Black alumni and the accomplishments of current students, featured remarks from President **Graham Carr**, **Annick Maugile Flavien**, BSc 13, GrDip 15, MA 18, manager of the BPO, and **Angélique Willkie**, co-chair of the President's Task Force on Anti-Black Racism.



9







IDOPHOTO

10



IDOPHOTO

11

**11** The **Black Alumni Network** also hosted its **first in-person social event** for members since it was established in 2019: a cocktail party held on June 29 at Palme, a Montreal restaurant owned by alumna **Lee-Anne Millaire Lafleur**, BA 06.



12

THE **65TH ANNUAL GARNET KEY SOCIETY BANQUET** TOOK PLACE ON MAY 12 ON SIR GEORGE WILLIAMS CAMPUS AND WELCOMED THE NEXT COHORT OF GARNET KEY VOLUNTEERS – THE 66TH IN CONCORDIA'S HISTORY.

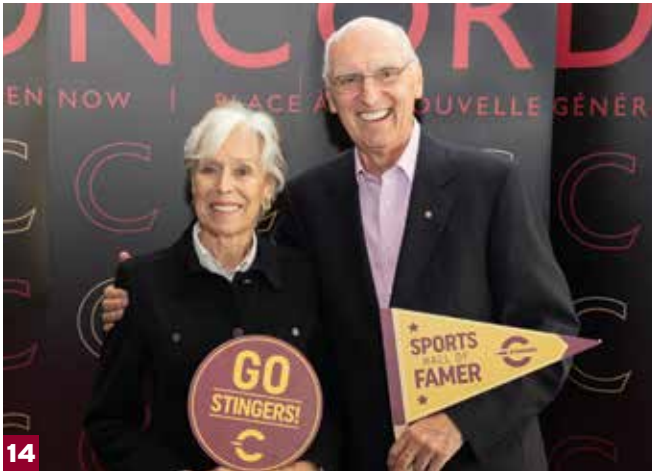




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### HOMECOMING 2023

Concordians returned to campus to take part in a variety of Homecoming events from September 21 to 24:

**13** Festivities kicked off with a panel discussion on the **future of artificial intelligence**.

Following opening remarks by President **Graham Carr**, **Jennifer Hollett**, BA 97, executive director of *The Walrus*, moderated a discussion between **Rina Carlini**, BSc 93, president and founder of Optimal Innovation Group, **Wahab Hamou Lhadj**, professor at Concordia's Applied AI Institute, and **Allan Benchetrit**, BA 87, MBA 91, president and CEO of Algolux.

**14** The **Concordia Sports Hall of Fame** inducted five alumni at a special ceremony on September 24: **George Lengvari**, BA 63 (Builder, pictured with wife Inez Lengvari); **Richard MacKay**, BA 58 (Athlete, Basketball); **Dave Miller-Johnston**, BA 01 (Athlete, Football); **Cat Tull**, BA 02 (Athlete, Basketball); and **Sheila Turner**, BSc 95, GrDip 08 (Athlete, Rugby). The 1994 Stingers women's rugby team was also inducted.

**15** The **Concordia Stingers football team** hosted the **Rouge et Or of Université Laval** on Loyola Campus on September 23, a 31-14 loss for the home squad. The game was preceded by the traditional **Alumni Zone Tailgate Experience**.

**16** The **34th edition of Shuffle**, Concordia's annual walkathon in support of student resources and services, drew 906 participants who raised more than \$200,000. **Sudha Krishnan** (pictured), BA 99, host of CBC Montreal *News at 11*, emceed this year's Shuffle — the first to be certified sustainable. Groups that walked the 6.5 kilometres between Concordia's two campuses included Team Orange Shirt, the Dr. Bob Roy Memorial Award team (pictured with President **Graham Carr**), The Pace Makers — who raised almost \$15,000 for the Concordia University Retired Faculty and Staff Scholarships and Awards Endowment, as well as the True and Fair Hybrid Works! team that raised close to \$13,000 for student support.





A PANEL ON QUEBEC CINEMA AT THE 2023 TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL IN SEPTEMBER INCLUDED DIRECTOR AND SCREENWRITER PASCAL PLANTE, BFA 11, AND BROADCASTER JOHN MOORE, BA 88 (SECOND FROM RIGHT AND FAR RIGHT, RESPECTIVELY).

17

18 The Concordia community gathered on September 26 to celebrate the **fifth anniversary of the naming of the Gina Cody School of Engineering and Computer Science**, and the philanthropic legacy **Gina Cody**, MEng 81, PhD 89, has left on her alma mater. Two events helped mark the occasion: a breakfast reception for undergraduate scholarship recipients and a showcase of student research projects that included remarks from **Mourad Debbabi**, dean of the Gina Cody School, and **Paul Chesser**, and a cake-cutting ceremony.



18

19 **Concordia's second annual Otsenhákta Student Centre Pow Wow** took place on September 15. Organized by the campus centre that serves as a resource for First Nations, Inuit and Métis students, the event in honour of Indigenous traditions and those who carry them forward featured special performances, artisanal wares and more. ■



LISA GRAVES

19

TWO-SPIRIT ANISHINABE DANCER **MAKHENA RANKIN-GUÉRIN** PERFORMED AT THE **OTSENHÁKTA STUDENT CENTRE POW WOW**.

View our event schedule at [concordia.ca/alumnievents](https://concordia.ca/alumnievents) and see all photos at [flickr.com/photos/concordiaalumnipics](https://flickr.com/photos/concordiaalumnipics).

## ALUMNI UPDATES

*Alumni with more than one degree from Concordia, Sir George Williams University and/ or Loyola College are listed under their earliest graduation year.*

**76 Leslie Weir**, BA, was reappointed librarian and archivist of Canada at Library and Archives Canada.

**79 Tony Giuliano**, BComm, was named chief financial officer at ESGold Corp.

**80 Hellen Christodoulou**, BEng, MEng 81, was appointed executive vice-president of Engineering, Sustainability and Business Development at Corbec.

**83 Anne Bowker**, BA, was named interim dean of Carleton University's Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

**Pierre Galoppi**, BComm, MBA 86, was named CEO at Brera Holdings PLC.

**86 Salvatore Iacono**, BEng, was named president and CEO of Cadillac Fairview, effective November 1, 2023.

**87 Rock Lefrançois**, BSc, was appointed vice-president of Exploration at Azimut Exploration.

**Howard Nemiroff**, MA, PhD 97, was named interim dean of Carleton University's Sprott School of Business.

**88 Dino Rambidis**, BComm, was appointed executive vice-president of Finance at Fonds de solidarité FTQ.

**89 Marc Riel**, BComm, GrDip 12, joined Croesus as vice-president of Business Development and Strategic Partnerships, North America.

**Renu Vaish**, BSc, was appointed chief regulatory officer at Ambrx Biopharma Inc.

**90 Carmela Cucuzzella**, BCompSc, BFA 05, was named dean of the Faculty of Environmental Design at Université de Montréal.

**Pietro Mazzei**, BEng, was appointed president and CEO of Rheinmetall Canada.

**93 Margaret Doell**, MFA, was named vice-president of Academic Affairs at Adams State University.

**Neil Linsdell**, BEng, MBA 00, was appointed head of Investment Strategy, Private Client Group at Raymond James Ltd.

**94 Steven Jackson**, BA, was named vice-provost of Academic Innovation at Cornell University.

**95 Benoit-Antoine Bacon**, BA, was appointed president and vice-chancellor of the University of British Columbia.

**Alison Lawton**, BA, was appointed to the World Refugee & Migration Council's Canadian Task Force Against Global Corruption.

**96 John Di Bert**, BComm, GrDip 97, was named chief financial officer at Air Canada.

**Alexandre Kaufman**, BA, was appointed judge of the Superior Court of Justice of Ontario.

**James McKenna**, MBA, joined Wall Street investment company Jefferies Financial Group.

**Mark Weightman**, BComm, was appointed president and CEO of the Montreal Alouettes.

**97 Tania Krywiak**, BA, was appointed managing editor at CTV News Montreal, News Talk Radio and CJAD 800.

**Kwong Wai Yeung**, BComm, was named company secretary at Swang Chai Chuan Limited.

**98 Sarafina Wolde Gabriel**, BComm, was named chief strategy officer at Rightlander.

**Mahesh Shah**, BComm, was appointed CEO of CoreTrust.

**99 Isabelle Dessureault**, MBA, was named delegate of the Government of Quebec in Atlanta, Georgia.

**00 Julie Quenneville**, BA, was named CEO of Toronto's University Health Network Foundation.

**Rebecca Tamarchak**, BSc, was promoted to head of Strategy, Governance and Partnerships at the Ontario Institute for Cancer Research.

**Roger Tambay**, MBA, joined Imaflex Inc. as president and CEO.

**01 Frédéric Boulanger**, BComm, was named director of Immigration Programs and Services at Collège Boréal.

**03 Maria Guercio**, BComm, was appointed climate tech industry practice leader, North America, at Chubb Climate+.

**Karen Kalayajian**, BComm, was named vice-president of Finance and Administration at IntelGenx Corp.

**05 Michael Bury**, BA, was named complaints and quality commissioner at McGill University Health Centre.

**06 Aaron Ling**, BEng, was named director of Sustainability at Sustana.

**09 Pierre-Marc Gendron**, BComm, joined Langlois as a lawyer.

**Sébastien Boire-Lavigne**, EMBA, was appointed chief technology officer at D-BOX Technologies Inc.

**Frédéric L'Heureux**, MBA, was appointed portfolio manager at Leblanc Martineau St-Hilaire.

**10 Sherin Al-Safadi**, MBA, PhD 14, was named president of Medical and Corporate Affairs and Radiopharm Theranostics Ltd.

**Riccardo Lento**, BA, joined Fasken as a real-estate lawyer.

**11 Monique Leroux**, LLD, was appointed senior advisor at Teneo and also joined the campaign cabinet at Université de Sherbrooke.

**12 Amina Joobar**, BFA, joined Goldwater, Dubé as a lawyer.

**Marianne-Sarah Saulnier**, BFA, was appointed vice-president of the Conseil des Montréalaises.

**13 Valérie Lavoie**, BComm, was promoted to account manager at Massy Forget Langlois Public Relations.

**Valéry Zamuner**, EMBA, was named senior vice-president, and chief corporate affairs and legal officer at Cogeco Inc. and Cogeco Communications Inc.

**14 Colin Romano**, BA, was appointed associate in the Tax group at Goodmans LLP.

**15 Anne-Marie Hubert**, LLD, joined the CHU Sainte-Justine Foundation as co-chair of its Grow Beyond fundraising campaign.

**16 Andrea Limbardi**, EMBA, joined Reitmans (Canada) Limited as president and CEO.

**Meagan Somerville**, BA, was appointed executive director at West Island Community Shares.

**17 Kevin Henley**, BComm, was named president and CEO of Canadian Net Real Estate Investment Trust.

**18 Heidi Yetman**, MA, was appointed president of the Canadian Teacher's Federation.

**20 Linda Crisafulli**, BComm, joined KRB Lawyers as an articling student.

**Charles Radack**, BEng, was named technical patent consultant, Intellectual Property Group, at Fasken. ■



ANDREA LIMBARDI, EMBA 16

# TAKE PRIDE in your alma mater!



**Anita Nowak, GrDip 99**  
Empathy expert and author



**Virendra Jha, PhD 82**  
Former vice-president of Science, Technology and Programs, Canadian Space Agency



**Jean-François Bélisle, BFA 04, MA 07**  
CEO and director, National Gallery of Canada



**France Wong, BComm 00**  
President and partner, BleuBlancRouge



**Rowena Pinto, BA 94, MA 97**  
CEO, Jack.org



**Jeffrey Kobernick, BComm 80**  
Co-founder and managing partner, NewEdge Wealth

You are part of Concordia's accomplished 254,000-member alumni family.

- Tell us where you're at:  
[concordia.ca/keepintouch](https://concordia.ca/keepintouch)
- Share your successes:  
[alumni@concordia.ca](mailto:alumni@concordia.ca)
- Join us on social media:  
[@ConcordiaAlumni](https://www.instagram.com/ConcordiaAlumni)



#CUpride #CUalumni



**Morton Minc**, BA 67, Concordia's jurist-in-residence, received the inaugural Dean Jason Carey Distinction Award for Social Innovation: Law and Justice. The honour was presented by the University of Alberta, Campus Saint-Jean.

**Clément Jodoin**, BSc 75, was inducted into the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League Hall of Fame.

**Donald A. MacPherson**, BA 82, was named a Member of the Order of Canada "for his long-time advocacy of harm reduction and evidence-based approaches to drug policy reform."

**Andrew Carter**, BA 84, celebrated 20 years as host of *The Andrew Carter Morning Show* on CJAD 800 Montreal.

**Dorothy W. Williams**, BA 84, MA 99, was a recipient of a 2023 Library and Archives Canada Scholar Award for her contributions to the field of Black Canadian history.

**Darren Entwistle**, BA 86, was named one of the Top 25 Executives of Vancouver for 2023 by C-Suite Spotlight.

**Daniel Cross**, BFA 91, MFA 98, professor at the Mel Hoppenheim School of Cinema, was named a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

**Megan Durnford**, GrDip 93, won the Betty Youson Award for Best Canadian Short Documentary at the 2023 Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Film Festival for *Last Respects*, a collaboration with her son Hugh Durnford-Dionne, a Faculty of Fine Arts student.

**Alanis Obomsawin**, LLD 93, received the 2023 Edward MacDowell Medal, for outstanding contributions to the arts. Past recipients include Georgia O'Keeffe, John Updike and Toni Morrison.

**Karyn Bye-Dietz**, GrDip 95, was named to the Wisconsin Hockey Hall of Fame.

**Elaine Hum**, BComm 96, was named one of the Top Women in Cybersecurity for 2023 by IT World Canada.

**Rana Ghorayeb**, BA 97, MEng 01, received the Inspiration Andrée Corriveau Prize from the Association of Quebec Women in Finance.

**Vincent Morello**, GrDip 98, was a finalist in the "Responsible for the financial management of a small or medium-sized enterprise" category at the Aces of Finance competition.

**Shannon D. Walsh**, BFA 00, MA 04, was the winner of a 2023 Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts.

**Abraham Tachjian**, BA 04, was named by *The Logic* as one of the people to watch in Canadian fintech.

**Gillian Sze**, BA 06, MA 08, won the Pat Lowther Memorial Award for her latest book of poetry, *Quiet Night Think*.

**Josh Usheroff**, BA 06, was the winner of a World Independent Advertising Award in the "Restaurants & Entertainment" category.







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**Sarah Bernstein**, BA 09, was shortlisted for the Booker Prize for her second novel, *Study for Obedience*. She was also shortlisted for Canada's Scotiabank Giller Prize and was named to *Granta* magazine's Best Of Young British Novelists list.

**Corey Pedneault**, BComm 09, GrDip 11, was a finalist in the "Finance Succession" category at the Aces of Finance competition.

**Nicole Antoine**, BA 10, was one of 13 company founders selected for the EY Entrepreneurs Access Network Class of 2023.

**Roshi Chadha**, BFA 10, MA 14, was appointed Officer of the Order of Montreal.

**Monique Leroux**, LLD 11, was among six leaders who received the International Horatio Alger Award.

**Sherry Romanado**, EMBA 11, was named parliamentary secretary to the president of the King's Privy Council for Canada, as well as minister of Emergency Preparedness.

**Johnnie Vu**, BComm 11, was awarded a Canadian Forces Decoration medal by the Governor General of Canada. He was also a recipient of an RBC Global Citizen Award.

**Valérie Lemaire**, BComm 14, was a finalist in the "Finance Succession" category at the Aces of Finance competition.

**Domenica Martinello**, BA 14, won *The Malahat Review's* Long Poem Prize.

**Andrea Peña**, BFA 17, won the Venice Biennale's first international call for new choreographic work by an artist under the age of 35. Peña's *Bogotá* premiered at the Biennale's 17th International Festival of Contemporary Dance.

**Kim Thúy**, LLD 17, was shortlisted for the 2023 Dublin Literary Award for her novel *Em*.

**Mzwandile Poncana**, BA 21, GrDip 22, was named a 2023 Black Journalism Fellow by the Canadian Journalism Foundation.

**Soodeh Abedini**, PhD 22, was named co-runner up for the Breakthrough Research Prize at the Quebec Climate Solutions Festival.

**Kyle Alden Martens**, MFA 22, was awarded a 2023 Claudine and Stephen Bronfman Fellowship in Contemporary Art.

**Aiden Nicell**, BFA 22, won Project Spark's Best Experimental Short Film award for *Shadow's Pass*.

**Michael Ogoms**, MSc 22, was named a Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation Scholar. The fellowship will support Ogoms's doctoral research at the University of Glasgow on support for neurodivergent individuals in the workplace.

## TOP 50 WOMEN LEADERS OF MONTREAL

Women We Admire, which recognizes the exceptional achievements of women, named its Top 50 Women Leaders of Montreal for 2023. Eleven Concordians made the list:

**Carolena Gordon**, BA 87

**Leslie Quinton**, Attd 94

**Rana Ghorayeb**, BA 97, MEng 01

**Stacey Masson**, BA 00

**Julie Quenneville**, BA 00

**Andrea Roy**, BComm 01

**Celine Cohen**, BComm 02

**Patricia Lemoine**, BFA 03

**Bhoomi Pathak**, BComm 04

**Ashee Sarin**, MBA 05

**Andrea Limbardi**, EMBA 16

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### MNBAQ CONTEMPORARY ART AWARD

Established in 2013 with support from the RBC Foundation, the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (MNBAQ) Contemporary Art Award recognizes Quebec-based artists who have exhibited work without representation. For the first time, five artists shared the prestigious award — all are Concordia alumni:

- Célia Perrin Sidarous**, BFA 08, MFA 15
- Ève Tagny**, BFA 11
- Anahita Norouzi**, MFA 13
- Sara A. Tremblay**, BFA 13
- Maria Ezcurra**, PhD 16

### SOBEY ART AWARD

One of Canada's most prestigious prizes in contemporary art, the Sobey Art Award celebrates emerging artists across the country. Four Concordians were named to the 2023 longlist, with one finalist:

- Marigold Santos**, MFA 11
- Anahita Norouzi**, MFA 13 (finalist)
- Renée Condo**, BFA 17
- Laura Acosta**, MFA 17

### GALA DYNASTIE

Launched in 2017, the annual Gala Dynastie celebrates and promotes Black artists from Quebec's anglophone and francophone communities. Four alumni were among the 2023 finalists:

- H. Nigel Thomas**, S BA 74, MA 75 (author)
- Anna Binta Diallo**, GrCert 09 (visual arts)
- Ève Tagny**, BFA 11 (visual arts)
- Esther Calixte-Bea**, BFA 20 (visual arts)

### WOMEN OF DISTINCTION

Since 1984, the Women's Y Foundation has recognized the commitment and achievements of women across Canada with its Women of Distinction Awards. Three Concordians are among Montreal's winners this year:

- Saôde Savary**, BSc 77, GrDip 88 (Social Commitment Award)
- Gina Cody**, MEng 81, PhD 89 (Achievement Award)
- Léa Clermont-Dion**, postdoctorate fellow, Department of Art Education (Inspiration Award)

### FANTASIA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

The Fantasia International Film Festival, one of the top genre-film festivals in the world, took place this summer with screenings across Montreal, including on Concordia's Sir George Williams Campus. From directors to actors and producers, alumni were well represented:

- Sandrine Béchade**, BFA 95
- Alain Fournier**, BFA 02
- Tamara Scherbak**, BFA 08
- Pascal Plante**, BFA 11
- Simon Allard**, BFA 12
- Rémi Frechette**, BFA 12
- Julien Cadieux**, BFA 13
- Colin Ludvic Racicot**, BFA 13
- Alexia Roc**, BFA 19
- Charles Parisé**, BFA 20
- Hanna Fortin**, BFA 22
- Éloïse Grenier-Carpintero**, BFA 22
- Juliette Gariépy**, BFA 22

### SCOTIABANK GILLER PRIZE

Three Concordians were among the 2023 contenders for the Scotiabank Giller Prize, Canada's top literary award for fiction:

- Sarah Bernstein**, BA 09, *Study for Obedience* (Knopf Canada); shortlisted
- Kasia Van Schaik**, BA 09, *We Have Never Lived on Earth* (University of Alberta Press); longlisted
- Erum Shazia Hasan**, MA 06, *We Meant Well* (ECW Press); longlisted

### ROYAL SOCIETY OF CANADA

The Royal Society of Canada (RSC) honoured four Concordia faculty members with some of the highest accolades available to scientists, scholars and artists across the country:

- Nadia Myre**, MFA 02, assistant professor, Department of Studio Arts (fellow)
- Angélique Willkie**, associate professor, Department of Contemporary Dance (fellow)
- Mireille Paquet**, associate professor, Department of Political Science (member, College of New Scholars, Artists and Scientists)
- Michel Magnan**, professor, Department of Accountancy (Yvan Allaire Medal)

### STONE BY STONE

- **Elisabeth Ann Gimber**, BA 83, **Mark Morgenstern**, BA 89, and **Robert E. Newton**, BFA 90, BFA 96, co-produced and co-directed *Stone by Stone* (*Pierre par pierre*), a feature-length documentary that screened at Vues d'Afrique international film festival in April. Grad **Carmel Kilkenny**, BA 86, also worked on the documentary as interviewer. The Montreal screening was attended by Concordia President **Graham Carr**, along with New York alumni chapter representative **Russell Makofsky**, BComm 07, and his parents Howard and Fran, who are featured in the film. ■



## ALUMNI ART

**1** An exhibition of artwork by Erik Slutsky, BFA 86, has been on display at Soho Galleries in Mérida, Mexico, since the summer and will continue throughout the fall. 1) "Carol on a yellow couch," oil on canvas (2002, reworked in 2021). [erikslutsky.ca](http://erikslutsky.ca)

**2** From June 17 to 23, 2023, John Raso, BA 79, presented *Two Rooms with a View*, a digital-art exhibition at the Montreal Art Centre and Museum. Included in the exhibition were three of Raso's photographs that were nominated for the 15th and 16th International Color Awards. 2) "Mobile 4," composite photograph printed on fine art lustre paper (2022).



**3** A solo exhibition by Avy Loftus, MA 20, took place at the Montreal Art Centre and Museum from October 1 to 7, 2023. *Reimagining Ireland* presented a journey of the artist's 25 years of engaging with Irish culture, traditions and landscapes. 3) "The Dark Hedges, N. Ireland," oil pastel and acrylic on canvas (2019). [avy.ca](http://avy.ca)

**4** A new public-art piece by Nicolas Grenier, BFA 04, in collaboration with MASSIVart and Sid Lee Architecture, was on display at Galerie PVM in Montreal's Place Ville Marie. "Prémonitions: Les Voix" explored artificial intelligence and the boundary between humans and machines. The immersive artwork, which invited audiences to interact with an AI language model, ran from July 6 to September 16, 2023. 4) "Prémonitions: Les Voix." [nicolasgrenier.com](http://nicolasgrenier.com)



## Mike Gutwillig (1925 - 2023)

'It was always about what he could do for someone else'



Myer “Mike” Gutwillig, BA 48, BFA 97, who passed away on January 2 at the age of 97, was a man of many passions and a Montrealer to his core.

Businessman, author, journalist, public-relations executive and realtor, Gutwillig was first known for his downtown-focused newspaper, *En Ville*, which

he published and wrote for from 1963 to 1970.

He later authored a book about Montreal called *From the Heart. The Special* — an off-Broadway musical he wrote about an English-speaking Jewish boy who falls in love with a francophone girl — was inspired by Wilensky’s, a lunch counter in Mile End, Montreal, that famously

serves a sandwich of the same name.

In his seventies, Gutwillig enrolled at Concordia’s film school, now the Mel Hoppenheim School of Cinema.

“He brought people together,” remembered long-time friend Barry Beloff, BA 65. “It was always about what he could do for someone else.” ■

## Barbara Barclay (1938 - 2023)

A consummate Concordian

Barbara Barclay, BA 74, BEd 76, who passed away on July 5 before her 85th birthday, was remembered as a consummate Concordian who inspired the university community as an alumna ambassador, faculty member and volunteer.

As president of the Sir George Williams University Alumni Association, Barclay championed one of

Concordia’s two founding institutions, compiling a retrospective to celebrate the 60th anniversary of Sir George’s first alumni class and leading a drive to permanently honour the founders of Sir George in the lobby of the Henry F. Hall Building.

A long-time advisor, coordinator and faculty member with the Teaching English as a Second



Language department, Barclay also contributed to the growth of Concordia.

She founded the university’s used-book fair in 1997 and was known to lend a hand and bring cookies to volunteers every year, even in retirement.

The annual fundraiser has since raised more than \$240,000 in support of students.

Barbara Barclay was honoured with the university’s Distinguished Service Award in 1999. ■

**John Francis Hennessey**, L BA 49, March 11, 2023, Meriden, Conn. He was 92.

**Desmond Patrick Fitzsimons**, L BComm 52, February 20, 2023, Toronto. He was 90.

**Walter G. Asbil**, S BA 54, April 8, 2023. He was 90.

**James Coady Pearson**, L BA 54, May 28, 2023, Montreal. He was 90.

**Ron Frederick Perego**, S BSc 56. He was 94.

**Berel (Benny) Bokser**, S BComm 59, March 28, 2023. He was 98.

**Rick Freitag**, S BA 59, S BSc 60, May 9, 2023, Thunder Bay, Ont. He was 88.

**Douglas S. Rollins**, S BA 59, April 26, 2023, Dollard-des-Ormeaux, Que.

**Eric William “Bill” Gerhardt**, S BA 60, June 20, 2023, Moncton, N.B. He was 91.

**Stanley J. Gibbons**, L BA 60, March 16, 2023, Montreal. He was 82.

**Walter John de Gruchy**, S BA 60, February 19, 2023, Châteauguay, Que. He was 85.

**David McGlaughlin**, S BComm 60, March 16, 2023, Niagara Falls, Ont. He was 85.

**Richard E. Shadley**, S BA 60, April 12, 2023.

**William D. Symington**, S BComm 60, April 13, 2023, Fonthill, Ont.

**Neil Ian Houston**, L BA 61, July 6, 2023, Montreal. He was 84.

**Martin Nadler**, S BComm 61, May 27, 2023, Montreal.

**Douglas James Crosbie**, S BComm 62, March 12, 2023, Lachine, Que.

**Aarre Olavi (Harry) Oljemark**, S BA 62, April 19, 2023, Montreal. He was 85.



# Bina Ellen (1926-2023)

'It's difficult to overstate the impact of [her] generosity'

**B**ina Ellen (née Margolese) — a foremost supporter of Concordia and co-namesake of the university's Leonard and Bina Ellen Art Gallery — passed away on August 8, 2023. She was 97.

Together with her late husband, Leonard Ellen, LLD 03, governor emeritus and past chairman of the Concordia University Foundation, Bina Ellen contributed to a number of causes as a philanthropist and volunteer.

With a focus on Montreal and the Jewish community, the Bina and Leonard Ellen Family Foundation has for decades improved the areas of health and community services as well as education, most notably at the Jewish



General Hospital, the Montreal Neurological Institute and Concordia.

The couple's long-time advocacy for the arts resulted in a new home for Concordia's art gallery in 1992. The renamed Leonard and Bina Ellen Art Gallery in the J.W. McConnell Building is today considered one of the finest university-based exhibition spaces in Canada.

"Bina Ellen's enlightened presence and her generosity, along with that of her husband Leonard, were instrumental in providing the gallery with the resources to become a significant presence in Montreal," said Michèle Thériault, director of the Leonard and Bina Ellen Art Gallery.

Concordia's Centre for the Arts in Human Development (CAHD), where creative arts therapies are used to change the lives of people with special needs, also benefited from Bina Ellen's financial support.

"Bina was a woman of compassion," said Lenore Vosberg, co-founder and senior associate director of the CAHD. "She was determined to make a

difference in [people's] lives, and she did that with her generosity."

The Ellens were major donors who were on hand to celebrate many campus milestones over the years, noted Paul Chesser, BA 94, GrDip 97, vice-president of Advancement.

"It's difficult to overstate the impact of their generosity. Bina Ellen's dedication to her community, to Montreal and to Concordia will forever serve as an inspiration to us all."

Bina Ellen is survived by her three daughters as well as a large extended family that includes many grandchildren and great-grandchildren. ■

**Owen Condon**, L BA 63, 2023. He was 80.

**Robert William Jort**, S BA 63, June 26, 2023, Ottawa. He was 82.

**Judith Ann Castle**, S BA 64, MA 83, June 27, 2023. She was 84.

**Michael J. Kostin**, L BA 64, May 15, 2023. He was 82. Inducted into Concordia's Sports Hall of Fame in 2000 for his contributions to Loyola College football.

**Russell Lawrence**, S BSc 64, June 3, 2023, Winnipeg, Man.

**Joel A. Silcoff**, S BA 64, March 4, 2023.

**Barbara Louise Norton**, S BA 65, March 25, 2023, Bethesda, MD. She was 81.

**Frederick Philip**, L BA 65, April 29, 2023, Newmarket, Ont. He was 78.

**Phyllis Amber**, S BA 66, February 12, 2023, Montreal. She was 92.

**Vincent G. Cuddihy**, L BA 67, Sherbrooke, Que. He was 77.

**Stuart J. Garinther**, L BComm 67, April 6, 2023, Georgetown, Ont. He was 78.

**Janet Louise (Ely) Jackson**, S BA 67, December 16, 2021. Pointe-Claire, Que. She was 75.

**Brian McKenna**, L BA 67, May 5, 2023, Montreal. He was 77.

**James McMahan**, L BA 67, April 26, 2023, Montreal.

**Joanne Helen Taylor Morgan**, S BA 67, May 11, 2023, Montreal. She was 91.

**Jill E. Thompson Bisgard**, S BA 68, February 4, 2023, Toronto. She was 76.

**Norman Pelino Gentile**, L BComm 68, June 2, 2023, Montreal.

**Allan Kujavsky**, L BComm 68, February 23, 2023.

**Stephen Sims**, L BComm 68, April 23, 2023, Montreal. He was 75.

**Richard Barbieri**, L BA 69, Cert 84, February 11, 2023, Pointe-Claire, Que. He was 79.

**David H. Cohen**, S BSc 69, July 18, 2023, Montreal, Que. He was 76.

**Donald Douglas**, S BA 69, March 1, 2023, Preston, Ont. He was 81.

**Mark F. Macpherson**, S BComm 69, S MBA 71, January 14, 2023. He was 90.

**Bernard Gibbs**, S BSc 72, MAsc 07, May 21, 2023. He was 76.

## Egbert Gaye (1955 - 2023)

Community leader and mentor

**E**gbert Gaye, BA 89, a Montreal journalist and community leader, passed away on June 4. He was 67.

As the founder and managing editor of *Montreal Community Contact*, Gaye was best known for establishing a platform to amplify stories about the city's Black and Caribbean communities, and for highlighting narratives that were underrepresented in mainstream media. He launched the bi-weekly newspaper in 1992 and served as its editor for 31 years.

Gaye was also a regular columnist at the *Montreal Gazette*, talk-radio

commentator and mentor to journalists as well as undergraduates at his alma mater.

"He would put as much effort into a first-year journalism student as he would into an interview with a major media outlet," observed Paul Gott, BA 95, a lecturer in the Department of Journalism.

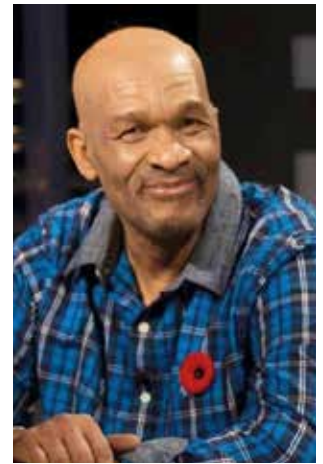
"Whenever I did something that was written about in the *Contact*, my parents would do everything they could to preserve those issues," said Julian McKenzie, BA 16, a hockey reporter who once interned for Gaye. "The *Contact*

means a lot to a lot of people — especially to the Black community in Montreal."

In more recent years, Gaye's son, Emar Mitchell, joined *Community Contact* as a graphic designer and layout specialist. Like his father, his dedication extended beyond the newsroom. Together, they delivered the paper to 70 distribution points across Montreal.

Gaye's death is a tremendous loss, said Richard Burnett, BA 88, who knew Gaye as an interviewer and fellow radio panellist.

"I think he was on a mission to empower the Black and Caribbean



PAUL GOTT

communities, and one of his strategies was to inspire with the power of positivity."

Gaye is survived by his wife, son and daughter-in-law. ■

**Harold James Griffin**, L BA 72, February 15, 2023, Dorion, Que. He was 86.

**William (Billy) A. O'Connell**, S BA 72, March 26, 2023, Brossard, Que. He was 96.

**Alex R. Sidorenko**, S BA 72, June 12, 2023, Lac-Notre-Dame, Que. He was 79.

**Steven G. Collyer**, S BFA 73, June 27, 2023, Glens Falls, N.Y. He was 73.

**James E. Nolan**, S BA 73, March 2, 2023, Oakville, Ont. He was 90.

**Boris Saykowski**, S BComm 73, June 1, 2023. He was 84.

**Charles Takefman**, S BA 73, June 30, 2023, Montreal, Que. He was 73.

**Mara Gutmanis Grey**, S MA 74, November 15, 2022. She was 82.

**Peter Grossi**, L BComm 74, March 19, 2023, Toronto. He was 72.

**Alicia Midor Holloway**, L BSc 74, BComm 86, April 1, 2023, Montreal.

**Catherine Neill Miller**, S BA 74, BA 88, March 3, 2023, Westmount, Que. She was 85.

**Jean F. Currie**, BA 75, February 22, 2023. She was 93.

**Geraldine Martin**, BA 75, June 6, 2023. She was 76.

**Michael M. McManus**, BA 75, June 21, 2023, Montreal, Que. He was 78.

**Lillian Simpson**, BA 75, GrDip 80, June 26, 2023, Victoria, B.C. She was 92.

**William John Errington**, BA 76, June 1, 2023. He was 76.

**Bernard John Keenan**, BA 76, March 1, 2023. He was 83.

**Merle Pedersen**, Cert 76, Apr 18, 2023, Halifax, N.S. She was 101.

**Sheila (Mendelsohn) Wiesenfeld**, BA 76, MA 84, June 19, 2023. She was 87.

**Kenneth H. Sinclair**, BComm 77, December 21, 2022. He was 67.

**Ihor J. Hupaliwsky**, BA 78, April 5, 2023. He was 67.

**Linda Audrey Hull**, BA 79, February 11, 2023, Kingston, Ont. She was 74.

**Peter Kourkoulis**, BComm 80, May 17, 2023, Montreal.

**Earl Samuel Macdonald**, BA 80, July 5, 2023, Laval, Que. He was 82.

**Domenico Di Lullo**, BComm 81, April 20, 2023. He was 64.

**Shirley-Ann Walker**, BA 81, January 31, 2023. She was 80.

**David H. Carr**, BComm 82, July 8, 2023, Saint-Lambert, Que. He was 90.

**David Edward Hull**, BComm 83, May 19, 2023. He was 77.

# Horst Hutter (1938 - 2023)

Distinguished professor emeritus

WITH FILES FROM ELI  
FRIEDLAND, BA 09, PHD 18

**H**orst Hutter, a former beloved faculty member in the Department of Political Science, died on May 22, 2023, in Leigné-sur-Usseau, France. He was 85.

Horst grew up in Graz, Austria, and graduated from Styria's Teacher Education Institute in 1957. He was a schoolteacher for several years and then received a Fulbright scholarship to attend Hunter College in New York, where he earned his MA. He later completed his PhD at Stanford

University with a dissertation on the politics of friendship in Greek and Roman antiquity.

Horst would later revise and publish this as his first book, *Politics as Friendship* (1978), in which he illustrated the importance of genuine individual friendships to the very emergence of political community in ancient Greece.

In 1973, Horst was recruited to the Department of Political Science at Sir George Williams University, one of Concordia's two founding institutions.

Soon after, on a yearly trip to Yelapa, Mexico, Horst met

the poet and artist Francine Prévost, with whom he would spend the rest of his life. They married and had two sons, the filmmaker Harald Hutter and actor Florian Hutter.

Horst taught at Sir George and then Concordia for 38 years before retiring as full professor in 2011. One of the greatest scholars of Plato and Nietzsche of his time, he also published the landmark *Shaping the Future: Nietzsche's New Regime of the Soul and Its Ascetic Practices* in 2006.

In honour of his career as an educator and scholar, Hutter



was named distinguished professor emeritus in 2015. After his retirement, he and Francine founded the Maison Gai Saber in Leigné-sur-Usseau, a retreat for artists and lovers of philosophy.

In the last years of his life, Horst was a grandfather to Léon, Florian and his partner Clio's son. ■

**Ruth Plotnick**, BA 84,  
February 9, 2023, Montreal.  
She was 90.

**Louise Bourgeau  
Spalding**, BA 84,  
February 9, 2023.

**Errol Wayne MacDonald**,  
Cert 85, MA 89, June 2022,  
Montreal. He was 73.

**Jennifer Quinn**, BA 85,  
Vancouver, 2023. She was 60.

**Patricia Jean Fraser**,  
BA 86, February 24, 2023.

**Peter Haniak**, BEng 87,  
June 23, 2023, Dollard-des-  
Ormeaux, Que. He was 59.

**Carol B. Henle**, BA 87,  
February 24, 2023, Montreal.

**Claire Marie Boyer**, BA 88,  
May 26, 2023. She was 82.

**Kevin Sanderson**, BComm  
88, April 27, 2023. He was 57.

**Daniel Leblanc**, BFA 90,  
July 15, 2023, Moncton, N.B.  
He was 55.

**Valerie Prager**, BA 90,  
March 13, 2023. She was 82.

**Joan (Gillis) Ferguson**,  
GrDip 91, June 2, 2023,  
Montreal. She was 84.

**Marie-Louise Deehy**,  
GrDip 93, February 4, 2023.  
She was 56.

**Bella Itzkowitz**, BA 93,  
April 2, 2023. She was 86.

**Agnes Sroka**, BFA 93,  
April 5, 2023, Laval, Que.  
She was 100.

**Gilberto Berrios  
Escalante**, MA 94, July 27,  
2022, Venezuela.

**Andrew Oberst**, BA 95,  
BFA 98, April 1, 2023. He  
was 51.

**Anthony Gucciardo**, BA 97,  
May 27, 2023. He was 52.  
While working in Kuujuaq,  
Que., Gucciardo saw the  
need for better access to  
medical services in remote  
areas far from city centres.  
The experience inspired  
him to pursue his education  
and become a registered  
nurse, going on to join the  
Canadian Armed Forces in  
Montreal and in the Yukon as  
a cadet instructor, registered  
nurse and captain.

Gucciardo is remembered  
for his dedication to his  
communities and country,  
for helping to develop youth  
as they transition into  
adulthood, and for sharing  
his passion for astronomy.  
He co-founded the Yukon  
Astronomical Society, where  
an observatory was built –  
the Gucciardo Observatory  
Telescope was named in  
his honour.

**Christos (Chris)  
Kalogeropoulos**, BA 00,  
March 20, 2023, Westmount,  
Que. He was 50.

**Catherine Nofall**, BA 00,  
March 12. She was 74.

**Benjamin Kalman**, BA 02,  
MA 08, June 6, 2023,  
Montreal.

**Caroline Meyer**, BA 03,  
July 13, 2023, Kitchener,  
Ont. She was 42.

**Olivia Ashley Schadel**,  
GrDip 17, April 15, 2023.  
She was 34.

**Brian Thomas Counihan**,  
June 19, 2023, Toronto.  
Counihan was named  
Concordia's first dean  
of students in 1978. ■

# Loyola College 'became a refuge'

How one of Concordia's founding institutions forever changed two Boston boys

JOSEPH F. CRONIN, BA 54

Growing up on the streets of Boston in the 1930s and 1940s was no cakewalk. We had few modern conveniences and faced poverty and high unemployment.

I was the youngest of seven, and my father worked tirelessly in a factory six days a week, feeding coal into a furnace.

My mother, the youngest of 16 siblings from Ireland, sponsored about 20 nieces and nephews for immigration to the United States. At times it felt like we lived in a boarding house!

John Simpson and I, good friends and classmates at Roxbury Memorial High School, excelled in athletics and academics. But due to financial constraints, college seemed out of reach.

One day, our guidance counsellor pulled us aside to tell us about two scholarships that were available at Loyola College in Montreal, Canada.

Excitement quickly turned to apprehension. Neither of us had ever left Boston.

Soon enough, a boy who had graduated ahead of us at Roxbury and went on to Loyola helped us out. The college became a refuge.

John and I played football at Loyola for four years. I was a lineman and John a defensive end.

Donning helmets but lacking nose guards, mouthpieces and much padding, we faced tough opponents like the University of Bridgeport, Hofstra University, Saint Michael's College in Vermont, Norwich University, Maine Maritime Academy and McGill University.

Our first year brought a single tie and no wins, but we started winning the next year. By my junior and senior years, I was the captain and we clinched a couple of victories. Though often outmatched,



JOSEPH F. CRONIN IN HIS 1954 GRADUATION PHOTO FROM LOYOLA COLLEGE, AND TODAY, AT AGE 91

we had a fantastic coach in Bill Orban, a true gentleman and inspiration.

After graduation, I continued my studies at McGill's Faculty of Dentistry while playing football for four more years. This is where I met my beloved wife, Kathleen Ward, from Brampton, Ontario, who became a registered nurse. We were married in 1957 at Loyola Chapel.

After 61 years of marriage and raising five children (who gave us 11 grandchildren), Kathleen passed away in 2019, the day after Mother's Day. Our son, Michael, now carries on the dental practice I ran in Leominster, Massachusetts, for more than 45 years.

My buddy John Simpson went on to study law and serve in the U.S. military, and became the first U.S. Interpol president and the 16th director of the Secret Service.

Shortly before he passed away in 2017, John called me. He recalled his first week at Loyola and how desperately he wanted to go back to Boston. I guess he was homesick.

"Thanks for talking me out of it, Joe," he said.

We talked some more about the opportunities Loyola gave us. The college really changed our lives. I'll always cherish these final remembrances with John.

To the faculty, administrators and coaches at Loyola who helped me — and John — along the way, thank you.

And to the warmhearted Montrealers who welcomed two Boston boys with open arms all those years ago, you'll always have a special place in my heart. ■



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[silvia.ugolini@concordia.ca](mailto:silvia.ugolini@concordia.ca)

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## 50

Before we celebrate our fifth decade  
in 2024-25, we want to hear from  
our 1974-75 alumni!

- ▶ **Were you** part of Concordia's first graduating class and have a memory to share?
- ▶ **Did you** meet your spouse, best friend or business partner at Concordia?
- ▶ **Is there** a Concordia professor who helped shape your journey?

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