

# LETTER from the Dean and Vice-President

"A remarkably generous man, Mr. DeGroot is an inspiration to us all," says John Kelton, dean and vice-president of the Faculty of Health Sciences, pictured below.



"I take great joy in helping other people."

– Michael G. DeGroot



**It was a deeply moving** and heart-warming occasion to witness the remarkable reception to Michael G. DeGroot at this past spring's oath ceremony for the graduating medical students.

When he took to the podium to announce his latest gift to support the Michael G. DeGroot School of Medicine, the audience of 200 students and their families and friends leapt to their feet to offer a standing ovation for our long-time philanthropist and dear McMaster friend. His announcement sent everyone in the room at the Hamilton Convention Centre into thunderous applause and within moments, the surprise news of his gift spread virally through social media.

It was a touching and electric moment for all of us there that day, including Mr. DeGroot who was clearly moved by the reaction.

A remarkably generous man, Mr. DeGroot is highly deserving of such a tremendous show of appreciation. As witnessed that unforgettable spring day, he has certainly touched the lives of our students.

Equally remarkable has been the inspirational power of his philanthropy. His \$105 million

donation to McMaster in 2003 has nearly doubled as a result of donations from others who said they were motivated by Mr. DeGroot's generosity. We anticipate a similar response to his most recent generosity.

His latest gift encompasses three components, each reflecting Mr. DeGroot's passion for innovation and creative risk taking.

The first component presents a collaboration between the Michael G. DeGroot School of Medicine and the DeGroot School of Business at McMaster. The Michael G. DeGroot Centre for Innovation in Health Leadership will forge an integrated alliance that represents a bold and original initiative aimed at producing the best healthcare leaders of tomorrow.

A second enterprising aspect of the donation will be the creation of the Michael G. DeGroot Centre for Biomedical Engineering. This centre will focus on biomedical advances that can lead to the improvement of human health, by turning ideas into innovative products that are safe, reliable and practical.

The third component will support McMaster's most promising discoveries through Michael G. DeGroot

Awards for Innovation in Health Research. These awards will propel innovative ideas from the lab to commercialization and ultimately into the creation of new jobs and businesses in Hamilton and beyond.

Mr. DeGroot's latest gift to the University confirms his belief in our commitment for excellence. In the 11 years since his \$105 million donation to McMaster, we have gained global recognition for our many successes. Our scientists have led some of the most important and groundbreaking studies of our time and we have continued to offer one-of-a-kind training for the next generation of medical practitioners.

In the days since Mr. DeGroot's latest gift, a tremendous sense of excitement continues to permeate throughout McMaster's Faculty of Health Sciences and our partners in Business and Engineering. As we forge ahead, we do so steadfastly, energetically poised to make another quantum leap in improving education, research and healthcare for years to come.

## SPECIAL EDITION

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# PHILANTHROPY

Building an **unstoppable future**



In 2003, Michael G. DeGroot made the single largest cash gift to an institution in Canadian history donating \$105 million to McMaster University. That record still stands. In appreciation, the medical school was named

in his honour, becoming the first named medical school in Canada. DeGroot also created the first named business school in Canada, the DeGroot School of Business, at McMaster in 1992.

Pictured above, Mr. DeGroot shakes hands with

Caryn Green, President, McMaster Medicine Student Council, Class of 2014 at the School of Medicine's oath ceremony, where he announced a \$50 million gift to the School of Medicine. McMaster President and Vice-Chancellor Patrick Deane looks on.

**It was no ordinary oath ceremony** for the 200 students graduating from McMaster's Michael G. DeGroot School of Medicine on May 23, 2014. When the benefactor of the School unexpectedly took to the stage to announce a magnificent new \$50 million gift, the crowd rose to their feet to offer a thunderous standing ovation.

"Not only have the people here achieved great things, but other donors have told me that my gift has helped inspire them to give, and that is very important to me," said Michael G. DeGroot, sharing why he was renewing his commitment to the University, the school's success and the future of health care. "As you move forward in your exciting new careers as doctors, please know that I am proud and humbled to have played a small part in your education at McMaster. It is a real privilege to share this moment with you."

Funding from the gift will support three components:

■ **Michael G. DeGroot Centre for Innovation in Health Leadership:**

■ This new centre, to be located at the Ron Joyce Centre, the Burlington campus of the DeGroot School of Business, will offer a novel, fast-track MD/MBA program, a host of certificate, diploma and executive education courses that will provide integrated medical/business training and a cluster of researchers studying key healthcare themes.

■ **Michael G. DeGroot Centre for Biomedical Engineering:**

■ This centre will bring together the health sciences and engineering disciplines and train professionals who are equally at home in both biomedical and engineering environments.

■ **Michael G. DeGroot Awards for Innovation in Health Research:**

■ These research awards will support the brightest teams of investigators in the Michael G. DeGroot School of Medicine who are tackling some of the world's most complex scientific questions.



An artist's rendering of the Michael G. DeGroot Centre for Innovation in Health Leadership.

**"A remarkable investment!"**

# RETROSPECT

## A life worth giving

**Michael G. DeGroot**'s passion for philanthropy began at a young age. At 14, he quit school to work in the family's tobacco fields in Langton, Ontario and by age 18 he had saved enough money to purchase his first truck. In four years, he owned a fleet of four trucks and was running a small-sized trucking firm in Elliot Lake, hauling uranium ore to the processing plants. As his business and wealth grew, he made a promise to himself that if and when he became successful, he would give his money back to charitable causes in education and health.

Having kept his life-long promise, DeGroot recently talked about his career as a successful businessman and shared the important lessons he learned along the way. He talked about the most important aspects of his life – his family and friends – and the spirit of giving he hopes to instill in others through example. He also talked about his recent \$50 million gift to McMaster, explaining why he holds the University so close to his heart.



One of Michael G. DeGroot's first trucks in Elliot Lake.

*"He is one of Hamilton's greatest citizen's ever."*



Working on the tobacco fields at the family farm in Langton, Ontario.

## A life-long passion to give back



Michael G. DeGroot during his school years.

**At the age of 18**, DeGroot was on the cusp of an exciting future. To come was a successful business career and unparalleled philanthropic gestures that would result in him being named an Officer of the Order of Canada, the country's highest civilian honour, and an honorary degree from McMaster University, among other recognitions.

By 24, he was a millionaire; yet, this early wealth came at a cost and with an important life lesson. "Within a year and a half of going to Elliot Lake, I made a million dollars," he said. "Four or five years later I went bankrupt, because the Canadian contract was cancelled by the U.S. and everything in that area stopped."

Unable to pay his bills, he declared bankruptcy. "If I can give any advice," he says, "it is to borrow the absolute minimum that you need. If you borrow too much and you can't pay it back, you're going to go broke."

Experiencing bankruptcy may have been the best thing that ever happened to DeGroot. "I learned a lot from having it all and losing it all. It was probably the biggest lesson I ever learned because when I started at Laidlaw I did things much differently," he says about the trucking company Laidlaw Transport Ltd., which he purchased in 1959. "I borrowed very little money and in 1969 we made history by going public on the Toronto and Montreal stock exchanges. The stock was growing at 30 per cent per year and became the number one gold stock in Canada for 17 straight years. This was more successful than I ever dreamed it could be."

Within five years he paid back every one of his creditors and he worked tirelessly – often 14 hours a day – to see his business grow. Laidlaw continued its expansion by acquiring more than 400 companies over the next decade, quickly becoming one of Canada's premiere trucking companies.

He continued to run Laidlaw successfully until 1988, when he sold the company to Canadian Pacific in exchange for nearly half a billion dollars in shares.

In 1990, DeGroot retired to Bermuda, though official retirement was short-lived. He entered into several successful business ventures with U.S. companies such as Republic Industries, AutoNation Inc., Century Business Services and Capital Environmental Resource Inc.

# INNOVATION

A **promise** worth keeping



An ambitious young Michael G. DeGroot developed into a successful businessman, who by age 24 was already a millionaire.



**It was during retirement** that DeGroot acted on the promise he made to himself many years earlier. In the upcoming years he would make several of the largest private donations in history to research and education.

His philanthropic journey began in 1992 with a sizeable donation to McMaster University to support its School of Business. His gift allowed the School of Business to expand and become the first named business school in Canada. He subsequently supported the McMaster Museum of Art, epilepsy research, literary criticism and the McMaster University Student Centre.

In 2003, he made his most substantial gift – a donation of \$105 million to McMaster, an amount that remains the largest single private donation to a school ever made in Canada. Later that same year, he donated \$10.5 million to Hillfield Strathallan College. He has also

given generously to various causes for young people in Bermuda and in Naples, Florida, where he resides during the winter months.

“I find it very rewarding all of the things I have done for McMaster. But it is not just about the money, it is about the people.”

– Michael G. DeGroot

His most recent gift of \$50 million to support the Michael G. DeGroot School of Medicine, was the icing on the cake for DeGroot. He says: “I find it very rewarding

all of the things I have done for McMaster. But it is not just about the money, it is about the people, particularly John Kelton, who has been in charge of most of it. He has just done a phenomenal job with my gifts and it is because of him, not just because of the money, that McMaster is number one in Canada and number 14 in the world.”

He adds that Kelton has made a commitment to ensure the long-term success of his gift beyond the end of his term as dean and vice-president of the Faculty of Health Sciences in 2016. “If it were not for this commitment, I might not have made this gift,” he says.



Michael G. DeGroot announces his \$50 million gift on May 23, 2014 at the Hamilton Convention Centre.

“Supernova gift!”

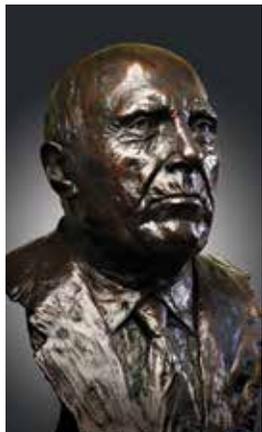
“An amazing gift that will provide a fantastic legacy.”

Pictured from left, John Kelton, dean and vice-president of the Faculty of Health Sciences; Michael G. DeGroot, Peter George, McMaster University President (1995-2010); and Roger Trull, vice-president university advancement (1993-2011), at the announcement of Mr. DeGroot’s \$105 million donation to McMaster, in December 2003.



# LEGACY

Philanthropy lives on



## While Mr. DeGroot has achieved

tremendous success throughout his life, he says his greatest achievement is his family. "Through the years I worked 12 to 14 hours a day. However,

my lovely soulmate Gillian, my four

wonderful children, 12 grandchildren and two great grandchildren are the most important part of my life, by far."

He tries to instill the same passion for philanthropy in his family. In fact, he has established a trust fund for his children, which contains a requirement that a certain amount be donated to charities of their choice.

He hopes his children will encourage the next generation of the family to give. "My children have contributed in a major way to good causes. I hope they teach my grandchildren the same thing."

At the age of 81, DeGroot looks back on his life satisfied that he has made a difference in the lives of many others. "I would like to be remembered for being a good businessman, but mostly a good philanthropist."

"I take great joy in helping other people and seeing them succeed in whatever they choose to do, whether it is becoming a doctor or a businessperson. That was my goal when I started and I made a commitment to myself that if I was ever successful I would give back."

"I would like to be remembered for being a good businessman, but mostly a good philanthropist."

— Michael G. DeGroot

Above all, DeGroot hopes his gift inspires others. "My major donation to McMaster 11 years ago almost doubled by the time it was all finished. I hope the same thing happens on my present gift."



Michael G. DeGroot with his daughter Joni Tipping and his three sons, from left, Michael H. DeGroot, Tim DeGroot and Gary DeGroot. They stand beside a bronze bust made in his honour during the opening of the Michael G. DeGroot Centre for Learning and Discovery, in September 2005.

# MILESTONES

## 1990

Michael G. DeGroot made an Officer of the Order of Canada.



## 1992

Michael G. DeGroot awarded an honorary degree from McMaster University.



## 1992

Michael G. DeGroot makes a sizeable donation to McMaster's School of Business, and it becomes the first named business school in Canada.



## 2003



Michael G. DeGroot donates \$105 million to McMaster. The School of Medicine is named in his honour (above: Dr. Kelton dons Mr. DeGroot with a white jacket bearing the school's name).



## 2005

The Michael G. DeGroot Centre for Learning and Discovery opens and a bronze bust of Michael G. DeGroot is unveiled.



Milestones continued on back page...

## MILESTONES

...continued from previous page

2008

First Michael G. DeGroot Fellowship Awards announced. Dr. Kelly O'Brien and Dr. Tim James are the inaugural recipients.

2009

Michael G. DeGroot cuts the ribbons for three world-class research institutes located in the Michael G. DeGroot Centre for Learning and Discovery: the Michael G. DeGroot Institute for Infectious Disease Research, the Michael G. DeGroot Institute for Pain Research and Care and the McMaster Stem Cell and Cancer Research Institute.

2010



The Waterloo Regional Campus of McMaster's Michael G. DeGroot School of Medicine opens on the Downtown Kitchener Health Sciences Campus of the University of Waterloo.

2012

The Niagara Regional Campus of the Michael G. DeGroot School of Medicine moves into a new home in the Cairns Family Health and Bioscience Research Complex on the Brock University campus in St. Catharines.

2014

Michael G. DeGroot donates \$50 million to support the Michael G. DeGroot School of Medicine.

# One-of-a-kind philanthropist for a one-of-a-kind university



Thank you to **Michael G. DeGroot** for a new and remarkable gift – \$50 million to the Michael G. DeGroot School of Medicine, McMaster University



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### A man of distinction, a man of firsts:

- First named business school in Canada - the DeGroot School of Business, McMaster University (1992)
- First named medical school in Canada - the Michael G. DeGroot School of Medicine, McMaster University (2003)
- Single largest cash gift to an institution in Canadian history (\$105 million, McMaster University, 2003)

**Patrick Deane**, President and Vice-Chancellor, McMaster University  
**John Kelton**, Dean, Michael G. DeGroot School of Medicine and Vice-President, Faculty of Health Sciences, McMaster University  
**Mary Williams**, Vice-President, University Advancement, McMaster University