The gift of Michael DeGroote and his family to McMaster and its medical school in December was a history-making occasion: At $105 million, it was the largest donation ever given to a Canadian university. In fact, it was the largest cash gift given to any institution in Canadian history.

"Health and health care are clearly the most prominent concerns for Canadians," said DeGroote. "I am investing in new discoveries in health care and in the delivery of health care. The dividends of that investment will not only impact our community, but others around the world. I am confident of McMaster's ability to maximize the impact of this gift so that its net effect will have far-reaching benefits."

At the announcement, Dean and Vice-President of the Faculty of Health Sciences, Dr. John Kelton said a donation that large had a "wonderful impact, which promises to transform our school of medicine, our entire faculty, and, in fact, our entire University."

Since then, stakeholders at all levels of the McMaster health sciences community have started developing strategies for putting the $105 million sum - which will be provided to the University over a five-year period - into action.

"The Faculty is following a "people first" policy in allotting the funds," Kelton said. "Emphasis will be placed on hiring international-calibre experts in health education, research and care, particularly in the areas of pain, infectious diseases, stroke prevention and cancer."

"McMaster has gained a reputation for self-directed learning, and people are the key to that process," says Kelton. "The DeGroote gift will enable us to recruit the finest talent from around the world to help us enhance the outstanding teaching and research efforts we have in place here in Hamilton."

University President Peter George said the gift is already having an impact on the University as a whole, and has raised McMaster's profile within the international academic and medical community.

"I've received a number of messages of congratulations from several other university presidents," he said. "But along with the momentum created by the gift comes the need to take a very proactive stance on allocating the funds. As we have said from the outset, we need to be creative and aggressive in the ways we move forward on our strategic priorities."

Within the Faculty of Health Sciences, a number of key initiatives are already well into the planning stages. One of them is the development of the Michael G. DeGroote Institute for Pain Research and Care. A symposium on pain is being organized to take place in Hamilton in the fall.

Dr. John Kelton, dean and vice-president of the Faculty of Health Sciences, adjusts the first lab coat with a Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine insignia on Michael DeGroote, as McMaster University President Dr. Peter George applauds during a standing ovation.
Although the initial feelings of exhilaration inspired by the DeGroote family's gift to McMaster have settled down a little, it is not likely that they will ever disappear completely. The gift is truly a history-making one, and the opportunities it affords both the Faculty of Health Sciences and the University as a whole are unprecedented.

This is, without a doubt, a transformative gift for McMaster, one that has the ability to change the entire character of the University in the near future and in the long term. I know I am echoing the sentiments of McMaster President Dr. Peter George, and the entire University community, in thanking Michael DeGroote and his family for the vote of confidence they have placed in us.

We're pleased to give tribute to our benefactor by naming the medical school, and several facilities and endowed chairs he is specifically supporting, for him. This is not the first time the University has chosen to honour a significant contributor by combining his or her name with our educational mission. In fact, the University is named for its first donor, Senator William McMaster, who established our institution of higher learning in 1887 with a bequest.

Today, private funds are still needed to assist universities like ours if we want to make quantum leaps ahead with our important mission of education, research and service to the community. Government funding is not increasing and we are loath to increase tuitions more than necessary. The active recruitment of financial support from the private sector simply makes good practical sense.

In addition, it is worth pointing out that we have established a tradition of acknowledging those who have supported McMaster's Faculty of Health Sciences by their leading-edge work. The names of John Evans, Moran Campbell, Fraser Mustard, Mary Cohen, Jack Ladlau, Jack Sinclair and, most recently, Richard Hunt – just to name a few examples – all accompany endowed chairs within the Faculty.

We have also established our Community of Distinction to honour members of the Faculty who have brought acclaim to McMaster as outstanding researchers and innovative educators.

In short, I can answer all those who wonder if we are somehow “selling” our identity by these recent name changes by responding emphatically that, as one of the world's top educational institutions in the health sciences, our identity is already secure. But what I do want is to provide the best possible infrastructure, faculty and funding lines to allow our faculty, staff and students to reach the goals to which they aspire.

With that in mind, it is now time to begin repaying the confidence placed in us by Michael DeGroote and his family, by making the best possible use of the funds they have allotted to us.

By building on the momentum and enthusiasm created by the gift, we will be able to embark immediately on a number of initiatives that will ensure that this historic gift will enhance the three important mandates that have brought McMaster and the Faculty of Health Sciences renown around the world: to further innovation in education, to conduct research at the highest level, and to achieve excellence in health care.

Never in Canadian history has a university been presented with this kind of opportunity. At McMaster, we are lucky enough to be able to draw on a long tradition of excellence that will enable us to make the most of our good fortune.

This special edition of our Faculty's magazine is being issued to let our alumni and others connected to the Faculty know about the ways in which we will be moving forward in the allocation of these funds. Our next issue of Network, out within the next few months, will update everyone about the activities of alumni and the Faculty.

I would like to outline a few of the general principles that will guide us as we make decisions about how to make optimal use of the DeGroote gift. Some of these are what we're calling the "people-first" concept. In other words, key decision-makers in the Faculty will be looking first to attract the top talent in the relevant fields.

The "people-first" plan will allow us to adopt a revolutionary strategy for recruiting the best and brightest talent. Traditionally, management of medical schools have identified needs within their programs, placed advertisements, and have then waited to see which applicants have answered the call.

This plan will enable us to make the most of our good fortune.
Michael DeGroote’s $105 million gift has not only made history as the largest such gift ever given to a Canadian university – it is also significant because of the continuing, wide-ranging impact it will have on medical education, research, and the construction of facilities at McMaster University.

The funds will be allocated to two areas: a $64 million endowment fund, supporting education, health care and medical research in perpetuity, and a $41 million capital fund directed to construction and outfitting of laboratory, library and hospital units.

The endowment fund will be allocated as follows:
- $35 million will be directed to the establishment of three centres. Each centre will have an internationally recognized leader in an endowed professorial chair who will build an exceptional team of scientists and caregivers.
  - The $15 million Centre for Research, Education and Care in Pain with a special focus on thalamic pain.
  - The $10 million Centre for Research, Education and Care in Cancer, with a particular focus on the molecular determinants of cancer.
  - The $10 million Centre for Research, Education and Care in Infectious Diseases.
- $25 million will create the Michael G. DeGroote Faculty of Health Sciences Development fund. It will enable McMaster to attract the best health sciences researchers, physicians and teachers.
- $4 million will be directed to two immediate priorities with the establishment of:
  - The Medard DeGroote Chair in Medicine, an endowed chair named after DeGroote’s father. The recommended chairholder is Dr. Akbar Panju.

The capital fund will be allocated as follows:
- $26 million to the Michael G. DeGroote Centre for Learning & Discovery, under construction on campus adjacent to the McMaster Health Sciences Centre.
- $5 million directed to the Michael G. DeGroote Institute for Pain Research and Care that will provide appropriate facilities for a team of researchers and clinicians to revolutionize the way pain is treated and managed.
- $10 million dedicated to the Michael G. DeGroote Pediatric Intensive Care Unit.

“Vhat opportunity is too great, too unique for us not to be bold in seizing it,” said Dr. John Kelton, dean and vice-president of the Faculty of Health Sciences. “But we will also be prudent in ensuring its impact. We will make Mr. DeGroote proud of his commitment.”

“Michael DeGroote, right, confirms the agreement with Dr. John Kelton, dean and vice-president of the Faculty of Health Sciences, left, and McMaster President Dr. Peter George.
Institute focuses on pain causes and treatment

Pain is central to many medical conditions and ailments. Its causes and potential treatments, however, are not thoroughly understood.

A world-class centre is being set up at McMaster, as the result of the DeGroote family gift, that will be devoted to exploring the causes of pain and strategies for overcoming it, as well as caring for patients.

The benefactor’s gift allot a $15 million endowment to establish the Michael G. DeGroote Institute for Pain Research and Care, and $5 million to build the facility on the second floor of the new Michael G. DeGroote Centre for Learning and Discovery.

In particular, the new institute will focus on neuropathic pain, with a special emphasis on thalamic pain. This type of pain is centred in the thalamus of the brain and can cause sufferers to experience numerous forms of discomfort. DeGroote has himself suffered from a severe form of thalamic pain since experiencing a stroke three years ago.

Dr. Akbar Panju, professor of medicine for the Faculty of Health Sciences at McMaster and chief of medicine for Hamilton Health Sciences, has been named interim director of the institute. He has also been recommended to the McMaster University Senate for the newly created Medard DeGroote Chair in Medicine, an endowed chair named after DeGroote’s father.

“Very little is known about the causes of thalamic pain, and very little is known about how to treat it,” said Panju. “But those who suffer from it find it to be, in many cases, extremely severe and intractable. Not only is there a lack of research and treatment for thalamic pain, there is a lack of awareness of this condition. We are planning to develop a place where top researchers and clinicians from around the world can come together to develop a better understanding of this kind of pain, and develop better ways of treating it.”

The first objectives are to seek out international leaders in pain to establish the centre; to set up a website which will build awareness and act as a resource; and to set up an symposium on pain this fall.

“We are committed to recruiting experts in the field who have demonstrated excellence in both research and in clinical settings,” said Dr. Panju. “It is very important that the people we recruit be strong in both these areas.”

Dr. Panju is also adamant that the new institute must tie in seamlessly with the research already going on at McMaster in all areas of pain research, education and treatment.

“Pain is a very broad area of study, and one in which we as a medical community are just beginning to do some critical work,” he said. “There are so many individual variations in terms of basic mechanisms for pain, different pathways in the body, different sites, different causes and different classes of drugs.

“Our goal is to augment the already excellent work done at McMaster and around the world in these areas, and to establish leadership.”

“We really appreciate that Mr. DeGroote has given McMaster and Hamilton this exciting activity. Our ultimate goal is to help people who suffer pain.”

Distinguished physician and educator will launch chair

Dr. Akbar Panju is the interim director of McMaster University’s newly established Michael G. DeGroote Institute for Pain Research and Care and it is intended that he will be appointed to the newly created Medard DeGroote Chair in Medicine. Both positions were announced on Dec. 17, as part of the $105 million gift by businessman Michael DeGroote to McMaster’s medical school.

Dr. Panju is also a professor of medicine for the Faculty of Health Sciences at McMaster University and chief of medicine for Hamilton Health Sciences.

Trained as a physician in Britain, Dr. Panju came to Canada in 1975 and worked as a family physician in the Ontario communities of Ignace, Thunder Bay and Cambridge before completing a residency in internal medicine with further training in cardiology and thrombosis at McMaster University in 1984.

Dr. Panju, 54, has been a faculty member at McMaster since 1986 and his abilities as an instructor have been reflected in teaching awards he has received from students, medical residents and his academic peers.

He is known as a researcher in internal medicine, thromboembolism and cardiology and has produced 46 articles, as well as two book chapters. Earlier this year he was awarded the national Osler Award by the Canadian Society of Internal Medicine, as an individual who exemplified the best in medicine. Previously he was awarded the John C. Sibley award by McMaster’s Faculty of Health Sciences for his outstanding contribution to health sciences education and research.

The Burlington resident is married, with two children.
Construction of the 300,000-square-foot Michael G. DeGroote Centre for Learning and Discovery is expected to be finished this spring.

The Michael G. DeGroote Centre for Learning and Discovery will be state-of-the-art both for innovative teaching and ground-breaking research.

The move into the $71 million, 300,000-square-foot centre is expected to start by late spring, with its first classes scheduled for September this year. The building is north of the Health Sciences Centre, backed by Forsyth Avenue.

A significant portion of the University’s gift from Michael DeGroote and his family, $26 million, has been earmarked for the new building, which is the largest constructed on campus since the Health Sciences Centre was built more than 30 years ago.

The first floor will seat up to 1,800 students from across the University in six large classrooms and five lecture theatres, including the largest seating space on campus with 600 seats.

With room for that many students, Dr. John Kelton, dean and vice-president of the Faculty of Health Sciences, says that the new centre will have a tremendous and immediate impact. “This new space will greatly assist the Faculty’s ability to deliver on our promise of innovative, problem-based learning in all areas of health sciences,” Kelton says.

“Furthermore, it will give a major boost to our ongoing goal of attracting top medical researchers, educators and clinicians.”

The second floor will be used for health care facilities and an additional $10 million of the DeGroote family gift has been allocated for the capital costs of the new Michael G. DeGroote Pediatric Intensive Care Unit, which will be connected to patient units at Hamilton Health Sciences with an enclosed pedestrian bridge to Hamilton Health Sciences’ McMaster site.

Currently, critically ill children and their families from the area must often be sent to other hospitals for care, and the new patient unit will provide for their needs in Hamilton.

As well, the second floor will hold the new Michael G. DeGroote Institute for Pain Research and Care, which has been allocated an additional $5 million from the gift to provide appropriate facilities.

On the third floor will be the offices of the newly-named Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine and the Margaret & Charles Juravinski Education, Research and Development Centre, where research will include faculty investigating new ways of learning.

Also, the third floor will house the Faculty’s Midwifery program, currently based at St. Joseph’s Healthcare Hamilton. In addition, it will contain three 5,000-foot research areas with offices, classrooms and workstations, as well as the advanced videoconferencing technology that will allow students at off-site clinical placements to participate with other students at McMaster.

There are a number of key tenants slated to begin operations in the new DeGroote Centre. One of these, the Faculty’s Program for Education Research and Development (PERD), is an initiative designed to enhance the way health care professionals learn and develop their skills.

Faculty of Health Sciences administrators are enthusiastic about how the DeGroote family gifts will allow McMaster to continue its world-class mission of education, research and care.

“Within the educational sphere, this gift will allow us to renew and expand our physical space, to include state-of-the-art facilities and the consolidation of undergraduate and postgraduate medicine,” said Susan Deenburg, associate dean, academic for the Faculty. “It will make it possible to attract top notch career educators and continue the legacy of curriculum innovation that has brought us world renown.”

On the fourth and fifth floors will be McMaster’s Institute for Molecular Medicine and Health, which recently made innovative steps in the development of the SARS vaccine. There will also be space to pursue new developments in biotechnology.

John Capone, the Faculty’s associate dean, research, says the increased laboratory space will bring many benefits to both the University and the Hamilton area. “This much needed new space will enable us to grow our capacity in leading-edge research in infectious diseases, cancer, and the development of new gene-based therapeutics,” said Capone. “As well, an associated centre will provide support for the commercialization of research findings by McMaster University scientists, and help translate this into economic growth for this region.”

Enhancements for the building feature two innovative design elements: a large atrium that will provide an attractive gathering space for patients, families and staff, and a large “double helix” structure up the west wall by the entrance, that will be visible on the glass wall.

Although stakeholders from all areas of McMaster’s health sciences community have emphasized that the prime focus of the gift will be to attract top medical talent to the University, expenditures on laboratory, medical and classroom equipment are also crucial.

Bookings for the Centre’s third-floor classrooms and tutorial rooms will be arranged by educational services at the Faculty, with classrooms and lecture rooms on the first floor being booked by the office of the registrar at the University.
McMaster Children's Hospital is the second largest pediatric hospital in Ontario, but it currently turns away three of 10 children brought in for care. It has only five beds for critically ill children.

Now, $10 million of the DeGroote family gift has been earmarked to set up the new Michael G. DeGroote Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (ICU).

Located on the second floor of the new Michael G. DeGroote Centre for Learning and Discovery, it will be linked by a pedestrian skyway to other patient units of the McMaster Children's Hospital in the McMaster Health Sciences Centre.

The new unit will provide better care for children and their families and improved pediatric medical education for students of the Faculty of Health Sciences, says Dr. Peter Steer. He is chair of the Department of Pediatrics in the Faculty of Health Sciences, president of McMaster Children's Hospital, and chief of pediatrics for Hamilton Health Sciences and St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton.

"The gift is most extraordinary, just breathtaking," said Steer. "The sheer size of the gift is quite humbling, really. But with all this excitement comes an awesome responsibility to do good work with what we've been given."

The funds will set up a fully-equipped 14 bed pediatric ICU, outfitting the facility with the ventilation, monitoring, invasive and investigative equipment needed, he said, "to get the facility up to speed as efficiently as possible." Government funds will also be sought to assist in operating the new ICU.

The benefits of the new unit will be immediate for both pediatric patients and the medical professionals who work with them, Steer said. As well, it will also boost another important area of McMaster's medical mission: the teaching of pediatric medicine.

"As a significant teaching area in our program, pediatric medicine will really get a boost from the new facilities," said Steer.

"Not only will current students benefit from the enhanced equipment and opportunities for care on a much larger scale, but it will allow us to make our recruitment of post-graduate students that much more attractive," said John Kelton, dean and vice-president of the Faculty of Health Sciences.

"Having facilities that are state-of-the-art means our students are well-versed in the leading edge of developments in the field," said Kelton. "More exposure to critical pediatric patient care will sharpen their skills."

Finally, said Steer, the pediatric ICU will benefit in one more major way from the funds - one which emphasizes a unique aspect of pediatric care. "Providing support for patients' families is a high priority in any type of intensive-care environment," he said.

"But in pediatric ICUs, this is even more significant. Right now, we have virtually no facilities for families of patients who may need long-term care. Within the design of the new unit, though, space is being allotted so the needs of parents and families of patients can be taken care of in a much more appropriate way."

McMaster Children's Hospital plays a central role in the community, providing services for children and their families throughout Hamilton and surrounding area. In the past year, more than 150,000 children and their families received care there.

Currently, there are more than 40 pediatric clinics within the hospital that help young patients with asthma, cancer, developmental disorders and other illness. It offers outpatient programs and services including those in the nutrition, metabolism, exercise, development, pediatrics and rehabilitation.

The hospital is also home to one of the country's newest and busiest neonatal intensive care units.
Philanthropist Michael DeGroote is a self-made man whose extraordinary achievements in the world of business were predicated on a few distinct principles.

He believes in hard work, doing the most with the least, being determined and consistent, being accountable, and above all, being decisive.

DeGroote, 70, was born in Belgium and immigrated to Canada with his parents when he was 14 years old.

Due to family financial pressures, he left school in Grade 9 to work in the tobacco fields in Langton near Tillsonburg, Ontario to help his family. At age 18, he bought an old army truck and began hauling manure from dairy farms to the tobacco fields. From that first foray into the world of business, he built a small trucking firm.

In 1959, DeGroote moved to the Hamilton area. He purchased Laidlaw Transport Ltd., building it into the company that would become the largest school bus operator and third largest waste management company in North America.

During the 1970s, DeGroote owned the Hamilton Tiger-Cats of the Canadian Football League.

In 1988, DeGroote sold Laidlaw Inc. to Canadian Pacific. In 1990, he retired to Bermuda where he still resides. His retirement did not last long, however, as he entered into several successful business ventures including U.S. companies such as Republic Industries, AutoNation Inc., Century Business Services, Capital Environmental Resource Inc.

This is not the first time DeGroote and his family have made major contributions to McMaster. Previous gifts have included significant donations to the business school, the student centre and the Museum of Art. He has also contributed to programs in literary criticism and epilepsy research.

In 1990, DeGroote was made an Officer of the Order of Canada, and in 1992 he was awarded an honorary degree from McMaster.

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How to Double Your Gift

Take advantage of an exciting opportunity to help students in financial need.

For a limited time, the Ontario Government will match your donation for student financial aid dollar for dollar - instantly doubling the value of your gift.

McMaster University will place your gift, and the government matching dollars, in The McMaster Student Opportunity Fund. The investment income from this endowed trust will be dedicated to student bursaries. Opportunities to name a bursary are available for gifts of $10,000 or more.

At McMaster we believe that no student should be denied access to higher education because of financial need. For more information on how you can help McMaster's students realize the dream of a higher education, contact the Development Office at: (905) 525-9140 ext. 27602

Please consider a gift to one of the following:
- School of Nursing Bursary Fund
- School of Midwifery Bursary Fund
- School of Rehab Sciences Bursary Fund
- Bachelor of Health Sciences Hon. Bursay Fund
- Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine Bursary Fund

Please indicate in the memo section of your cheque the desired bursary.
**Reaction**

**Sonia Anand, MD**  
Medicine ’92  
Associate Professor, Medicine  
Faculty of Health Sciences

"The donation to McMaster Medical School is spectacular. The funds have been earmarked to improve research programs at the University and clinical services within Hamilton Health Sciences. I am thrilled by the announcement, and look forward to seeing all of the great things that come from it!"

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**John Evans, MD**  
Founder, McMaster Medical School  
Chairman of the Board, Torstar Corporation

"This unprecedented gift will allow the Faculty and the University to continue the outstanding track record of innovation that has always characterized health sciences education at M.C.M. We could not have dreamed about support at this level when the Medical School was founded. It recognizes the creative contribution and commitment of excellence which have continued over more than three decades to enhance the School’s reputation worldwide."

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**John Capone, PhD**  
Associate Dean, Research  
Faculty of Health Sciences

"Strategic investments into leading-edge cancer, infectious diseases and pain research, made possible through the DeGroote donation, provides an outstanding opportunity to recruit the best and the brightest scientists to M.C.M. and, to establish international centres of excellence in these fields."

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**Susan Denburg, PhD**  
Associate Dean, Academic  
Faculty of Health Sciences

"The opportunities the gift will afford should boost the morale and motivation of members of the Faculty and the broader M.C.M. community, taking our programs to new levels of excellence. It will create new opportunities for the Faculty within a highly competitive external environment, as the associated resources are leveraged strategically."

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**Mary Law, PhD**  
Associate Dean, School of Rehabilitation Sciences, Faculty of Health Sciences

"Because of the Faculty of Health Sciences’ interdisciplinary focus, the DeGroote gift will be of tremendous benefit for all members of the Faculty of Health Sciences. Supporting education, capital building and the generation of new knowledge for people with chronic pain, stroke or cancer will make an important difference for the Faculty, University and our community for years to come."

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**Catherine Tompkins, PhD**  
Acting Associate Dean, School of Nursing  
Faculty of Health Sciences

"This gift will have a far-reaching effect on all aspects of health sciences education at M.C.M., and nursing is no exception. Students will now be able to benefit from a wide range of educational opportunities, enhanced resources and increased practical applications that were not possible before."

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**The Hon. Tony Valeri**  
Minister of Transport  
MP, Stoney Creek

"Mr. DeGroote’s exceptional gift will have a significant impact for many years to come. It’s also an overwhelming expression of confidence in the future for M.C.M. and the Hamilton community at large."

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**Cynthia Forrest, RN**  
President, Nursing Alumni

"Mr. DeGroote’s endowment to M.C.M. to further facilitate the university as a world-wide centre of excellence in health care, will undoubtedly create an indelible impact on the quality of health care overall and the health of the local community in Hamilton."

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**Sarah McMullen**  
Editor, McMaster University Medical Journal

"M.C.M. has long been touted as the most innovative medical school in Canada, and hopefully this gift will provide the resources and motivation necessary to keep us at the forefront of innovation and discovery."

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**Larry Di Ianni**  
Mayor, City of Hamilton

"The gift helps emphasize the important role that M.C.M. plays within our city. Thanks to the work of the M.C.M. Health Sciences program, Hamilton has an internationally renowned reputation in health care research and education. M. R. DeGroote’s generosity will greatly enhance the good work at M.C.M. and will continue to enrich our community."

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**Marie Bountrogianni, PhD**  
MPP for Hamilton Mountain

"Mr. DeGroote’s gift will not only benefit M.C.M. students and faculty, but will have a far-reaching impact beyond the campus, helping the University to continue to produce highly educated and highly trained graduates, eager to make their mark on the world."