$15-million gift launches digestive health institute

Hip surgeon: MD alumnus operates on sports superstars

New program trains physician assistants
The turning of a new year is as much a time to reflect on our history as it is an opportunity to contemplate our future. When the Faculty of Health Sciences formed in 1974, it consisted of a medical school, a nursing school and a small offering of graduate programs. At the time, our enrolment was 580 students. Today, more than 4,000 students make the Faculty their educational home.

Through our innovative problem-based learning curriculum, we train doctors, nurses, midwives, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, scientists and other professionals who go on to successful careers in healthcare and health-care research. No matter what their discipline, our students are taught to approach problems collaboratively, with the goal of continually improving patient care.

In 2009, we will mark 35 years of excellence in research and education but, like all successful ventures, our growth has not been accomplished in isolation. It has been made possible through the generous support of our alumni and friends.

In October, the Faculty of Health Sciences received a $15-million gift to establish a digestive health research institute. The gift was the second significant contribution from the Farncombe family of Oakville. In 2004, the Farncombe family provided $3.5 million to the digestive diseases program to set up a sterile gnotobiotic laboratory and an endowed chair in inflammatory bowel disease.

The most recent gift will be used to build the Farncombe Family Digestive Health Research Institute on the third floor of the Health Sciences Centre, as well as create four prestigious endowed chairs and provide scholarships for rising stars.

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We are thankful to the Farncombe family for their belief in us – and their extraordinary support of our renowned digestive health research program. We look forward to construction of the new institute in 2009, as well as the many important discoveries that will follow.

There have been other firsts in the Faculty of Health Sciences over the past year. McMaster became the first university in Canada to offer an education program for physician assistants. While new to Ontario, physician assistants have been part of the U.S. health-care system for more than 40 years. They also are employed in Manitoba and by the Canadian Forces.

We welcomed our first class of 21 students in September and are committed to providing them with the education they need to successfully transition into the field. We look forward to watching their progress both here at McMaster and beyond. As the first civilian physician assistants in Ontario, they will help to define their profession.

In the School of Nursing, three of our faculty – Alba DiCenso, Jennifer Skelly and Sue Matthews – have been recently named among the top 100 nurses in Canada.

In the School of Rehabilitation Science, Professor Sue Baptiste has launched an innovative program to help internationally trained occupational therapists prepare for their Canadian certification exam.

This fall also marked the launch of the Niagara Regional Campus of the Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine. Based at St. Catharines General Hospital, the Niagara campus opened its doors to 15 first-year students in December. The initiative comes just a year after we successfully launched the Waterloo Regional Campus in downtown Kitchener.

This has been an exciting period of development for us, and we have a lot to look forward to in 2009 as we continue to grow our reputation as a world leader in health-care research and education.
As a professor at McMaster University, Michael Gent set the international gold standard for high-quality medical research. Now, the establishment of an endowed chair in his name will ensure that tradition continues.

The professor emeritus of the Department of Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics returned to McMaster in May from his home in Scotland to celebrate the creation of the Michael Gent Chair in Healthcare Research.

The research chair has been established with a gift from Gent, and will be held by the chair of the Department of Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics. The first holder – for two months – was his former student, Brian Haynes.

“The Michael Gent Chair will bring prestige to the department, given the research accomplishments of its benefactor, and it will provide enduring funding to strengthen the faculty of the department,” Haynes said.

Haynes finished 10 years as the department chair of Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics at the end of June. The chair then moved to acting department chair Kathryn Bennett.

Gent joined McMaster University in 1969 as an associate professor and was promoted to professor in 1973. He chaired the Department of Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics from 1973-79 before becoming associate dean, research, for the Faculty of Health Sciences from 1979-1983.

Under Gent’s direction, McMaster established the leading clinical trials research group in the country.

In 2004, a professorship was established in Gent’s name after he made a significant contribution to the university. Another recent donation has enabled the professorship to be converted to an endowed chair.

“I always said I would never leave McMaster, so I am greatly honoured to continue my association with the department by having my name remain here on the endowed chair,” Gent said.

Professors named to new endowed chair and professorship

Optimal aging and child health are the focus of research for two new positions at the Faculty of Health Sciences.

Parminder Raina has been named the first Raymond and Margaret Labarge Chair in Research and Knowledge Application for Optimal Aging.

Raina is a professor in the Department of Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics and director of the McMaster University Evidence-Based Practice Centre. He is also the co-director of the R. Samuel McLaughlin Centre for Research and Education in Aging and Health.

Raina’s research interests are in the epidemiology of aging, including the aging brain, disability and fall-related injuries.

He is currently the lead principal investigator of the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging, a national, long-term study that will follow approximately 50,000 Canadians between the ages of 45 and 85 for a period of at least 20 years.

McMaster alumna Suzanne Labarge donated $2 million to McMaster to establish the endowed chair, which was named in honour of her parents. She earned her BA in economics from McMaster in 1967 and an MBA from Harvard in 1971. She is now retired from a career in senior executive management with the federal government and the Royal Bank.

John Cairney has been named the inaugural holder of the McMaster Family Medicine Professorship in Child Health Research.

Recruited from the University of Toronto and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Cairney is an associate professor in the Department of Family Medicine and the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioural Neurosciences. He has also been appointed the associate director of research for family medicine.

Cairney’s research focuses on examining the pattern of mental health problems across the lifespan as well as the impact of childhood disability on the physical and psychological development of children.

“I came to McMaster because of its reputation for world-class research in children’s mental health and pediatrics, and also because of its innovative approach to interdisciplinary research and practice,” he said.

The Department of Family Medicine committed $1 million over eight years to establish the professorship.
Three join the Community of Distinction

The father of pediatric exercise science, a health economist who shaped the study of health-care interventions and a champion of evidence-based neonatal care have been honoured by the Faculty of Health Sciences.

Oded Bar-Or, Bernie O’Brien and Jack Sinclair were named the 2007 inductees of the Faculty’s Community of Distinction.

The photographs and biographies of the three former professors have joined the gallery, which was recently relocated to the Ewart Angus Centre in the Health Sciences Centre.

Up to five individuals are selected annually to join the Community of Distinction. The gallery was established to honour alumni, faculty and staff who have brought distinction and recognition to McMaster University and the Faculty of Health Sciences through innovative scholarship and outstanding research.

Oded Bar-Or, MD, dedicated his life to helping children develop healthier lifestyles. As a visiting professor, then professor of the Department of Pediatrics from 1981 through 2003, he earned worldwide renown as the father of pediatric exercise science. In 1983 he established the world’s first Children’s Exercise and Nutrition Centre at McMaster, laying the groundwork for revolutionary work combining science and clinical applications in the field of childhood exercise, nutrition and obesity. Also known as a gentle soul and gifted mentor, his distinguished accomplishments led to many awards and honours, including honorary degrees from three universities.

Bernie O’Brien, PhD, was a pre-eminent health economist who established McMaster University as a world leader in assessing the benefits and costs of health care interventions. Before his untimely death at the age of 44, he had an illustrious career as a professor and researcher, garnering national and international awards in recognition of his pioneering accomplishments in developing new methods for economic evaluation in health care. A professor in the Department of Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics from 1990 to 2004, he was a passionate teacher and a gifted collaborator with a distinct talent for building bridges for shared research programs between academic, clinical and industry interests.

Jack Sinclair, MD, brought evidence-based medicine to the field of neonatology. A respected scholar of medicine, skilled clinician and inimitable mentor, Dr. Sinclair was a professor of pediatrics at McMaster University from 1970 until retirement in 1999. He built Hamilton’s neonatal clinical care and training programs, and introduced rigorous evaluation of the care provided to premature and seriously ill newborns. His leadership led to standards of excellence in neonatal research and care that are recognized and practised around the world. In tribute, an endowed chair in neonatology has been established in his name at McMaster University.

Professor inducted into city gallery

Sandra Witelson, a professor of the Department of Psychiatry and Neurosciences, was inducted in 2007 into the Hamilton Gallery of Distinction. The gallery recognizes outstanding Hamilton citizens, past and present, who have made significant contributions towards the betterment of this community.

Witelson, a neuroscientist who holds the endowed Albert Einstein/Irving Zucker Chair in Neurosciences, was honoured for bringing international honour and distinction to Hamilton through her research and her study of Albert Einstein’s brain. She is a fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and has been an active community volunteer. The gallery, located in the Hamilton Convention Centre, displays a portrait of each inductee as well as a citation highlighting outstanding achievements.

Simulated OR dedicated

A McMaster University training lab that mimics the challenges of a hospital operating room has been funded by Robert Hansebout, chair of the Department of Surgery from 1989 to 1999.

The Dr. Robert and Agnes Hansebout and Family Simulated Operating Room was dedicated this year following a gift from the Hansebout family. Robert Hansebout, a professor emeritus, is an internationally recognized expert in spinal cord trauma.

The simulated operating room features a lifelike robot that mimics human functions such as breathing and swelling. The room is part of the Clinical Learning Centre in the Health Sciences Centre. It is used to teach all of the students enrolled in the Faculty of Health Sciences.
Emerging investigators awarded CRCs

The Faculty of Health Sciences has recruited several promising investigators to hold Canada Research Chairs (CRCs). The federal program was created to attract and retain in Canada some of the world’s most accomplished and promising researchers.

McMaster University has a total of 65 Canada Research Chairs. Tier one chairs are given to outstanding researchers acknowledged by their peers as leaders in their fields. Tier two chairs are awarded to exceptional emerging researchers, acknowledged by their peers as having the potential to lead in their field.

The following tier two chairs have been awarded in the Faculty of Health Sciences since 2007:

Jonathan Draper, assistant professor in the Department of Pathology and Molecular Medicine, has been named the Canada Research Chair in Human Stem Cell Lineage Commitment. Recruited in February 2008 as a principal investigator at the McMaster Stem Cell and Cancer Research Institute, Draper was one of the first scientists in the world to intensively grow and begin to characterize human embryonic stem cells. He comes to McMaster University from the United Kingdom.

Kathy McCoy, a scientist investigating how bacteria and fungi influence the development of the immune system, has been appointed the Canada Research Chair in Gastrointestinal Immunology. McCoy joined the Department of Medicine as an assistant professor in 2006, returning home to Canada from the Institute of Experimental Immunology in Zurich, Switzerland. Her research focuses on how the immune system is influenced by early exposure to bacteria, fungi and pathogens, and through that investigation she hopes to develop better ways to treat and prevent allergies.

Sheila Singh, assistant professor of the Department of Surgery, has received a Canada Research Chair in Human Cancer Stem Cell Biology. As a pediatric neurosurgeon and research scientist, Singh brings her patient experiences to the laboratory as she seeks to understand what causes brain tumours in children. Recruited to the McMaster Stem Cell and Cancer Research Institute in July 2007, her research focuses on characterizing cancer stem cells that have been linked to the development and maintenance of brain tumours.

Christopher Wynder, a principal investigator at the McMaster Stem Cell and Cancer Institute (SCC-RI), holds the Canada Research Chair in the Epigenetic Control of Stem Cells. An emerging leader in his field, Wynder’s research focuses on understanding how genes are switched on or off in human embryonic stem cells, which is fundamental to understanding the development and progression of cancer. He was recruited to the SCC-RI in June 2006.

Petra Arck, an associate professor in the Department of Medicine, has been appointed the Canada Research Chair in Neuroimmunology. Her research involves using animal models to investigate the impact of psychological stress on the body. Several diseases, such as inflammatory bowel disease and asthma, have long been recognized to be triggered or aggravated by psychological stress. Arck, a recruit from Germany, is hoping to figure out how people can adapt their behavior so that stress doesn’t affect their health.

Renewals of tier one CRCs include:

- Deborah Cook, professor of the Department of Medicine, has been renewed as the Canada Research Chair of Research Transfer in Intensive Care;
- Gerry Wright, professor of the Department of Biochemistry and Biomedical Sciences, has been renewed as the Canada Research Chair in Molecular Studies of Antibiotics;
- David Andrews, professor of biochemistry and biomedical sciences, has been renewed as the Canada Research Chair in Membrane Biogenesis;
- Peter Rosenbaum, professor of the Department of Pediatrics, has been renewed as the Canada Research Chair in Childhood Disability Research, Dissemination and Mentoring;
- Geoff Norman, professor of Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics, has been renewed as the Canada Research Chair in Cognitive Dimension of Clinical Expertise.

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The School of Rehabilitation Science received $519,000 from the Government of Ontario to create a pilot project aimed at supporting internationally educated occupational therapists preparing for their Canadian certification exam.

The first iteration of the Occupational Therapy Examination Preparation Program (OTepp) ran this fall, before the national certification exam. A second session, running from April to June, will coordinate with the July exam.

“There are people living in this country who can do the work, but they can’t get the credential,” said Sue Baptiste, a professor at the School of Rehabilitation Science and principal investigator for the project.

The goal of OTepp is to help bridge that gap.

Baptiste and Mary Law, associate dean of the School of Rehabilitation Science, developed an informal program to support internationally trained occupational therapists about a decade ago. OTepp is the first formal offering of that initiative. Baptiste said her research shows that occupational therapists who train abroad are more likely to pass their Canadian exams when they are supported and mentored.

Thirty-four people enrolled in the fall session of OTepp with many of those students participating from elsewhere in Ontario or overseas, Baptiste said.

“I’m expecting that on an annual basis we’re looking at about 60 to 70 people taking it,” she said.

Her hope is partnerships can be formed with other rehabilitation schools across the country to further enhance the accessibility of the program. Currently, the University of British Columbia and the regulatory college for occupational therapy in that province are working with the OTepp investigative team to become the first distance site with funding from the B.C. government. The program is currently offered through traditional and distance education courses. The pilot runs until October 2009.

Lynch to head body of international midwives

As one of the first regulated midwives in Ontario, Bridget Lynch helped to shape her profession into a model of practice that’s respected around the world. Now the associate clinical professor at McMaster is taking on a new challenge as the first Canadian to lead the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM).

A midwife since the early 1980s, and registered in 1994 when the profession was regulated in Ontario, Lynch’s advocacy experience goes back more than a decade.

She served as president of the Association of Ontario Midwives before becoming a board member of the ICM in 2002, deputy director in 2005 and then president this past June. The ICM represents midwives in more than 80 countries worldwide.

“While the profession of midwifery is still relatively new to Canada, midwifery has long been central to maternal and newborn care in most countries,” said Lynch, who has taught in McMaster’s midwifery education program since 2001.

“During my years with the ICM I have visited midwives in South America, Europe, Asia and Africa. The dedication of these midwives has been inspiring,” she said. “But the challenges facing them have emphasized the critical need to develop a strong international network of midwifery.”

“One of the priorities during my term is to strengthen the profession globally,” she said, explaining the privatization of healthcare threatens to erode midwifery in some countries.

In September, a $9-million project between the ICM and the United Nations Population Fund was launched to strengthen the education and regulation of midwifery in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia over the next three to five years.

Lynch also wants to improve the relationship between midwives, nurses, obstetricians and pediatricians to ensure seamless multidisciplinary care centred on the mother and her newborn.

“The spotlight is on midwives right now at an international level,” she said.

Alumna remembered

A trust fund has been created in memory of Alison Lall (née Fisher), an alumna of the School of Rehabilitation Science.

Lall and two of her children were the victims of a homicide in Calgary in May.

The Alison (Fisher) Lall Trust Fund has been established to support students in the occupational therapy program.

The Guelph native graduated from the program in 1997 after earlier earning a BA (Hon) from McMaster in gerontology and sociology.

“She was a quietly confident and exceptionally talented student occupational therapist,” said Mary Law, professor and associate dean of rehabilitation science.

Contributions in remembrance may be made online at givetomcmaster.ca. The trust fund is in the sub-category drop-down menu.
Nursing grad assists in Ethiopia

As a nursing student at McMaster, Harpreet Dhillon worked to raise awareness about issues affecting Africa and the opportunities for students to help.

Her goal, as a founding member of UNICEF Mac, was to let others know about the needs of a nation beleaguered by AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.

“I always felt like I had a disconnect because I hadn’t actually been there and that’s what students were looking at and asking questions about,” Dhillon said of Africa.

Last year, the 23-year-old, who graduated with a BScN in 2007, traveled to the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, to work with the Ethiopian Nurses Association.

Her six-month internship was funded by the Canadian International Development Agency in partnership with the Canadian Nurses Association and the Canadian Society for International Health. By chance, she ended up working at the same organization as another McMaster nursing alumna, Charlotte Passmore.

Dhillon interned as an information management officer in the association’s headquarters, working to improve the organization’s communications, visibility and software and computer capabilities.

“That’s what the need was,” she said, explaining that the work was new to her, but it drew on a familiar skill set.

“It was basically problem-based learning,” she said.

While in Ethiopia, Dhillon volunteered with Mother Theresa’s Missionaries of Charity, working in a wound-care clinic. On a weekly basis, she would change wound dressings for people dealing with the effects of diabetes and other injuries.

“Basic things that you might see here were just exacerbated to phenomenal levels,” she said, recalling the many patients she treated with diabetes.

Dhillon said the experience gave her a better understanding of the world and health-care challenges abroad.

The nursing grad is planning to do more international medical aid work, likely in South Asia. She is currently upgrading her acute care skills.

“I think once you get a taste of international health care and working internationally, you can’t get enough of it,” she said.

Nursing school forms partnerships abroad

Ten nursing graduates from Oman have expanded their international experience at McMaster University.

The visiting group arrived from the Middle East in August to spend two months learning about Canadian nursing theory at McMaster and observing Canadian nursing practice at various sites of Hamilton Health Sciences.

The program marks the beginning of a new partnership between the School of Nursing, Hamilton Health Sciences and the Sultan Qaboos University in Oman.

“To me, it’s a beautiful way to mutually explore each other’s strengths,” said Basanti Majumdar, the School of Nursing professor who organized the program.

The visiting nurses graduated in May from Sultan Qaboos University with a BScN, the second class of the university to do so. As a requirement of their degree, they have to complete a two-month internship abroad.

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Nursing alumna Harpreet Dhillon

international medical aid work, likely in South Asia. She is currently upgrading her acute care skills.

“I think once you get a taste of international health care and working internationally, you can’t get enough of it,” she said.

Faculty recognized as exceptional nurses

Three faculty members in the School of Nursing have been named among the top 100 registered nurses in Canada.

Alba DiCenso, Jennifer Skelly and Sue Matthews have each received a Centennial Award from the Canadian Nurses Association for their contributions to the profession.

DiCenso, a professor in the School of Nursing and the Department of Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics, was recognized for her accomplishments in evidence-based nursing and advanced practice nursing.

Skelly, an associate professor of nursing, was honoured for expertise and leadership in establishing the only continence education program in North America.

Matthews, an associate clinical professor, is vice-president (Ontario) and chief of practice for the Victorian Order of Nurses. She was recognized for her accomplishments as the provincial chief nursing officer from 2004 to 2006.
McMaster, St. Catharines partner on family health centre

A new partnership has been formed between the Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine and the City of St. Catharines to establish the McMaster Niagara Family Health Centre.

The centre, located at 18-24 Ontario Street, will be a clinical teaching unit to educate future doctors and will help address the need for more family physicians in the area.

The medical school and community are recruiting four physicians to oversee eight family medicine residents. Medical students will also be placed at the centre during their clerkship. The centre is expected to roster more than 6,000 patients.

Renovations of the city-owned space, currently the Community Physicians Clinic, started in the summer. The centre will welcome the first residents in July 2009.

More medical students training in Brant-area hospitals

More medical students are training in Brant-area hospitals through the McMaster Community and Rural Education program, known as Mac-CARE.

This fall, the Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine increased the number of students on four- to six-week rotations to 80 a year.

The students will be hosted at all the Brant Community Healthcare System hospitals as well as the Norfolk General Hospital in Simcoe, the West Haldimand Hospital in Hagersville and the Aboriginal Health Centre in Six Nations.

McMaster partners with Brampton hospitals to train doctors

The William Osler Health Centre is the newest teaching site for the Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine.

In July, seven residents began their two-year training program at Brampton Civic Hospital, part of the William Osler Health Centre. The program will grow to a total of 18 residents by 2010.

Residents will gain experience primarily at Brampton Civic Hospital, with some specialized training at the Etobicoke General site.

The initiative, made possible by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, is aimed at increasing the training of new physicians in the province.

Regine Krechowicz (BASc '07) fulfilled a lifelong dream this past summer when she cycled across Canada on a trek that began on the nation’s birthday and ended just before she started medical school at her alma mater.

Over the course of two months, the Arts and Science Program grad logged 6,600 kilometres, travelling from Vancouver to Montreal and visiting many small communities in between.

The journey was a chance for the 25-year-old to explore the places she could one day set up a primary-care practice.

“It was a great experience to see all the communities, especially when I crossed into Northern Ontario and thought, ‘This could be a place I could come back to,’ ” she said.

Krechowicz’s interest in rural medicine has led her to enroll in the Niagara Regional Campus of the Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine. She is among the first class of 15 students at the satellite campus, which opened this fall.

“I thought it would be such a great environment to learn in,” she said. “I really knew if I was going to study medicine, it would have to be through a problem-based learning approach.”

The Niagra campus, located in a newly renovated wing of the St. Catharines General Hospital, is the second regional campus to be established.

In 2007, the Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine launched the Waterloo Regional Campus with 15 first-year students. The class has already grown by more than one-third, as the provincial Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care increased the number of first-year student seats to 21 this year.

All Niagara and Waterloo students spend the first four months of the medical program in Hamilton before moving to the regional campuses for the rest of their training.

Dr. Karl Stobbe, the regional assistant dean of the Niagara campus who was responsible for setting up both regional campuses, said there has been terrific response from the Niagara medical community to provide part-time instructors and tutors.

“We’re getting good at this,” he said.

“But we have to build things in a way that fits here, for what suits the region.”

Construction is underway of a permanent home for the Waterloo campus. The school is temporarily housed in a Kitchener office tower, but will relocate before September 2009 to a new three-storey building devoted to the McMaster medical school on the University of Waterloo’s Health Sciences Campus in downtown Kitchener.

The Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine set a new record this fall by welcoming its largest class of 183 first-year students. Since 2000, first-year enrolment has increased by 83 per cent, due to a provincial government initiative to educate more doctors in Ontario.

Krechowicz, who grew up in Oshawa, said she intends to work in one of the many underserviced communities in Ontario. She realized that was what she wanted during a volunteer placement with a doctor in India.

“I realized as a physician you can have a much greater impact in a community,” she said.
Michael Peirone (M.Sc. ‘96) has returned to McMaster to enroll in Canada’s first civilian physician assistant (PA) education program.

The 39-year-old, who earned his master’s in molecular genetics, is used to spending his days with doctors. His wife is a family physician. His friends are doctors. And now he will become one of the first physician assistants to be trained in Ontario. PAs provide patient care under the supervision of a physician in a variety of clinical settings.

“It’s kind of exciting to forge a trail and influence the way that the profession will develop over the years,” he said.

Launched in September 2008, the two-year course has been developed using McMaster’s signature problem-based learning curriculum. The first year of study focuses on the clinical sciences supporting health-care delivery. In the second year of the consecutive 24-month program, the students are in clinical placements.

John Cunnington, director of the McMaster PA education program, has personal experience with new programs, as he is a graduate of the McMaster medical school’s inaugural class of 1972. He said introducing PAs into the health-care system will improve the capacity of doctors to see patients.

“Physicians— particularly in community hospitals, private practice and community practice — could really benefit from assistants. If you have an assistant, you have two people doing the work. You can delegate. You can divide. You can accomplish more,” he said.

PAs have been part of the health-care system in the United States since the 1960s. In Canada, they are employed by the Canadian Forces and also work in Manitoba, where they are called clinical assistants.

The duties of PAs depend on the supervising physician’s scope of practice. Responsibilities include conducting patient interviews and taking medical histories, performing physical exams or providing counselling on preventative health care.

Peirone, who is interested in primary care, said much can be learned from the successful history of the PA profession elsewhere.

“It’s encouraging because you see the role the PAs have in the military and in the United States. Their scope of practice is very wide and they have a really good opportunity to specialize,” he said.

“I think that we, as physician assistants in training, need to take a role in not only understanding the scope of practice that PAs are going to have in Ontario, but to shape that in whatever way we can.”

More than 260 applications were received for 21 spots in the inaugural PA class. Many of the successful applicants had previous experience in the health-care sector.

“We want them to be ambassadors for the profession so that the profession will grow and expand,” Cunnington said. “And these people in the first class are ideally positioned to take on that role.”

Two win Michael G. DeGroote Fellowship Awards

Two young investigators with diverse clinical and scientific backgrounds are the inaugural recipients of the 2008 Michael G. DeGroote Post-Doctoral Fellowship Award.

Kelly O’Brien is a physiotherapist who earned her PhD from the University of Toronto and joined the School of Rehabilitation Science at McMaster University in September 2008. Her post-doctoral research focuses on the disability experienced by adults living with HIV/AIDS.

Tim James is a biologist who earned his PhD from Duke University and joined McMaster as a post-doctoral fellow in January 2008. His research focuses on genetic control of mitochondrial inheritance in the pathogenic yeast Cryptococcus neoformans.

The post-doctoral fellowship is awarded to a young investigator with an exemplary academic record and an interest in pursuing post-doctoral research in one of the many areas that are demonstrated strengths of the Faculty of Health Sciences.

The award provides annual support of up to $45,000 for up to three years, through the Michael G. DeGroote Faculty of Health Sciences Development Fund. A second fellowship, the Michael G. DeGroote Academic Fellowship Award, has also been created through the development fund. It provides support of $75,000 per year for two years for a research associate, academic, in the Faculty of Health Sciences.

The deadline for this year’s Michael G. DeGroote Fellowship Awards is March 2, 2009. For more information or to apply, visit www.fhs.mcmaster.ca/mgdfa.
A $15-million gift to the Faculty of Health Sciences has launched a new institute dedicated to understanding the causes of chronic digestive diseases and developing new treatments for sufferers.

The Farncombe Family Digestive Health Research Institute has been established through a generous contribution from the Farncombe family of Oakville.

A celebration drawing together the family and faculty, staff and students from digestive health research program and McMaster, as well as officials from the Crohn’s and Colitis Foundation of Canada, was held at the Michael G. DeGroote Centre for Learning and Discovery in October.

The gift includes infrastructure capital for an innovative home for the institute, graduate scholarships and four endowed chairs, including one held by the newly appointed scientific director John Wallace.

Wallace, a pharmacologist and internationally renowned investigator in the field of inflammation, joins McMaster in January 2009. He has been named the inaugural chairholder of the Farncombe Family Chair in Digestive Health Research.

“As academic researchers, we have to get past the notion that our job is complete when we’ve published a paper,” he said. “Publishing is important to share the information with other researchers, but we must also do a much better job of keeping the public informed of the discoveries we have made.”

“We also have an obligation to try to translate our research findings into meaningful advances in clinical care, and by striving to commercialize the important discoveries we make, we can generate funds to expand our research effort.”

The Farncombe Institute is the evolution of McMaster’s successful digestive diseases research program, which has garnered an international reputation as one of the top 10 gastrointestinal research groups in the world over its 25 years.

The research of the institute is focused on developing new strategies for the diag-
nosis, treatment and prevention of intestinal diseases, with particular emphasis on investigating the role of the bacteria in the gut.

More than two million Canadians suffer gastrointestinal disorders that impact many aspects of health.

“In our community, there are many people suffering with digestive diseases,” said Stephen Collins, a founder of the digestive health research program and associate dean of research for the Faculty of Health Sciences. “Many of these are adults, often between the ages of 18 to 25, in the prime of their lives. Many of them are prisoners of their symptoms.”

John Kelton, dean and vice-president of the Faculty of Health Sciences, said the Farncombe’s gift will provide hope to those who suffer.

“It will be the quiet inspiration at a hospital bedside,” he said. “That is where the Farncombe family investment will go to work – in the most private, most vulnerable moments of a patient’s life.”

The gift will also enhance the institute’s role as an innovative training environment focused on developing tomorrow’s leaders in the investigation of digestive diseases.

The funding for the institute is the second major gift from the Farncombe family. In 2004, they gave $3.5 million to the Intestinal Disease Research Program to establish both a gnotobiotic, or germ-free, laboratory that was unique at a Canadian university, and the endowed Farncombe Family Chair in Inflammatory Bowel Disease.

Since receiving the initial gift, the digestive diseases program has leveraged $21.5 million in new investments, particularly in research grants and additional facilities. The research program has acquired cutting-edge DNA sequencing equipment, received the allocation of two senior scientist positions and welcomed international graduate students.

A new home for the Farncombe Institute will be constructed on the third floor of the Health Sciences Centre and will include laboratories, offices and a unique meeting area and atrium for scientists from a variety of disciplines to share ideas and form new collaborations.

Construction of the institute is expected to begin in early 2009. Its website is farncombe.mcmaster.ca.

Wallace takes reins of Farncombe Institute

John Wallace has been recruited to McMaster University to lead the Farncombe Family Digestive Health Research Institute as its first scientific director.

An internationally renowned pharmacologist, he also now holds the Farncombe Family Chair in Digestive Health Research. He has been appointed a professor in the Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine and begins Jan. 1, 2009.

Before joining McMaster, Wallace was a professor of pharmacology and therapeutics at the University of Calgary and held a Canada Research Chair in Inflammation. He received his B.Sc. and M.Sc. from Queen’s University and his PhD from the University of Toronto. He completed his post-doctoral studies at the Wellcome Research Laboratories in London, England.

Wallace has founded two pharmaceutical companies and has expertise in the commercialization of new technology.

His personal research interests are focused on mediators of inflammation and their contribution to mucosal injury and dysfunction. He is also interested in the mechanisms of injury induced by the gastrointestinal tract by anti-inflammatory drugs, and the factors that regulate healing of ulcers.

The author of more than 300 peer reviewed papers, he is among the top 0.5 per cent of biomedical scientists in the world in terms of citations.

In 2007, Wallace completed his MBA from the University of Birmingham.
A large art piece of etched glass panels has been installed in the Health Sciences Library, a donation in honour of four generations of Bensen family alumni of McMaster.

Twelve glass panels with images and landscapes of ten provinces and two territories of Canada form a 53-foot-long glass wall of the Jan and Mien Heersink Reading Pavilion. Created by Canadian crystal artist Mark Raynes Roberts, the work is called “A View to Our Heritage” and communicates the tapestry of the country.

“The art allows us to enhance a beautiful room which is designed to encourage an openness to knowledge,” said John Kelton, dean and vice-president of the Faculty of Health Sciences. “This reminds us of the world beyond science and of the vastness and openness of our Canadian heritage.”

Donors and Hamilton art collectors Bill and Wynn Bensen made the donation in tribute to the members of the Bensen family who have made McMaster their academic home since 1905.
- Roy Carlyle Bensen received two degrees from McMaster in 1907 and 1908, as well as the Chancellor’s Gold Medal as the best student. He returned to McMaster as a professor in 1930 and was chair of the Department of Philosophy until 1941.
- Roy’s son Harold Bensen did his undergraduate studies at McMaster before his medical degree in London, Ontario. He was later a family physician in Hamilton.
- Harold’s son Bill, the donor, was in the second graduating class of the Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine, in 1973.
- Bill’s son Rob has three degrees from McMaster, including an MBA. “This medical library is the soul of this building, of the Faculty of Health Sciences,” said Bill Bensen, a rheumatologist and clinical professor of medicine at McMaster’s medical school. “We want the art and culture to surprise and stimulate everyone, particularly our students.”

Six department chairs, who during their terms brought leadership, scholarship and vision to the Faculty of Health Sciences, were formally recognized at a retirement ceremony in June.

The inaugural event celebrated the contributions of the six faculty members, who have stepped down from their chair positions, but not from academic life. The six honorees were:
- **Craig Coblentz**, professor and acting chair of the Department of Radiology from 2004-08. He is the site chief of the Department of Diagnostic Imaging at the McMaster University Medical Centre.
- **Bill Evans**, professor and founding chair of the Department of Oncology in 2006. He is president of the Juravinski Cancer Centre and a regional vice-president of Cancer Care Ontario.
- **Brian Haynes**, professor and chair of the Department of Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics from 1998-2008. He has a joint appointment with the Department of Medicine and is the chief of McMaster’s Health Information Research Unit.
- **Cheryl Levitt**, professor and chair of the Department of Family Medicine from 1996-2006. She is Cancer Care Ontario’s provincial clinical lead for primary care.
- **Gerry Wright**, professor and chair of the Department of Biochemistry and Biomedical Sciences from 2001-07. He is the scientific director of the Michael G. DeGroote Institute for Infectious Disease Research.

Each honoree received an engraved captain’s chair as a gift from the Faculty of Health Sciences.

“All have made the most outstanding contributions,” said John Kelton, dean and vice-president of the Faculty of Health Sciences. “They truly embody our vision.”
McMaster a new frontier for astronaut

Dave Williams, a physician and Canadian astronaut, has landed in Hamilton as the director of the McMaster Centre for Medical Robotics.

The new centre, located at St. Joseph’s Healthcare Hamilton, is dedicated to developing surgical robotic technologies to improve local and remote patient care. It is part of the McMaster Institute for Surgical Innovation, Innovation and Education, directed by Mehran Anvari.

Williams worked as an emergency physician in Toronto and Kitchener before joining the Canadian Space Agency in 1992. His most recent journey to space was in 2007 when he took part in a record 18 hours of space walks to continue the assembly of the International Space Station.

In addition his new director role, Williams is a professor in the Department of Surgery of the Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine and holds a physician executive position at St. Joseph’s.

“I measure what I do in my career based on my ability to effect positive change,” Williams said. “I look forward to working with some of the leading scientists, physicians and engineers and contributing to the next generation of surgical robotics. I am confident that through our research we will improve the delivery of health care around the globe.”

In welcoming the new professor, McMaster President Peter George said: “Dr. Williams has had an extraordinary career, and he’s been a great ambassador for Canada and for medical science – both on and off the planet. His fearless dedication to finding new ways of bringing medical care to remote environments represents the most advanced edge of medicine under exploration these days.”

Koff recruited to lead radiology department

Koff recruited to lead radiology department

David Koff, a physician known for leveraging technology to improve medical imaging, has been appointed chair of the Department of Radiology. A radiologist in his native France, he immigrated to Canada in 1988 to become an assistant professor and researcher at University of Toronto, and a radiologist at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre. In addition to his academic role at McMaster, the associate professor was also appointed as chief of the department of diagnostic imaging at Hamilton Health Sciences.

Other senior appointments announced recently included:

**Eric Brown** has been appointed chair of the Department of Biochemistry and Biomedical Sciences. He is a professor, the Canada Research Chair in Antimicrobial Research and the director of the McMaster High Throughput Screening Laboratory. Brown’s research interests involve identifying and characterizing new bacterial targets for antibacterial drug development.

**Cathy Morris (MHSc ’78, MD ’81)** has been appointed the regional assistant dean for the Waterloo campus of the Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine. She is a clinical assistant professor in the Department of Medicine and chief of staff at Cambridge Memorial Hospital.

**Karl Stobbe** has been appointed the regional assistant dean for the Niagara Regional Campus of the Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine. He is a clinical assistant professor in the Department of Family Medicine. Stobbe developed and served as the director of the McMaster Community and Rural Education Program (Mac-CARE) and took a lead role in establishing the Waterloo and Niagara campuses.

**Gerry Wright** has been named scientific director of the Michael G. DeGroote Institute for Infectious Disease Research. He holds the endowed Chair in Infection and Anti-Infective Research, the Canada Research Chair in Molecular Studies of Antibiotics and is a professor and past chair of the Department of Biochemistry and Biomedical Sciences.

**Peter Rosenbaum** has been appointed director of the McMaster Child Health Research Institute. A developmental pediatrician, he holds the Scotiabank Chair in Child Health Research and the Canada Research Chair in Childhood Disability Research, Dissemination and Mentoring. He is a professor in the Department of Pediatrics and co-founder of the CanChild Centre for Childhood Disability Research.

**Kathryn Bennett** has been appointed acting chair of the Department of Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics. The professor also holds the Michael Gent Chair in Healthcare Research.
Norman wins Karolinska Institutet Prize

Geoff Norman, assistant dean of the Program for Educational Research and Development at McMaster, has been recognized with the 2008 Karolinska Institutet Prize for Research in Medical Education.

The international award, given out by one of Europe’s leading medical universities, recognizes high-quality research in medical education.

Norman’s research interests since joining the Faculty of Health Sciences in 1971 have focused on expert diagnostic reasoning – how clinicians arrive at a diagnosis — and how medical students learn. He holds the Canada Research Chair in Cognitive Dimensions of Clinical Expertise and is a professor in the Department of Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics.

Norman played central role in developing the concept-based curriculum of the Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine. The curriculum is the evolution of McMaster’s problem-based learning approach.

“It’s an astonishing recognition,” Norman said. “The prize and Karolinska Institutet are so well known in my field of work; it’s a feather in the cap for both me personally and for McMaster University.”

‘Champion educator’ wins Sibley Award

Alan Taniguchi, who is known to his colleagues and students as a ‘champion educator’ and visionary in his field of palliative care, was honored with the 2008 John C. Sibley Award.

The award is presented annually to a part-time faculty member of the Faculty of Health Sciences who has made an outstanding contribution to the education of health professionals.

Taniguchi, an assistant clinical professor in the Department of Family Medicine, is the education director in the division of palliative care and program director of the palliative medicine fellowship program.

Outside McMaster, he is the medical director and attending physician at Shalom Village Nursing Home, and works as a consultant physician on a palliative care team at Hamilton Health Sciences.

“Having the opportunity to teach and to work with others on interesting scholarly projects is itself wonderful, but to be recognized in the process is simply amazing,” Taniguchi said. “There are many individuals who stand along with me in receiving this award.”

Physician and former student Samantha Winemaker said Taniguchi is deserving of the honour.

“I am proud to be his colleague and lucky to have him as my mentor. He is a genius clinician and champion educator, I am forever in awe of him,” she said.

Teaching accolades for FHS faculty

Outstanding teachers in the Faculty of Health Sciences were honoured this year for their contributions to education. Anthony Levinson, an assistant professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioural Neurosciences, has been recognized with an AFMC-GlaxoSmithKline Young Educators Award. The award honours faculty members at the beginning of their careers who have made major contributions to their university or the overall medical community.

Patangi Rangachari, a professor emeritus in the Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine, was selected as one of 10 winners of the 3M National Teaching Fellowships. The annual award is given to individuals who demonstrate exceptional leadership and commitment to the improvement of university-level teaching across Canada.

Paul O’Byrne, chair of the Department of Medicine, has been honoured by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada with the James H. Graham Award. The award recognizes O’Byrne’s outstanding contributions to the education of medical residents.

Martin Stämpfli, an associate professor in the Department of Pathology and Molecular Medicine, was named the winner of the McMaster Student Union Teaching Award for the Faculty of Health Sciences.

Lynda Bentley-Poole, an assistant professor with the School of Nursing, won the McMaster Student Union Teaching Award for best nursing instructor. The McMaster Student Union Teaching Awards recognize and encourage excellence in teaching at McMaster.

Ari Shali, assistant professor of Pathology and Molecular Medicine, is winner for sixth consecutive year of the David Carr Teaching Award for the Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine. The graduating MD class chooses the winner of the annual award.
Promising researchers win provincial award

Three faculty scientists are expanding their research teams after being honored with Early Researcher Awards in July.

The provincial competition aims to improve Ontario’s ability to attract and retain top research talent by helping recently appointed faculty build their teams of graduate students, post-doctoral fellows and research assistants.

McMaster received eight of 66 awards this year, with three to the Faculty of Health Sciences. Brian Coombes, assistant professor in the Department of Clinical Biochemistry and Biomedical Sciences, is studying how to reduce serious gastrointestinal illness caused by the presence of certain bacteria in domesticated livestock. His research team is discovering ways to block the bacteria before they attack healthy cells.

Mohit Bhandari, associate professor in the Department of Surgery and Canada Research Chair in Musculoskeletal Trauma and Surgical Outcomes, is researching how to best perform hip surgeries to minimize the number of post-surgery hip fractures and complications.

Anne Klassen, associate professor of the Department of Pediatrics, was the principal investigator of one of the largest and most comprehensive studies of factors affecting the well-being of parents caring for a child with cancer. Her new study will explore the experience of first-generation South Asian and Chinese parents caring for a child with cancer.

FHS faculty honoured for outstanding contributions

The outstanding research and advocacy of several Health Sciences faculty were celebrated this year with a number of national and international awards.

Stephen Collins, associate dean, research, for the Faculty of Health Sciences and Distinguished University Professor of the Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine, received the Richard D. McKenna Memorial Lecture Award this year. The award is the highest honour given to a scientist by the Canadian Association of Gastroenterology.

Harriet MacMillan, a professor in the Department of Pediatrics, has been named the 2007 recipient of the Paul D. Steinhauser Advocacy Award, presented annually to a member of the Canadian Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. The award recognizes exceptional contributions in advocacy for children, adolescents and their families. MacMillan is a child psychiatrist and pediatrician and holds the David R. (Dan) Offord Chair in Child Studies.

Stephanie Atkinson, a professor and associate chair of the Department of Pediatrics, has received the 2007 Distinguished Nutrition Leadership Award from the Danone Institute of Canada. The national prize recognizes an outstanding contribution to the field of nutrition. Atkinson received the award for her contributions to clinical and epidemiological nutrition research.

Stephen Walter, a professor in the Department of Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics, was named the inaugural recipient of the Statistical Society of Canada Award for Impact of Applied and Collaborative Work. Walter has collaborated with clinicians in various specializations including internal medicine, evidence-based medicine and developmental pediatrics. He is interested in several areas of biostatistical methodology.

Brian Coombes received the 2007 Most Promising Researcher Merit Award from the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). The award recognizes Coombes’ contributions to the field of bacterial pathogenesis. Coombes is assistant professor in McMaster’s Department of Biochemistry and Biomedical Sciences as well as a research scientist in the Infectious Disease and Emergency Preparedness Branch of the PHAC. His research focuses on the molecular genetics of virulence and the cellular microbiology of disease.

Vijay Grey, associate professor in the Department of Pathology and Molecular Medicine, was honoured with the Canadian Academy of Clinical Biochemistry Award for Outstanding Contribution to the Profession of Clinical Biochemistry. Her research focuses on gastrointestinal pathology and the impact of poor nutrition on disease.

Cheryl Levitt, a professor in the Department of Family Medicine, has been honoured by the Federation of Medical Women of Canada with the 2008 Enid Johnson MacLeod Award. The award recognizes either a woman physician or a non-physician for the promotion of women’s health research and/or women’s health education. Levitt is a past chair of the Wonca Working Party on Women and Family Medicine and was the first woman recruited to chair a clinical department at McMaster University.

Salim Yusuf, an internationally renowned cardiologist, has become the first Canadian to receive the European Society of Cardiology’s highest honour, the Gold Medal. The professor of medicine received the award for his involvement in developing large, simple trials and the concept of meta-analysis. Yusuf is the vice-president of research and chief scientific officer at Hamilton Health Sciences, and the director of the Population Health Research Institute.
McMaster honours three FHS alumni with awards

Three health sciences alumni were honoured with awards from McMaster University during alumni events in the spring.

**Beverly Walters (MD '81, M.Sc. '89)**, the first female neurosurgeon to practice in Toronto, was inducted into the McMaster Alumni Gallery. While working in Canada, Walters traveled to the Ukraine and instituted a travel program for young neurosurgeons to observe the practice of Western medicine. Her consulting company, CarePath, is a web-based software business dedicated to the delivery of evidence-based medicine in the United States. **Andrew Padmos (MD '72)**, chief executive officer of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, was inducted into the McMaster Alumni Gallery. Before joining the college, Padmos was commissioner of Cancer Care Nova Scotia and head of the Cancer Care Program at the Queen Elizabeth II Health Sciences Centre. He was associate dean for cancer programs in the Faculty of Medicine at Dalhousie University and the vice-president of research and academic affairs for Capital District Health Authority. **Hugh Silk (MD '98)**, medical director for Oral Health Initiatives at the University of Massachusetts Memorial Hospital, received a McMaster Arch Award, given to recognize achievements of recent graduates. During his residency in the U.S., Silk observed many children with tooth decay. He began his own research and joined forces with local pediatric dentists, family doctors and pediatricians to demonstrate that primary care providers could implement oral health promotion strategies for young children. That led to a state-wide initiative to train every pediatric primary care provider about oral health.

Rehab pioneer dies

**John Basmajian**, a professor of medicine with an international reputation in the development of rehabilitation science, has died at the age of 86.

Born in Constantinople and raised in Brantford, Ont., Basmajian received his medical degree from the University of Toronto in 1945. He joined McMaster in 1977 as a professor and director of the Hamilton Health Sciences Rehabilitation Centre at Chedoke Hospital. He was a pioneer in the field of electromyography, the study of electrical discharge from muscles. That work influenced the development of biofeedback, a rehabilitation technique used following injury to the central nervous system.

Basmajian published many books and is the author of more than 400 scientific articles. He received many accolades, including the Order of Canada and Order of Ontario and membership in the Faculty of Health Sciences’ Community of Distinction.

He had remained actively involved in the School of Rehabilitation Science after becoming professor emeritus in 1986.

BScN team receives President’s Award

**The BScN Program Staff**

The BScN team was one of two employee teams at McMaster recognized with President’s Awards this past May. The awards are given to individual staff or teams of employees who make outstanding contributions to the University.

The citation for program staff of the Bachelor of Science (Nursing) noted the group works as a team to provide consistent, reliable, high-quality support services to the McMaster Mohawk Conestoga Collaborative BScN Program. The program has the reputation of being the most successful in the province. More than 1,700 undergraduate students are in five different streams, located at three different sites within Ontario.

The President’s Awards for Outstanding Service represent the highest honour the University can give to non-teaching employees.

Honoured members of the BScN Program Staff are:

- **Andrew Padmos**
- **Hugh Silk**
- **Beverly Walters**
- **Carlene Viinberg**
- **Marta Davis**
- **Connie Heckbert**
- **Vicki Lewis**
- **Liz Reeves**
- **Anne Bolender**
- **Michelle Buchner**
- **Kelly Edge**
- **Wendy Lejambe**
- **Brenda Montesanto**
- **Carlene Viinberg**

Infectious disease expert receives degree

**Donald Low**, an infectious disease expert who helped steer Ontarians through the SARS crisis, received an honorary Doctor of Science degree at the Faculty of Health Sciences convocation in May.

Low is the microbiologist-in-chief at Mount Sinai Hospital and a leading authority in microbiology and infectious disease.

He completed his undergraduate training and postgraduate training in medicine and infectious diseases at the University of Manitoba. He went on to train in Medical Microbiology at the University of Toronto.

During the SARS outbreak in 2003, Low was a key member of Ontario’s SARS containment team.
FHS alumni: Where are they now?

1970s

Karen Wall, BScN ’70

After graduation, Karen Wall worked as a nurse briefly in her hometown of Sudbury before moving to Winnipeg in 1972. For more than 35 years, she has worked in nursing practice, education and educational administration. In 1998, she received her master’s degree in nursing from the University of Manitoba. That same year, she became the chair of nursing at Red River College (RRC) in Winnipeg. During Karen’s 10-year term as chair, RRC Nursing has grown from one program with 150 students and 30 staff, to five programs with 750 students and 100 staff. Under her leadership, RRC Nursing has expanded both its degree and diploma nursing programs, initiated a video-streamed rural nursing program and launched a transitional program for immigrant nurses.

Lawrence Cohen, MD ’79

Lawrence Cohen is chief of medical endoscopy and director of the Division of Gastroenterology at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre in Toronto. He is an associate professor of medicine at the University of Toronto and a fellow of the American College of Gastroenterology. After earning his MD from McMaster in 1979, he completed a fellowship in internal medicine at the University of Toronto with subspecialty training in gastroenterology and therapeutic endoscopy. Cohen has recently been appointed to the Canadian Colorectal Cancer Advisory Board for GeneNews Limited, a company focused on developing blood-based biomarker tests for the early detection of diseases.

1980s

Paula Rochon, BA (Hon.) ’80, MD ’83

Paula Rochon has been appointed vice-president, research, at Women’s College Hospital in Toronto to begin in January 2009. A geriatrician and clinical researcher, Rochon most recently held appointments as a senior scientist and interim director of the Kunin-Lunenfeld Applied Research Unit, part of Baycrest’s Research Centre for Aging and the Brain. She is a professor in the departments of medicine and health policy, management and evaluation at the University of Toronto and a senior scientist at the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Studies. After completing her undergraduate and medical degrees at McMaster University, Rochon earned her master’s degree in public health from Harvard University.

1990s

Jodi Steele, B.Kin. ’97, B.H.Sc. (PT) ’99

The year before she enrolled in the physiotherapy program at McMaster, Jodi Steele lost her mother to non-Hodgkins lymphoma. That life-altering experience led her to begin a cancer rehabilitation program at a time when few physiotherapists were working in the field. In 2005, she started Cancer Rehab Inc., a not-for-profit clinic in Hamilton that offers an evidence-based treatment involving interval training and personalized physiotherapy for clients in various stages of cancer. In 2009, Steele’s program will be launched in Oakville, Brampton and two sites in Toronto as part of Wellspring, a national network of not-for-profit cancer support centres. The McMaster alumna is working as both a consultant and physiotherapist at the Oakville site.

2000s

Jennifer Mooradian, B.H.Sc. (Midwifery) ’02

Jennifer Mooradian jumped into federal politics this past October when she ran as the Green party candidate for the riding in Welland, Ont. The midwifery alumna, who worked for the Niagara Midwifery Practice for five years until May 2007, says she became interested in Green party politics during the 2006 federal election. When she found out there wasn’t anyone running in the Welland riding this time around, she signed up for the race. The timing of election meant that she was campaigning just eight weeks after the birth of her first child, Emi. While her political bid was unsuccessful, Mooradian says she would love the opportunity to run again.

Steven Hoffman, B.H.Sc. ’07

As a project manager with the World Health Organization (WHO), Steven Hoffman is working to overcome the global health workforce crisis by promoting teamwork in healthcare delivery. During his final year at McMaster, Hoffman interned at the WHO, where he proposed a program on interprofessional education. Hoffman assisted in getting the program up and running, and he now works part-time for the organization while he pursues his law degree and master’s in political science at the University of Toronto. Hoffman credits McMaster’s exceptional faculty and the Bachelor of Health Sciences Program’s approach to education for his success. He intends to practice in the area of health law and policy after he graduates in 2010.

Would you like to be included in the Where Are They Now feature? Please e-mail us at network@mcmaster.ca, to let us know what you’ve been up to since you graduated from McMaster.
It's one thing to admire the feats of sports athletes such as hockey great Mario Lemieux, figure skater and Olympic gold medalist Tara Lipinski and golf legend Greg Norman. It's another accomplishment altogether to have actually had a hand in their elite athletic success.

As a leading orthopedic hip surgeon, Dr. Marc Philippon's cutting-edge techniques, enhanced surgical tools and commitment to evidence-based medicine have meant longer careers for some of the world's top athletes.

The McMaster alumnus's star-studded patient roster includes a wide range of professional athletes who have needed his revolutionary hip arthroscopic surgery.

As one of Philippon's first high-profile patients, Greg Norman came to see him in June 2000 after suffering for a number of years with hip problems. Philippon diagnosed him with a torn labrum, a common injury experienced by professional golfers, and then performed his signature surgery.

Hip arthroscopy uses small incisions to repair the hip joint, and is less invasive than traditional hip surgery. It involves a shorter recovery time, allowing athletes get back into the game faster.

Norman wanted to shine a light on his condition by broadcasting the surgery over his website. "I think that had a great impact – a positive impact – on educating people about these types of injuries," Philippon said.

Eight years after surgery, Norman continues to compete professionally. This year, the 53-year-old placed third at the British Open.

For Philippon, that's what his work is all about — enabling patients to keep living active lifestyles.

"That's what we try to do with every patient – no matter if it's a professional athlete or a weekend athlete, or a person who just wants to be able to do the gardening at her home," he said. "If we can enable them to maintain the activity they like to do, it's a victory for us."

Philippon has established himself as a leader in his field — starting out in Florida, moving to Pittsburgh and now hailing from Colorado. Since then, he has successfully treated some of the world's biggest names in sports. At the same time, he has been the director of sports medicine/hip disorders and also to start a fellowship in that discipline.

Marc Philippon built his practice in evidence-based medicine and then revolutionized hip surgery.

"McMaster had these options that you could do electives basically anywhere in the world," he recalled. "I remember Dr. MacLeod told me I had to do a rotation in surgery and he arranged for me to go spend some time with Dr. Gordon Hill. That turned out to be an excellent experience for me."

After graduation in 1990, Philippon moved to Miami to complete his residency in orthopedic surgery at the University of Miami's Jackson Memorial Hospital. His passion and skill as an orthopedic surgeon were clear from early on. After completing his training, he became the chief of orthopedic surgery at Holy Cross Hospital in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. A year later, he was recruited to the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center to be the director of sports medicine/hip disorders and also to start a fellowship in that discipline.

"I was impressed because it was a great combination of world-class sports medicine practice but also world-class research," he said. "The evidence-based medicine that was at the research foundation really impressed me, and that's why I decided to move."

Now a managing partner at the clinic, Philippon relocated his practice to Colorado in 2005. Since then, he has successfully treated some of the world's biggest names in sports. At the same time, he ensures their treatment is evidence-based.

"As a surgeon, I think it's important to validate your outcomes because in surgery there are always ways of making an approach better. For every patient that I see and treat, we collect around 700 data points," he said.

"There's no doubt that McMaster was essential in planting that seed in me."
Reunited 2008

Hundreds of McMaster alumni from the schools of nursing, medicine and rehabilitation science returned to campus this year to be reunited with old classmates and friends.

- The School of Medicine welcomed back the MD class of 1983 for its 25-year reunion during Alumni Weekend in May. More than 60 people attended celebrations that included campus tours and dinner at Convocation Hall.

- The MD class of 1988 marked its 20-year reunion in July with dinner, dancing and tours of the Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine.

- The School of Nursing hosted three separate reunions for its alumni this year. The class of 1973 celebrated its 35-year reunion during Alumni Weekend; the class of 1983 celebrated 25 years during Homecoming; and the class of 1988 marked two decades since graduation with campus tours and lunch at the President’s Residence during Alumni Weekend.

- OT and PT alumni from the School of Rehabilitation Science gathered in June to mark the five-year, 10-year and 15-year reunions for the classes of 1993, 1998 and 2003. The celebrations were attended by 115 people, and included a family barbeque, tours and dinner at Convocation Hall.

Philippon has also worked to improve his discipline by helping to create better surgical tools. Ten years ago, the tools used in hip arthroscopy were rigid and limited in their ability to reach inside the joint. Philippon approached the manufacturer and pitched an idea for more flexible instruments. Today, those tools are some of the most used in hip arthroscopy in the world.

Now one of his goals is to develop prevention programs for athletes. He also wants to implement algorithms and treatment plans for patients who develop early problems with their hips.

“We’ve made a lot of great progress over the past few years, but I know we still have a lot of work to do,” he said. “Hopefully I can partner with McMaster to help us do even more evidence-based research and have these programs in place to touch all parts of the spectrum — the young athletes and the athletes in their 20s, 30s, 40s.

“I think it would be a great accomplishment if we could have a positive impact across the whole spectrum.”

Collaboration with McMaster would further enhance the tradition of knowledge sharing at the Steadman Hawkins Clinic. Over the last few years, Philippon has performed surgery in 10 different countries and taught in many more around the world.

“If you want to evolve a procedure, I think it’s important to teach it,” he said. “As you educate other surgeons or other students, you also learn.”

When he’s not in the operating room, Philippon enjoys spend time with his wife and three children and maintaining an active lifestyle. His love of hockey, cultivated as a young boy growing up in Quebec, has stayed with him throughout the years. He coaches his son’s hockey team and still plays himself.

Last summer, Philippon’s wife and three kids spent nearly a month in Quebec, visiting family and learning French, his first language. Maintaining close ties, both to his homeland and his alma mater, are important. He says if any of his children decide to follow in his footsteps and pursue medicine, he will recommend McMaster.

“I will never forget the opportunity they gave me to study there,” he says. “They planted a very, very important seed in my medical career. McMaster gave me the tools to really become who I am today, as far as the approach I take to any medical problem.”
McMaster launches space medicine seminar series

Imagine coming down with the flu or needing surgery while in a remote environment. A new public seminar series – Space, Exploration and Remote Care Medicine – is exploring the history and challenges of providing medical care in extreme conditions.

Canadian astronaut Dave Williams, who joined McMaster in 2008 as the director of the McMaster Centre for Medical Robotics, kicked off the series in early December with a free public lecture about the history of space medicine.

He will return again in May to speak about medical aspects of spacewalks – also known as extra-vehicular activity.

The next lecture is scheduled for Jan. 13, 2009. Gary Gray, a Canadian Space Agency consultant flight surgeon with Defence Research and Development Canada, will talk about the selection criteria the Canadian Space Agency uses for long duration missions.

Future seminar topics will include minimally invasive surgery in space, remote medicine experiences and developing clinical protocols for being on the moon or mars.

The monthly seminar series is presented by the Bachelor of Health Sciences Program, and runs until October 2009.

Lectures are held in the Ewart Angus Centre of the Health Sciences Centre, room HSC 1A1, from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

All lectures are free, but require attendees to RSVP to space.medicine@learnlink.mcmaster.ca.

For additional information about upcoming seminars, please call (905) 522-1155, ext. 34399, or e-mail spacemed@mcmaster.ca.

2009 Class Reunions

MD Class of 1989 – 20th Reunion
Date: September 2009
Location: Muskoka, Ont.
Reunion Committee: Joan Don

MD Class of 1979 – 30th Reunion
Date: April 17-19, 2009
Location: Scottsdale, Ariz.
Reunion Committee: Judy Maynard, Lisa Rosennkrantz, Paul Steinberg and Susan Wilansky
Website: http://sites.google.com/a/medportal.ca/class-of-79-reunion/

School of Nursing Class of 1974 – 35th reunion
Date: June 19-21, 2009
Location: TBA
Reunion Committee: Deborah Kyle

School of Nursing Class of 1979 – 30th reunion
Date: May 23, 2009
Location: McMaster University, Hamilton
Reunion Committee: Barb Hartford

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Waterloo area alumni sought
The Waterloo Regional Campus of the Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine is looking for medical alumni in Waterloo-Wellington who are interested in sharing their expertise with students in preclinical and clinical education programs.

The Waterloo campus is also looking for PhD scientists, nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and social workers to participate in other aspects of the curriculum.

For more information, contact the Waterloo Regional Campus at 519-885-5426, ext. 21104, or wrc.info@mcmaster.ca.