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DOBSON
MENTORSHIP
CIRCLE
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McGill

Dobson Centre
for Entrepreneurship

BUILDING INNOVATIVE COMPANIES WITH A PURPOSE

DOBSON MENTORSHIP CIRCLE

Mentorship to get you to the next level

The Dobson Centre is the hub for entrepreneurship at McGill University, where ideas stemming from all McGill faculties grow into innovative companies with a purpose.

We aim to inspire, teach and develop early entrepreneurs while also introducing them to local, national, and global entrepreneurship ecosystems.

The Dobson Mentorship Circle supports startups that have graduated from our entrepreneurship programs, and who are looking to receive mentorship from seasoned business experts, as they navigate the challenges and opportunities of growing their business.

Our distinguished group of prominent business leaders, each with twenty or more years of expertise with startups, business innovation, and leadership, provide a source of inspiration, a listening ear, and new perspectives to broaden the horizons of Dobson founders to help them grow.

“It takes many attributes to be a successful entrepreneur: conviction, perseverance, dedication, and intense focus. This is not a journey for the faint of heart, making the Dobson Mentorship Circle a relevant and timely initiative. Our mentors will guide and support entrepreneurs along their path.”

-Dino Di Palma



Marie-Josée Lamothe

Directorship
McGill Dobson Centre For
Entrepreneurship,
Professor of Practice
Desautels Faculty
of Management



Dino Di Palma

Chair
Dobson Mentorship Circle

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Program Dates:
Ongoing

Program benefits:

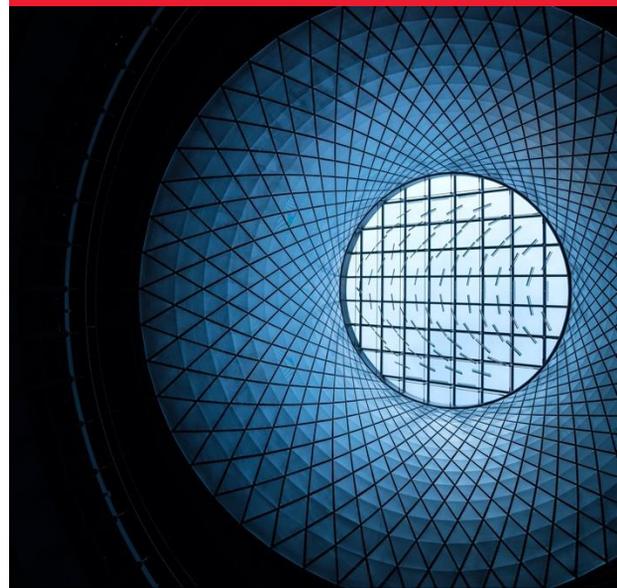
- Increased motivation and inspiration
 - Having someone to confide in
 - Being prompted to approach problems from different viewpoints
 - Ongoing feedback and help in diagnosing situations
 - Learning from real-world examples drawn from their mentor's experience
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Matches are made based on mutual interests and alignment and may include one mentor or a team of mentors, depending on topics and growth areas. The program includes:

DISCOVERY MEETING: Entrepreneurs present their pitches and share business goals that they have identified for the next 12-18 months, along with areas that they are seeking support with, while Mentors share details on their background and areas of expertise.

ACTION PLAN: Once matched, mentors and mentees will meet and develop a 12-month action plan to address desired growth areas and track progress.

MENTORSHIP MEETINGS: A minimum of one 60-minute mentorship meeting per month will take place over a 12-month period.



“Mentorship has played an invaluable role in the progress of Algi. Being able to learn from experienced entrepreneurs and industry leaders has helped us to make smart decisions and grow more quickly.”

Alessandra Amato
Co-Founder, Algi

OUR MENTORS

Soula Chronopoulos

An immunologist by training, Soula started her career in neuroscience research at McGill University, conducting pioneering research in Alzheimer's disease. She launched a successful medical training company in 2005 (Taimma Communications), and was ranked in the top 100 female entrepreneurs, and one of Canada's fastest-growing companies by Profit Magazine in 2012.

As VP Growth & Innovation at LCILX, she oversees the design and deployment of innovative learning experiences for Fortune 500 companies and the LCI Education Network. Passionate about R&D, Soula is currently leading global innovation initiatives to drive richer learning experiences that will connect our students globally at LCI.

Mentoring Subjects: Health Sciences



Soula Chronopoulos

President of ellicom & Vice
President of Innovation at LCILX,
Canada

OUR MENTORS

Dino Di Palma

Dino Di Palma most recently served as President, Strategic Partners & Global Accounts at Avaya. In this role, Dino was responsible for direct, channel, and partner sales in the U.S., Canada, and Latin America. He also had responsibility for the company's go-to-market strategy across the entire portfolio of cloud and premise-based software and hardware solutions serving enterprises, government agencies, channel partners, SIs, SPs, and small and medium businesses.

Prior to joining Avaya, Dino was Chief Revenue Officer at Broadsoft, leading the company's global sales operations. Dino was responsible for global sales, operations, professional services, and partner initiatives. Broadsoft was acquired by Cisco in late 2017 for \$1.9B. He has also held leadership positions overseeing global sales and business development, customer service and support, and manufacturing operations at Benu Networks (CEO) and Acme Packet (COO & member of the founding team), prior to its acquisition by Oracle in 2013 for \$2.1B. Dino is also a member of the G20 Ventures and board chair of one of the G20 Portfolio companies (Emissary). G20 Ventures provides early traction capital for East Coast enterprise tech startups.

Mentoring Subjects: Corporate strategy & positioning, sales & marketing strategy, GTM, business development & distribution, M&A acquisition & integration, organizational theory, fundraising, and deal execution.



Dino Di Palma

Chair
Dobson Mentorship Circle

OUR MENTORS

Rubin Gruber

Rubin Gruber is a well-known successful entrepreneur, having founded many innovative companies in the telecommunications, data communications, and digital networking areas over a span of forty years. In 2007 he co-founded Verivue (acquired in 2012 by Akamai: AKAM), a company providing infrastructure products that support on-demand television and movies as well as content delivery networks. Before Verivue, Gruber co-founded Sonus Networks (NASDAQ: SONS), and VideoServer, Inc (NASDAQ: VSVR), after serving as Senior Vice President BBN Communications Corporation. Gruber also founded Davox (NASDAQ: DAVX, acquired Aspect and renamed Aspect), Cambridge Telecommunications (CTX) which was later acquired by GTE.

Gruber served on the Boards of all the companies he founded, as well as a number of other private companies, including GreenVolts, NetDevices (acquired by Alcatel-Lucent), Brix Networks (acquired by EXFO), 2Wire (acquired by AT&T, Telmex, and Alcatel) and others. Gruber was a member of the board of directors of the International Softswitch Consortium, the International Packet Communications Consortium, and he was one of the founding members of the International Multimedia Telecommunications Consortium where he was awarded the Pioneer award. He was named to the Massachusetts Telecom Hall of Fame.

Currently, Rubin is a member of the Leadership Council of the Tannenbaum Open Science Institute, part of McGill University's Montreal Neurological Institute (MNI) as it promotes worldwide adoption of Open Science to accelerate scientific discovery and adoption.

He also mentors students in Florida Atlantic University's MCPRI artificial intelligence laboratory. He holds a B.Sc. from McGill University and an MA in mathematics from Wayne State University. He was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Science Degree from McGill University.

Mentoring Subjects: Generalist



Rubin Gruber

Chairman Of The Board, Metrika,
Boston

OUR MENTORS

Stephen Harper

Former Chief Executive Officer, Saguenay Strathmore Capital, an alternative investment management company, Stephen is currently a non-executive director of BGC European Holdings LP, a leading interdealer broker, Copper Street Capital LLP, an investment management company, and Hello Products LLC, an oral care company. Prior to founding Strathmore Capital LLP in 2003, Stephen served as Chief Operating Officer and Partner of VHC Partners LLP, a European hedge fund. Previously,

Stephen was a Senior Managing Director at Bankers Trust. He joined Toronto as one of the founding members of its Canadian derivatives business. As co-head of the Capital Markets Group, he pioneered the equity derivatives market and helped build BT Bank of Canada into a pre-eminent derivative firm in Canada. In 1990, he became the youngest bank president in Canadian history. Shortly thereafter, he moved to London as Managing Director and Head of the European equity derivatives business. He subsequently held various senior management positions in risk management and investment banking before becoming Chief Operating Officer of the Global Risk Management Services Division.

In addition, he served as a director on the boards of Bankers Trust International (U.K.), Bankers Trust AG (Switzerland), and BT Bank of Canada. Stephen started his career at Wood Gundy Inc. in Toronto. He joined as an Associate in Corporate Finance in 1984 then became part of the newly formed swaps and derivatives team.

Stephen has a B.Sc. magna cum laude from Brown University (1982) in Applied Mathematics and Economics and an MBA from Harvard University (1984).

Mentoring Subjects: Generalist



Stephen Harper

Director at Strathmore Investments Ltd., London

OUR MENTORS

Marcia Kilgore

Marcia Kilgore is a Canadian-born entrepreneur who has founded several global companies in the beauty and footwear industries. Her ventures include industry revolutionizing Bliss Spa, sold to LVMH after only three years from its launch; bath, body, and cosmetics brand Soap & Glory, sold to British Drugstore giant Alliance Boots/Walgreen; biomechanics meets fashion footwear brand FitFlop; and naturally-derived bath & body product brand Soaper Duper.

Most recently, in October 2016, Kilgore founded Beauty Pie, her radical new luxury beauty product buyers' club, aimed at democratising the luxury beauty industry by disrupting the existing business model.

Through its fully digital marketplace, Beauty Pie sells luxury beauty products without the luxury beauty prices, by sourcing these from manufacturers - and cutting out intermediaries, avoiding expensive real estate and advertising - while focusing its attention on quality.

Using the elite third-party luxury labs that Kilgore worked with for the last 25 years, Beauty Pie is flipping the luxury beauty industry upside down, with a direct-to-consumer membership business model and totally transparent pricing.

Beauty Pie is about empowerment, self-worth and teaching women (and men) that they deserve a bigger piece of it, even if 'getting more' starts with the price of an amazing moisturiser.

Mentoring Subjects: Generalist



Marcia Kilgore

Founder of Bliss Spa, Soap & Glory, FitFlop, Soaper Duper and Beauty Pie, London

OUR MENTORS

Christiane Lemieux

Christiane Lemieux is a designer, entrepreneur, investor, and author. Christiane introduced her European lifestyle brand LEMIEUX et CIE into the United States in late summer 2020, coinciding with the publication of her first business book “Frictionless: Why the Future of Everything Will Be Fast, Fluid, and Made Just for You” (Harper Collins Business), a 2020 Porchlight Business Book Awards Longlist title. Prior to starting her newest ventures, Christiane was the Founder/CEO of THE INSIDE, her direct-to-consumer (D2C) home furnishings brand. She was the Co-Founder of Cloth & Company and the Founder of DwellStudio, which was purchased by Wayfair, the world’s largest online home furnishings retailer, in 2013. Christiane served as the Executive Creative Director of Wayfair until 2016.

Lemieux is an active investor in the Consumer and Tech Sectors, individually and with the WIE syndicate. Her investment focus is on Founder Inclusivity and Diversity. Christiane is a frequent contributor to Architectural Digest, Apartment Therapy, Editor At Large, and other design outlets. Lemieux authored her first book, “Undecorated” (Random House/Clarkson Potter) to critical acclaim in 2011; her second best-selling book (still #1 in Interior Decoration & Ornament on Amazon) “The Finer Things” also was published by RH/CP in 2016.

Christiane entered the television space as co-host and judge on “Ellen’s Design Challenge” - a furniture design competition show on HGTV. Lemieux was highlighted as one of Fortune’s 2012 “Most Powerful Women Entrepreneurs” and is a graduate of Parsons School of Design and Queen’s University in Canada. Christiane sits on the board of “EveryMother Counts,” the non-governmental organization (NGO) started by Christy Turlington Burns to fight maternal mortality and support women, babies, and health care providers. Looking ahead, Christiane’s third book and fourth books, “Provenance” and “The Everything Home,” are slated for publication in 2022.

Mentoring Subjects: Generalist.



Christiane Lemieux

Founder Lemieux Et Cie,
New York

OUR MENTORS

Michael Mee

After completing an undergraduate degree in engineering at McGill, Michael became enamored by the possibility to apply a quantitative engineering mindset to biology and the emerging field of Synthetic Biology.

He moved to Boston to pursue his doctoral studies where his Ph.D. research in Biomedical engineering was completed in George Church's lab at HMS. The focus of his thesis was on developing advanced genetic and protein engineering technologies to control the microbiome. He was bit by the "entrepreneur's bug" at the tail end of his Ph.D. and launched a company, Syncrobes, focused on translating the technology he was advancing to improve the gut health of livestock animals. Growing that company provided him opportunities to interact with the Boston VC community and ultimately led to an offer to join one of the premier life science-focused venture creation firms, Flagship Pioneering, where he spent the second half of his decade in Boston.

His time at Flagship was focused on conceiving, strategizing, and ultimately building very early-stage companies. More specifically he was focused on the development of two microbiome companies in the agricultural (Indigo) and therapeutics (Kaleido) domains, co-founding and launching a new therapeutic delivery platform and gene therapy company (Cobalt Biomedicine/Sana Biotechnologies) and most recently developing new ventures in AI-based drug development and gene editing areas. A long-term goal of his has always been to bring his learnings in Boston back home to help contribute to the Canadian biotech ecosystem. To that end, he recently relocated to Montreal to help launch a new Canadian-focused life science and health technologies venture capital fund, Amplitude Ventures and is excited to be able to achieve this goal with the support of the stellar team he works with.

Mentoring Subjects: Health Sciences



Michael Mee

Principal, Amplitude Ventures

OUR MENTORS

Neil Murdoch

Mr. Murdoch is an active investor in private companies and has served on the boards of many private and public companies. He currently sits on the boards of 8 private firms. Mr. Murdoch has been actively involved in four different businesses that have grown their valuation from under \$20 million to over \$250 million. Mr. Murdoch has a strong track record of leadership and execution in the retail investment world. In late 2003 Mr. Murdoch founded Connor, Clark & Lunn Capital Markets Inc. where he raised, as CEO and President, over \$2.5 billion in new assets before Aston Hill Financial acquired the firm in 2013.

Prior to that, he was Executive Vice-President and Portfolio Manager at AIC Group of Funds. Mr. Murdoch joined AIC in 1993 when the firm managed only \$150 million in assets and was instrumental in its growth to over \$15 billion as one of the three principals of the business.

Mr. Murdoch received his Bachelor of Commerce degree from McGill University and a Bachelor of Law degree from the University of Toronto. He completed his formal education with a Master of Management degree from the Kellogg Graduate School of Management and holds the Chartered Financial Analyst designation. He is also active in the community, including as a member of the McGill Faculty of Management Faculty Advisory Board and as a co-founder of Operation Guardian Force.

Mentoring Subjects: Software, financial services, and fintech



Neil Murdoch

Former CEO of Connor, Clark & Lunn Capital Markets

OUR MENTORS

Joseph Sasson

Joseph has over 35 years of experience in entrepreneurship, manufacturing, marketing, international business, real estate development, and family business. He arrived in Montreal during the civil unrest in Lebanon and from a very young age, worked in the family business. After receiving his BComm from McGill In 1986, Joseph joined his start-up family business. His forward thinking led the company's transition from Wholesale Distribution to specialized Canadian manufacturing of disposable consumer personal care products, which allowed for huge accelerated growth potential.

Joseph has led the business as its CEO since he joined 30 years ago. During that time the company has grown in personnel from 4 to over 250 today. Delon/Iris grew rapidly thru organic and strategic acquisitions, with a key emphasis on product and process innovations. He completed the OPM Harvard Business School program for executives in 2007, and he and his family also attended the Harvard Families in Business Program. In 2010, Joseph started as a real estate investor in residential management which later grew into development. Shortly after, the humbling experience of having a heart attack led to his passion for giving back and mentoring young entrepreneurs. Both privately and as a member of Anges Quebec, he has invested in numerous start-ups, where he is still on the board of a number of those companies.

In 2014, Joseph continued to complete the OPM HBS Leadership Program Unit IV in Shanghai to take full advantage of emerging opportunities in Greater China. His specialty is taking his experience to help start-ups create an integrated business plan and to strategize creative solutions. He enjoys adding value to start-ups by sharing his knowledge and strengths to help start-ups grow.

Mentoring Subjects: Generalist



Joseph Sasson

CEO, Delon - Iris

OUR MENTORS

Mark Smith

Mark L. Smith, is the President of Pandion Investments Ltd, a private family office that manages the affairs of Bill Sinclair in addition to the investment affairs of André Desmarais. Bill Sinclair is the co-founder of JDS Uniphase, the world's largest fiber-optic company. André Desmarais is the Vice-Chairman and Co-CEO Power Corporation of Canada, a diversified international and investment and management holding company with significant interests in the financial services, renewable energy, communications and other businesses through such companies as GreatWest Life Assurance Company of Canada, Investors Group, Mackenzie Financial Corporation, Putnam Investments and Power Renewable Energy Corporation.

Mr. Smith attended McGill University's Business School where he obtained his CA and was a Rhodes Scholar finalist and James McGill scholar. He started his career with Touche Ross & Co. (Deloitte) in 1982 and in 1986 joined the Claridge group in Montreal. Claridge is the private company that manages the affairs of the Charles R. Bronfman family whose family owned and controlled The Seagram Company, Cadillac Fairview, Netstar Communications (owners of TSN, The Discovery Channel and RDS) and numerous other investee companies. Mr. Smith served as President of Claridge SRB Investments, Senior Vice-President of Investments of the entire Claridge Group and Chief Operating Officer of Claridge Israel.

Mr. Smith has a wide range of investment experience in a wide range of industries including the financial services industry, telecommunications, technology, sports, pharmaceuticals, food, media and entertainment, health care and medical services and agro-chemical industries. Mr. Smith's directorships include and have included Netstar Communications (formerly Labatt Communications), Medisys Medical Group, Enterprise Capital, Venture Coaches, Interset, Osem Food Group, ECI Telecom Inc., The TNA Group, Campbell Resources, Westcourt Capital, Crowntek Business Systems, Dalcour Canada and CBCI Telecom.

Mentoring Subjects: Generalist.



Mark Smith

President of Pandion Investments Ltd

OUR MENTORS

Jeff Speak

Jeff Speak is a serial entrepreneur, who after spending six years in the industry, launched his entrepreneurial journey in the telecom and technology space. Over 30 + years he has launched several start-ups in these marketplaces culminating each time with a successful exit. The businesses he built and led, targeted a number of different markets including; reseller of telecom products and services, (CBCI Telecom) videoconferencing manufacturer (CBCI), wireless modem manufacturer (BlueTree Wireless), technology expense management software as a service (CIMPL).

During his career, he has raised over \$30 million of capital and exited each venture successfully. He has built an area of expertise at raising capital in both the private and public markets while completing one Initial Public Offering (IPO) and one Reverse Takeover (RTO) along with many Venture Capital (VC) financings. Based on his extensive career in building small to medium-sized businesses, he has developed a talent for driving growth by planning and executing a go-to-market plan along with building a positive company culture.

Mentoring Subjects: Driving growth and raising capital



Jeff Speak

President at Speakco Investments

OUR MENTORS

Sharon Stern

Sharon Stern is a Canadian entrepreneur and real estate investor. She is the President of Eastmore Management and Metro Investments, two organizations focused on the acquisition, development, and management of multi-residential and commercial properties in the downtown core of Montreal. Prior to founding Eastmore, Sharon worked in Strategy and Corporate Development for the Business Development Bank of Canada.

Sharon serves on the Faculty Advisory Board of McGill University's Desautels Faculty of Management. In addition, Sharon is an active angel investor in Canadian-based startup organizations and serves on the board of Pro-Montreal Entrepreneurs.

Sharon earned a Bachelor's Degree from McGill University in Economics and World Religions and a Master's Degree from Brown University in Economic Policy. She lives in Montreal with her husband and two sons.

Mentoring Subjects: Generalist



Sharon Stern

President of Eastmore Management and Metro Investments

OUR MENTORS

Lora Tisi

Lora Tisi has over 30 years of experience as an International Retailer, leading several team's business growths and brand initiatives including revenue and profit growth, Merchant and Brand leadership.

Most recently, as President of the RW&CO Brand for Reitmans Canada Limited, delivered 18 Consecutive quarters of sales and margin growth. Menswear results were particularly strong, with Product and Brand collaboration with NHL Superstars, such as PK Subban, Erik Karlsson, Morgan Reilly, and Mark Schieffele, resulting in significant sales and market share increases across both genders.

In 2000, Lora became President of American Eagle Outfitters and launched the brand across Canada. The team was successful with the brand launch, opening 46 stores, coast to coast in 108 days, exceeding first-year profit targets, and becoming the "Brand of Choice" for Canadian teens.

Prior to American Eagle, Lora spent 17 years building the 900 store chain, The Northern Group. By leveraging the marquis brand, Northern Reflections, total sales grew to C\$1Billion. Unquestionably, the US store's result is a proud achievement, as this success eclipsed any other Canadian apparel entry into the US for sales, growth, and profit.

Mentoring Subjects: Retail strategy and global best practices in specialty, department stores, and omnichannel, merchandising, organizational development, marketing, and PR, Indigenous heritage, culture, TRC, and Education.



Lora Tisi

Senior Retail Strategist

OUR MENTORS

Yolanda M. Wardowski

With over 15 years of advisory, execution, and investing experience, Yolanda has been directly involved in the origination and execution of several billion dollars worth of domestic and cross-border financing and strategic M&A transactions across the Consumer and Technology sectors. Sector expertise in Branded Consumer Products, Retail/Apparel, Luxury, Personal Care, Food/Beverage and in Technology, Consumer/Mobile, and DNVB sectors.

Her career began at J.P. Morgan in the M&A/Corporate Finance group focusing exclusively on domestic and cross-border transactions in the Consumer Products and Retail sectors. She was also one of four M&A professionals selected to join J.P. Morgan's internal M&A group, where she advised the Corporate Office and the Board of Directors on potential M&A and investments in foreign banks. As well, she has also held senior positions at Ernst & Young Capital Advisors and 94th Street Capital developing and executing financing strategies for portfolio companies.

Mentoring Subjects: Generalist



Yolanda M. Wardowski

Managing Director, Avalon Net
Worth, New York

BECOME A MENTEE

Participant profile

The Dobson Mentorship Circle is open to McGill startups who have completed the McGill X-1 Accelerator and/or were winners in the finals of the McGill Dobson Cup who:

- Can demonstrate early traction with a Proof of Concept, a Minimum Viable Product (MVP), and early customers and/or revenue, and are now looking to scale their business
- Have the potential for exponential growth to eventually serve global markets
- Have identified business goals for the next 12-18 months and are seeking mentorship to help them achieve specifically identified milestones
- Can commit to full participation in the Dobson Mentorship Circle for a minimum of a 12 month period

STEPS

1. Submit your startup

Click the link below to submit your startup. Once admitted into the program, you will receive an email confirmation and next steps for joining the Dobson Mentorship Circle.

2. Connect with mentors

Participating startups and mentors will be invited to get acquainted. Startups will present their pitch and mentors will share details about their professional backgrounds. Your startup will be matched among members of the McGill Entrepreneurs Mentorship Circle and you will receive direct connections with mentors.

[Click here to apply](#)

LET'S STAY IN TOUCH

For general inquiries:
kika.armata@mcgill.ca

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