He began his business career with the FBDB prior to joining Roynat Capital shortly after it was founded in 1962. Roynat Capital was created to provide term financing and various forms of equity capital to small and medium-size businesses across Canada. He began as an Investment Officer, became a Supervisor in 1965, the General Manager in 1968, a Director in 1970 and President and Chief Executive Officer in 1972.

In 1989, when ownership changed, he became Chairman of Roynat and President and CEO of Montreal Trust, one of the five original shareholders of Roynat Capital.


He was very active in the Montreal business community and served as Chairman of the Mount Royal Club, the Royal Montreal Golf Club, and the Forest & Stream Club. He also served as Chairman of the Salvation Army Montreal Advisory Board.

Active in his community, he served as President of St. Mary’s Hospital Center and its Foundation.

He is married to Jocelyne Vanasse and has five children, 10 grand-children, and one great granddaughter.
THE 4TH ANNUAL
JOHN D. THOMPSON
ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR
ROBERT HEFT
B.ENG. '77, MECHANICAL
CEO OF ZINGENIX
B.ENG (ROYAL MILITARY COLLEGE OF CANADA)
GROUP PRESIDENT, GOVERNMENT SERVICES,
DISCOVERY AIR
DIDIER TOUSSAINT
B.ENG. '01, ELECTRICAL
HEAD OF OPERATIONS, POKA INC.
BUSSINESS IDEA PITCH COMPETITION:

THE PROGRAM

4:00 – 4:30 PM REGISTRATION

4:30 – 4:45 PM WELCOMING REMARKS
Katya Marc
Industry Liaison Manager, EngInE
Peter Thompson
Vice-President, National Bank of Canada

4:45 – 5:30 PM KEYNOTE ADDRESS
Robert Heft, B.ENG. '77, MECHANICAL
CEO of Zingenix Ltd. (Israel), a development stage gene therapy company and is a Member of the Board of Directors of several publicly-traded companies. He founded IBEX Pharmaceuticals in 1986, and served as its President, Chief Executive Officer and Member of the Board of Directors until 2001. He sold the pharmaceutical assets of IBEX to BioMarin in 2001. He went on to serve as President and CEO of a Florida biotech company and was also the Co-founder of Precise Genetics, which was acquired by Amgen. He sold Enobia to Alexion Pharmaceuticals Inc. in 2012 for USD 1.1 Billion, which was at the time the largest ever sale of a private, pre-commercial biopharmaceutical company. He is currently the CEO of Zingenix Ltd., a development stage biotechnology company and is a Member of the Board of Directors of several publicly-traded companies. Dr. Heft obtained his PhD from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Genetic Engineering/Radiological Sciences in 1986 at which time he was also a Neurology Fellow at the Massachusetts General Hospital. Prior to that he received a Bachelor of Science degree in Materials Engineering from McGill University and a Bachelor of Science degree in Nuclear Engineering from Cornell University.

5:30 – 6:20 PM BUSINESS IDEA PITCH COMPETITION

6:30 PM PITCH COMPETITION AWARD PRESENTATION

6:40 PM CLOSING REMARKS
Professor Benoit Boulet
Associate Dean, Research and Innovation

6:45 – 8:00 PM NETWORKING COCKTAIL

Robert is currently CEO of Zingenix Ltd. (Israel), a development stage biotechnology company and is a Member of the Board of Directors of several publicly-traded companies. He founded IBEX Pharmaceuticals in 1986, and served as its President, Chief Executive Officer and Member of the Board of Directors until 2001. He sold the pharmaceutical assets of IBEX to BioMarin in 2001. He went on to serve as President and CEO of a Florida biotech company and was also the Co-founder of Precise Genetics, which was acquired by Amgen. He sold Enobia to Alexion Pharmaceuticals Inc. in 2012 for USD 1.1 Billion, which was at the time the largest ever sale of a private, pre-commercial biopharmaceutical company. Dr. Heft obtained his PhD from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Genetic Engineering/Radiological Sciences in 1986 at which time he was also a Neurology Fellow at the Massachusetts General Hospital. Prior to that he received a Bachelor of Science degree in Materials Engineering from McGill University and a Bachelor of Science degree in Nuclear Engineering from Cornell University.

Didier is the Group President of Discovery Air Government Services, and is responsible for Discovery Air Defence Services (Top Aces), Discovery Air Technical Services and Discovery Air Fire Services. Previously, he served in the Royal Canadian Air Force as a CF-18 pilot where he was awarded the prestigious “Top Gun” award. Later he was a Senior Consultant to the Directorate of Research and Development Canada and companies such as Northrop Grumman and CAE.

Bruno is currently Head of Operations at Poka Inc., a social platform that focuses on efficient training, knowledge retention and real-time troubleshooting in the manufacturing world. He was the founder of Contest3, an API for developers to integrate email data in their applications. Bruno has been involved in startups since graduating from McGill Engineering in 2001 with his first web startup acquired in 2003.

Dr. Heft obtained his PhD from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Genetic Engineering/Radiological Sciences in 1986 at which time he was also a Neurology Fellow at the Massachusetts General Hospital. Prior to that he received a Bachelor of Science degree in Materials Engineering from McGill University and a Bachelor of Science degree in Nuclear Engineering from Cornell University.

“Portable timing system and analysis interface for competitive swimming”
Akaraseth Puranasamriddhi
(Electrical and Computer Engineering undergraduate)

“Language-learning App”
Karem Bikaye
(Chemical Engineering masters)

“Connecting people to small local businesses”
Nasif Alam
(Electrical and Computer Engineering undergraduate)

“All-in-one systems for cannabinoid extraction and measurement for commercial production of cannabis infused products”
Nayem Alam
(Electrical and Computer Engineering undergraduate)

“Akaraseth Puranasamriddhi
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“Shohm – an app to connect students with affordable short-term housing”
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