

MCGILL SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENT



edition

McGill

Alumni Profile: Stewardship in Action

by Margaret Forrest



Murielle Vrins

Energetic and passionate, and speaking with eloquence and precision, Murielle Vrins (BSc Environment, Biodiversity and Conservation Domain, 2002) is a fine advocate for community outreach. Excited about bringing global environmental awareness to the Montreal Urban Community, Murielle is an officer in charge of communications and event planning for Équiterre's "Fair Trade" and "Eco-Transport" initiatives. Équiterre is a Quebec-based NGO that provides "alternative proposals" to environmental issues. For Murielle, identifying environmental problems is not enough. "People need to know what to do," says Murielle. "The solution has to come to them" to enable them to take action.

This year, Murielle has been active in Équiterre's preparation for Fair Trade Week (May 1-17). While helping to make fair trade coffee a viable alternative for citizens of the Montreal Urban Community has been her principal task, Murielle is excited by new initiatives that are increasing the availability of fair trade tea. Murielle is also part of the "Transportation Cocktail in the City" campaign, promoting lifestyles less dependent on cars – even car-free. Équiterre actively educates decision-makers about the benefits of public transit, car sharing, walking and bicycling. To entice conversion to eco-transport this year, Équiterre is offering the public an opportunity to win the "Transportation Cocktail." Valued at \$4,000, this eco-transport concoction includes public transport passes for a year and a fully equipped bicycle.

How did Murielle move from a BSc in Environment to be a community worker in the urban landscape of Montreal? Murielle credits the Field Semester she spent in Panama during her final year at the MSE. Murielle particularly appreciated the small seminar-style classes at the Panama Field Station, where professor-student ratios were kept to 1:20, allowing for ample

in-depth discussion of the issues at hand. The experience was a turning point for Murielle, as she came "face to face...with real people living real environmental and conservation problems." Her fieldwork integrated the important ingredient of scientific knowledge with the cultural, political and economic issues of conservation. The objective of her work was to aid community decision making about conservation through education. "We saw where our food really comes from – food we take for granted as ordinary, to be expected everyday – like salt, sugar or bananas – and the human and environmental cost (of producing such food)."

Murielle followed her MSE degree with several internships, including a position at the Gault Nature Reserve, managed by McGill University, at Mont St. Hilaire. The mountain site includes a United Nations-designated Biosphere Reserve, a conservation area that protects and promotes human interaction in its ecosystems. Although Murielle's main research tasks involved environmental monitoring, she was also charged with enhancing local community involvement with the site, by designing community activities and events. It was here that she found herself moving away from a "research focus" towards a "people focus." This is what she enjoys so much about her work with Équiterre. "Getting the information to the people," says Murielle, "provides them with a venue to experience change in environmental practice."

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Deborah Buszard

The MSE: a McGill success story

Deborah J. Buszard, Dean, Faculty of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences

I am pleased to welcome Nigel Roulet to the position of Director of the McGill School of Environment (MSE). Professor Roulet, former director of the Centre for Climate and Global Change Research and professor in the Department of Geography, has been part of the School since its inception. He brings to the directorship a deep understanding and commitment to the mission of the MSE. As lead scientist for several national research networks and as an active faculty member at McGill University, and previously at York University, Professor Roulet has considerable experience in fostering interdisciplinary research.

The MSE has become one of McGill's most recent success stories. Through the growing participation of McGill faculty and an overwhelming demand for its programs from students, the MSE is stimulating new teaching and research partnerships across the University, well beyond the three founding faculties. One result is the addition of a new degree designation – the Bachelor of Science in Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. Having a growing number of MSE students and faculty on the Macdonald campus presents an exciting opportunity for new research and teaching collaborations between the two campuses and inevitably strengthens McGill's contributions to environmental studies. The MSE has been exemplary in providing an innovative and rigorous undergraduate program, and there is a desire to see this innovation carry over into partnerships in the training of graduate students.

This June the Dean of Arts, Professor John Hall, will take over as the Presiding Dean of the MSE. The three years during which I have served in this role have been an exciting time for the School and it is rewarding to watch it take its place among the outstanding examples of scholarship within the University. I look forward to its continued growth and success in the future.



Nigel Roulet

Looking Ahead

Nigel Roulet, Director, McGill School of Environment

When I chaired the founding committee for the McGill School of Environment (MSE) in 1996 and 1997 the University community asked how large we thought the MSE could become. I remember hypothesizing registering 30 students. Well, so much for my ability to predict the future! We now have close to 300 students spread throughout the three years of our degree programs, and over 20 students doing the post-degree Diploma in Environment. This success is challenging us to find ways to maintain our high-quality, integrative and interdisciplinary program that is based on experiential learning. The hiring of new faculty is at the core of our response to meeting this growing demand. However, increased faculty alone will not address all of the challenges we face as class size continues to swell. In the coming months we will be exploring methods to enhance learning in large groups. Our new degree, offered on the Macdonald campus, allows the MSE space to grow and explore new, exciting research and teaching avenues. One such question is how we are going to feed and provide clean, healthy water for a growing population without increasing environmental degradation.

The MSE is always exploring ways to evolve and meet new challenges. We have proposed a new stream for MSE students through the Faculties of Arts and Science's new degree, the Bachelor of Arts and Science (BA&Sc). We are responding to student demand for an honours degree option and hope soon to announce the development of graduate options – using, as an initial model, the successful Neotropical graduate option championed by Professor Catherine Potvin, an Associate member of the MSE in the Department of Biology. Based on the success of McGill's internationally based field semesters, the MSE would like to develop a more local program that focuses on the study of the environmental tensions between the natural rural landscape and urbanized areas. This could be located at Mont St. Hilaire and/or the Morgan Arboretum, and would focus on examining the natural, social, economic and political issues surrounding the management and preservation of nature reserves and green spaces in a near-urban setting.

At the beginning of my term as Director, I witnessed the results of our capstone course, *ENVR 401*. As I listened to the presentations from each project group I was both impressed and proud of the accomplishments of our students. Seeing how they have combined and applied their theoretical and practical knowledge to articulate the complexity of "real world" environmental problems and then seek possible solutions is, for me, the embodiment of what the MSE is all about. I hope, as you read this newsletter, you will feel that same sense of pride and accomplishment for having contributed, in your way, to this success.

Our First Canada Research Chair

by Margaret Forrest

Last summer the MSE was pleased and honoured to welcome Garry Peterson, holder of the Canada Research Chair (CRC) in Social Ecological Modelling, to McGill University. Garry's area of specialization focuses on the assessment of the resilience of regional ecosystems, in order to uncover ways that science can help humans make better decisions. Garry began his academic career at the University of Waterloo, where he studied systems engineering. He did graduate work in ecology at Florida State University and postdoctoral research at the University of Wisconsin. His joint appointments in the MSE and the Department of Geography allow us to capitalize on his entire range of academic experience.

As a David H. Smith Conservation Fellow at the University of Wisconsin, Garry became a coordinating lead author for the "Millennium Ecosystem Assessment," an international science project that is attempting to assess the condition and possible future of the world's ecosystem services. His job was to assess the consequences of alternative scenarios of future development in the Northern Lakes region of Wisconsin, where tourism is transforming land cover and use. "My research is centred on the theory and practice of ecological management. I am interested in the ecological dynamics of human-dominated ecosystems, and understanding the dynamics of social-ecological systems," he says. Garry is also currently participating in the Resilience Alliance through a modelling project that compares a set of regional case studies. The Resilience Alliance is an international research network that "aims to identify conditions and designs of ecosystems, institutions and economic incentives that maintain or restore resilience to ecological economic systems."

Garry is establishing a new research program in Mont-Saint-Hilaire, 32 kilometres southeast of Montreal. A former agricultural centre, this municipality forms part of the Greater Montreal urban fringe. The regional landscape is dominated by the mountain of St. Hilaire, which includes McGill University's Gault Nature Reserve, a United Nations-designated Biosphere Reserve. By examining the forces and uncertainties that are driving changes in land cover and use, Garry's research will consider such phenomena as urban sprawl, its accompanying threats to both people and the natural environment, and the struggle between opposing needs and interests. Garry looks forward to the Mont St. Hilaire research site joining the other Millennium Ecosystem Assessment sites in Sweden and Wisconsin, where adaptive ecological management techniques are being applied to urban fringe regions adjacent to the boreal forest.

"Nature is uncertain," says Garry. Adaptive ecological management accepts this premise and employs environmental policies as hypotheses rather than answers. As an adaptive ecological manager, Garry believes that shedding the notion of fixed solutions allows us the freedom to adopt environmental policies as hypotheses to be tested, revised, adapted and even newly

Continued on page 4...



Garry Peterson

Owen Egan

New People, New Ideas

by Margaret Forrest

Raja Sengupta joined McGill in summer 2003 and is jointly appointed in the MSE and the Department of Geography. Hailing from India, via Iowa and Illinois, Raja declared himself to be "excited to be part of the MSE" and jumped right into the MSE capstone course, *ENVR 401: Environmental Research*. His expertise in water resource management and geographic information sciences supported two undergraduate research teams in their investigations of water quality in Lac St. Louis, a local section of the St. Lawrence River.

Raja is enjoying being in Canada – and in Montreal in particular. The mosaic of life in this city reminds him, perhaps surprisingly, of Calcutta. Since arriving, Raja has undertaken research projects involving Quebec farming. He is currently investigating the possibilities of modelling human behaviour in agricultural land use and landscape change. Raja's models help inexperienced users perform complex computer tasks. They are designed to facilitate decision-makers to generate alternative land-use solutions and integrate analytical models with information about environmental conditions at specific geographical locations.

At present, these models describe change and decision making in a North American context. Raja anticipates participating in global knowledge sharing next year, however, when several graduate students arrive from India and Colombia. We look forward to future modelling projects in *ENVR 401*, and to exploring their use in research as Raja joins the *ENVR 301: Environmental Research and Design* teaching team next fall.



Raja Sengupta

Owen Egan

Continued from page 3...

formulated. This dynamic process makes it possible to live in and with our environment in increasingly “better” ways (where “better” is defined by the community in question).

Garry’s desire is to combine his research into social-ecological systems that examine human-environment co-evolutionary processes with the “important ability of people to learn.” Using the CRC opportunity as seed money, and the downtown campus, Macdonald campus and the Greater Montreal region as his classrooms, Garry hopes to create innovative learning experiences where students and research faculty can interact synergistically.

Garry is pleased that “the excellence of the MSE is being rewarded” through his position as a Canada Research Chair (CRC). The federal government developed the CRC program in an effort to enable Canadian universities, affiliated research institutes and hospitals to become world-class centres of research by designating financial support for salary and research funding through chair positions.

It is Garry’s belief that we should not overlook the many research opportunities in our own backyard. “Fundamental, novel research questions,” he says, can be posed right here in Montreal. In fact, his two research teams from the MSE undergraduate course *ENVR 401: Environmental Research* conducted their investigations last fall on the McGill downtown campus.

Students recording vegetative data on Paakumshumwuaa (left to right) Claude Péroquin, Sarah Schiff, Véronique Bussières, Karina Benessaiah, Emilie Lagacé.

Jesse Sayles (left) and Steve Boyce (right) navigate shooting rapids on Paakumshumwuaashtikw.



Véronique Bussières



Erica Crawford

Aa-wiichaautuwiihkwi:



Cree Nation of Wemindji:
www.wemindji-nation.qc.ca

E*NVR 401: Environmental Research* is the MSE capstone course. Under the guidance of a faculty supervisor, teams of six or eight MSE students go into the field and conduct environmental research for a “real world” client. Early in the semester, students from diverse academic backgrounds develop research proposals that are formally

presented to faculty, clients and peers. The remainder of the semester is spent refining and executing the research design, collecting data, and producing a final report. Emphasis is placed on honing communication skills and learning how to deal with the dynamics of collaborative research with multiple stakeholders.

For many undergraduates, this is a first foray into the uncharted territory of research outside the classroom and, as with all research, the challenge is to find and articulate the right question. Delving into the relevant background literature



Véronique Bussières

Students planning a transect route at George Stewart’s fishing camp. (left to right) Emilie Lagacé, Virginie Demers.

Student Kudos

Anne Sabourin, BSc in Environment (Land Surface Processes and Environmental Change), is this year’s recipient of the **Judith Mappin Scholarship** for academic excellence.

Alain Du Cap, BA in Environment (Environment and Development), received the **Diane Hasley Scholarship in Environment** for his outstanding academic performance this year.

Émilie Lagacé, BSc in Environment (Land Surface Processes and Environmental Change) 2004, was awarded a **Commonwealth Scholarship** to attend Oxford University, where she will undertake graduate studies in water systems.

ENVR 401 in James Bay

by Margaret Forrest



Students preparing a goose given as a gift to hosts George and Ellen Stewart (left to right) Dorothy Stewart, Margaret Forrest, Steve Boyce, Erica Crawford, Andrew Bennett, Calude Pélouquin, Sarah Schiff, Emilie Lagacé.

reveals the complexity of the issues at hand. Creative challenges for the students include developing data analysis tools and designing surveys and other research tools. The

process of analysis is a period of total engagement that opens new territory by threading the investigation process into a comprehensible narrative, a professional report and a presentation. All of this is done in one semester!

As a student in 401, the concept of conducting research in the “here and now” of my own corner of the world was an exciting proposition. Little did I know that joining the team of students on the James Bay project in the spring of 2003 would lead me to question and rearrange my perspective on the environment.

The Cree Nation of Wemindji, James Bay, is exploring the possibility of creating a culturally appropriate protected area in the watershed and adjacent marine coastal region of *Paakumshumwuaa* (Old Factory). MSE undergraduate student teams are *aa-wiichaautuwiihkw* (coming together to walk together) to conduct relevant biogeographical and cultural research with the *Iyiyuuch* (Cree) of Wemindji over the next three years. Professor Colin Scott is supervising student teams, offering the benefit of his rich research experience drawn from more than 20 years of partnership with this Cree community.

As a member of the 2003 research team I had the privilege of learning from a people for whom environmental stewardship is second nature. We paddled *Paakumshumwuaashtikw* with our *Iyiyuu* partners through the unique subarctic space that is both fragile and resilient.

Natural forest fires continually shape the low-lying lichen and moss meadows, punctuated by groves of jack pine and black spruce. The deep blue waters of the lake spill over pink granite slabs, running clear to the brackish estuary along the shores of the bay. This landscape has supported *Iyiyuuch* for over a thousand years; their close bond with the land is governed by an understanding of mutual respect.

We developed a plant community inventory, digital mapping process and culturally appropriate interview techniques. Gathering our field research into a meaningful report made for a sometimes exasperating, but wholly satisfying experience. It will, however, take more time and other teams of student researchers to complete the documentation and establish the parameters of social-ecosystem resilience in *Paakumshumwuaa*. It is my privilege to have taken the following understanding away with me: if we are to help establish a protected area here, it is the unique relationship of reciprocity between *Iyiyuu* and *Iyiyuschi* (the people and their world) that must first be preserved.



George Stewart shares stories about Paakumshumwuaa. (left to right) Prof. Colin Scott, Katherine Scott, Sarah Schiff, Steve Boyce, Jesse Sayles, Bill Stewart, George Stewart, Dorothy Stewart, Ronnie Asquabeneskum, Prof. Peter Brown.

Sarah Schiff, BA (Environment and Development) coordinated the very successful Sierra Youth Coalition Conference held at McGill in October 2003.

Vicky Baker, BSc 2004 (Biodiversity and Conservation), conducted a community workshop on **Vermicomposting** with support from Quebec's *Environment Action* program. This summer Vicky will continue working with the McGill community in the MSE community **organic garden** (to become involved contact bakervicky@planet-save.com).

The McGill Urban Community Sustainment Project (MUCS) launched McGill's first multidisciplinary sustainable design process, bringing together **six courses** and over **60 students** from engineering, urban planning, social work and architecture, as well as the MSE. Extending beyond the classroom, MUCS volunteers work in the streets and community meetings of Montreal neighbourhoods, bridging the divide between McGill students and local Montreal communities. With the continued support and encouragement of the MSE, MUCS looks forward to further academic design and stronger roots in local neighbourhoods.

Synergy: The Environmental Research Community at McGill

by Jeanne Adeland

Last spring, the MSE, in collaboration with the Faculty of Engineering, coordinated the first Symposium on Environmental Research held on the McGill campus. Since the MSE was founded, one of its core objectives has been to bring together academics from across the University, facilitating dialogue about the environment and stimulating new integrative approaches to environmental teaching and research.

The event was a tremendous success, drawing close to 200 professors and students from across McGill for two days of oral and visual presentations and panel discussions at McGill's Faculty Club. Forty-seven research presentations were given and 20 graduate student posters were displayed. Most important, the event illustrated the interdisciplinary nature of research involving environmental problems and solutions. Faculty research ranged from investigations of

organic pollutants to the understanding of biological invasions to international water system law. These seemingly diverse topics are good examples of the underlying interconnectedness of environmental research. For example, biological invasions can be considered as an organic pollutant, and when present in water systems, pose tricky transboundary jurisdictional problems for lawmakers.



Students and faculty during poster session.

The event closed with a plenary discussion focusing on how to increase collaborative environmental research at McGill. Several innovative ideas surfaced from the discussion, and there was great enthusiasm and support for the MSE to organize research symposia in the future. The MSE is creating a Symposium Committee, with

a mandate to highlight the breadth and diversity of environmental research at McGill and to facilitate opportunities for interaction and collaborative initiatives.



Host Locally, Think Globally

by Jeanne Adeland

Last fall, the MSE, in collaboration with the International Human Dimensions Panel (IHDP) and Columbia University, hosted the 2003 Open Meeting of the Human Dimensions of Global Environmental Change Research Community. The MSE was chosen to be the local host of the biannual conference, which presented an excellent opportunity to build interdisciplinary research networks with the International Scientific Committee (ISC). The conference also enabled McGill students and professors to network with environment researchers from around the globe.

Tackling the human dimensions of global environmental change is an ambitious goal for a three-day conference, but the 423 delegates from 62 countries arrived prepared to do just that! Early birds arriving the day before were welcomed at the McGill Faculty Club by the Honourable Clifford Lincoln, member of Parliament for Lac St. Louis and former Quebec Minister of Environment. Later, participants were invited to a public lecture at Moyse Hall given by Barbara Gobel, Executive Director of the IHDP based in Germany.

The intensive conference program included 56 panels

and six plenary sessions covering a wide variety of topics ranging from sustainable development to climate change vulnerability. Keynote speakers over the three days included David Runnals, president, International Institute for Sustainable Development; Cynthia Rosenzweig, research scientist, NASA's Goddard Institute of Space Studies; and Roger Kasperson, executive director, Stockholm Institute for Environment. In addition, a number of ancillary meetings, which took place during break times, offered an occasion to present to smaller groups, allowing for more in-depth discussion and knowledge

sharing. The 120 poster presentations submitted for display stimulated discussions between sessions and the exhibitors on site provided a window into the variety of academic, government and NGO services available to researchers today.

"The conference was an impressive demonstration of the body of knowledge produced by the environmental change community during the past ten years. One could find conceptual and empirical knowledge on a broad range of issues. This in mind, it is not surprising that the question, what society is doing with this valuable knowledge, was asked in many conversations."

Conference Delegate Harald Heinrich,
Julich Research Centre, Germany

The conference was truly a triumph for the MSE! Delegates reported being particularly impressed with the abundance of helpful MSE staff and student volunteers. Thank you to all those who made the event such a success, especially Marilyn Scott, Peter Brown, Katherine Scott and Danielle Lefebvre!

MSE Annual Lecture Takes Off

by Bronwyn Chester



Lincoln Brower

It began, aptly enough, with butterflies; and now the McGill School of Environment's annual public lecture series has truly taken flight. Thanks to the gift of an anonymous donor, members of the McGill community and the public at large were

privileged last September to have the chance to attend two lectures – one on each of McGill's campuses – by Lincoln Brower, the world's foremost authority on monarch butterflies.

Brower, a professor of biology at Sweet Briar College in Virginia, has been studying the monarch butterfly since the 1950s. The first of his two lectures emphasized the need and the efforts to protect the overwintering sites of the monarch in the state of Michoacan, Mexico. In his second talk, as part of the very successful "Food For Thought" Lecture Series at Macdonald, Professor Brower discussed the ecological chemistry of the hardy black and orange butterfly that migrates up to 4,000 kilometres in its fall flight from Canada and the northern United States to central Mexico.

The monarch caterpillar feeds only on milkweed, a plant containing cardenolides. This chemical protects the caterpillar and butterfly from predators. Using some of the many slides he has accumulated over the past 26 years, Brower illustrated how other species of butterfly, such as the Viceroy, have evolved to physically resemble the monarch in order to benefit from birds' aversion to the genuine article.

In the 1960s, in an effort to better understand the migratory cycle of the monarch, Brower analyzed the cardenolides of the various species of milkweed in North



In fact, Brower could show, from the place of origin of the particular milkweed species upon which the butterfly would lay her eggs and the larva would feed, that there were at least three generations in the year-long cycle of the monarch.

Annie Hibbert, a zoology undergraduate who attended the Macdonald lecture, was impressed by Brower's tenacity in tracking the mysterious cycle of the monarch. "I felt privileged to have had a glimpse of this man's life's work," she says. "Dr. Brower demonstrated how curiosity can lead to interesting hypotheses and how the results of experiments often lead to more questions."

Brower's curiosity and respect for such an extraordinary biological phenomenon also provoked him to activism in the quest to save the 50 acres of oyamel fir trees in the Neovolcanic Mountains in Mexico. This forest is the winter home to all monarchs born east of the Rockies. Brower recently formed a geographical information systems team involving the University of Mexico, NASA, and Lynchberg and Sweet Briar Colleges in Virginia to document changes to the local ecology.

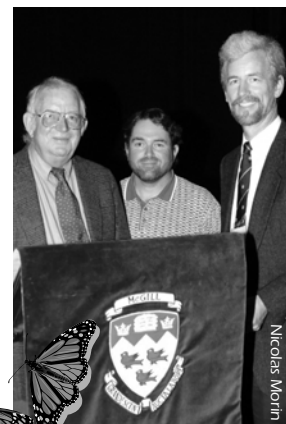


Guests with Lincoln Brower during reception.

MSE director Nigel Roulet would like the next speaker in the series to be someone who, like Brower, "is involved in the conservationist and social aspects of a major environmental issue as well as being a top scholar.

"I'd like to focus on the success stories," says Roulet, who will soon be assembling a selection committee of MSE students and cross-appointed faculty to find the next speaker. The MSE learned recently that the gift that enabled this lecture has been extended to ensure the hosting of new guest lecturers for at least two more years. The School is hoping to keep this highly appreciated series for many more years to come.

(l-r) Lincoln Brower, Nigel Roulet and Jim Fyles.



Guests during lecture reception.



Development and Alumni Relations News

The MSE is celebrating its sixth year of leading McGill in new directions of teaching and research on the environment. The generosity of our alumni and friends has played an increasingly important role in the School's success over the past six years. Gifts to the School have provided scholarships that recognize and assist the efforts of our top students, bursaries that enable students to pursue environmental fieldwork, and grants for student-led projects that raise awareness about environmental matters and provoke change.

In addition to providing support to students directly, as you will have read in the article that showcases our new lecture series, some gifts enable the MSE to enrich the entire University community and general public by bringing scholars of international renown to share their enthusiasm, knowledge and passion for particular areas of environment study.

Many of this year's donors had the opportunity to hear students talk about the importance of their gifts during the MSE student "thank-a-thon" held in March. In case our volunteers weren't able to reach you personally, we take this opportunity now to thank you all for your continued generosity and commitment to McGill and the environment.

For more information on making a gift to the MSE please contact **Sari LaBelle** at sari.labelle@mcgill.ca or **(514) 398-8977**.



*MSE Student Phonathon Volunteers
(from left) Jesse Sayles, Emily
Carpenter, Spencer Mann,
Anne Sabourin.*

UPCOMING EVENTS

September 2004

The MSE Lecture Series and Macdonald's "Food For Thought" Series kicks off. More information to follow soon.

October 14-17, 2004

Homecoming weekend for McGill and Macdonald graduates. Visit our website for details about MSE events downtown and at Macdonald.

Visit www.mcgill.ca/mse for more details about events.

Making a Gift of a Lifetime

Deciding on the disposition of your estate can be difficult, even when you want to use it to help improve the world in some way.

Laura Cero has lived all her life in Montreal. When she was a child, walks in the woods were a highlight of sunny spring days, and she still derives a great deal of pleasure from strolling through a park or a wooded area. She also enjoys cycling and birding, so the city's pleasant bike paths and quiet green spaces are personally very important to her. Laura has watched with dismay as buildings and highways began to encroach on areas that used to be ideal places for contemplative walks. Her desire to help conserve the environment that gives her so much pleasure is what finally helped her decide on a destination for her bequest.

Laura wanted her estate to be translated into something meaningful in perpetuity. A conversation with a friend brought to her attention the possibility that perhaps education and the environment, two worthy causes, would fit the bill perfectly and, what's more, could be combined in one gift. She investigated various institutions and finally settled on McGill because of its size and reputation – and because she was impressed with the work done at the MSE to prepare students for their roles in the management of local and global environmental concerns.

The Laura Cero Bursaries in the MSE will provide generations of students with opportunities for learning in a growing discipline, and will benefit the wider community through the fieldwork, research and influence of each recipient.

Bequests and other
planned gifts for
McGill University

The Gift of
a Lifetime

How does a planned gift work? Is there any financial benefit to the donor who makes one?

A planned gift is a charitable donation arranged during a donor's lifetime but not available to McGill until sometime in the future. The most common type of planned gift is a bequest, but it is just one of many types.

A bequest to McGill University may serve to reduce, by means of a tax credit, the income tax payable by the donor's estate. A planned gift may eliminate or reduce tax on capital gains when appreciated property is given.



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