



A photo taken in 1986 of Ann Cihelka with David Johnston, then McGill Principal and now 28th Governor General of Canada.

THE GIFT OF  
A LIFETIME

# A Lifetime of Service to McGill

The late Ann Cihelka had a gift for encouraging others to give. As McGill's Director of Planned Gifts and Donor Relations, she possessed a deep passion for philanthropy and served as a tireless advocate for the advancement of higher education.

But Cihelka also practiced what she preached, donating regularly to McGill throughout her 16-year career at the University. Following her retirement in 1995, she provided funding and a generous bequest to establish and endow the Ann Cihelka Award (later renamed the Ann Cihelka Bursary Fund), which provides financial assistance to top students who might otherwise not be able to afford a McGill education.

"My mother wanted all students to have the opportunity to learn at the highest level," says Frank Cihelka, her oldest son. "She came from humble beginnings so it was important for her that everyone be given the chance to succeed."

Born and raised in Wood Islands, a small farming and fishing community in Prince Edward Island, Ann Cihelka left home when she was just 16 to start a new life in Montreal. She got her start in fundraising through a part-time job with a consulting firm, obtaining the skills that propelled her to a position with McGill's development office.

As head of the Planned Giving program, Cihelka played a key role in educating alumni about the power of bequests and planned gifts and matching the interests of donors with the University's priorities. Over time, she came to know many of the people who named McGill in their wills and maintained these special relationships throughout her career.

Cihelka passed away on December 21, 2009, but she continues to touch the hearts and lives of students today through her Bursary Fund. Bursary recipient Abena Addo (right), an environmental science student and player on the Martlets varsity basketball team, says the award is "a huge relief as it significantly lowered my financial distress, allowing me to continue my education at a school I have grown to love."



Robert Cihelka says his mother would be heartened to learn of the tremendous impact of her generosity. "Mum believed that education was the key to freedom and success," he says. "She would have been proud to know the difference she is making."



**McGill** Bequests and  
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