



THE GIFT OF A LIFETIME

A Legacy Born of Loss

It would be hard to find a more enthusiastic advocate of higher education – and of McGill – than Prof. Mahesh Sharma, DipEng'68, MEng'72, DipMan'74, MBA'76.

"There is nothing more important than education, and I am very grateful for all that it has given me," says Sharma, a Professor and Distinguished Teacher at Concordia University's John Molson School of Business. "McGill has been a significant part of my life, and I am grateful for the opportunities that it opened up for me."

Sharma, who immigrated to Canada from India in 1966, recognized that education was the key to a successful future. "When I arrived in Montreal, with only \$8 in my pocket, I stayed with my brother, Brajesh, who also studied Architecture at McGill," he recalls. "I already had a Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering, so I got a job and enrolled part-time at the School for Continuing Studies for evening courses towards a post-graduate Diploma in Engineering."

After earning a Masters of Mechanical Engineering (specializing in aerodynamics) at McGill, Sharma went to work for a multi-national engineering company. But it was not long before his appetite for learning drew him back to McGill. He returned to the School for Continuing Studies to take evening classes for a Diploma in Management, which he earned in 1974. Two years later he completed his

MBA at the Desautels Faculty of Management – with support from a Quebec Senior Administration Fellowship.

By the 1980s, Sharma had risen to the position of Chief Engineer at his firm. Then, on June 23, 1985 his life was dealt a devastating blow, when his wife, Uma and daughters, Sandhya and Swati, perished in the bombing of Air India flight 182.

Shortly after suffering this terrible loss, Sharma decided to leave industry and take on a full-time teaching position at Concordia, where he had been lecturing since 1975. Now a tenured professor in the Department of Supply Chain & Business Technology Management, Sharma was presented the prestigious John O'Brien Distinguished Teaching Award based on 10 years teaching in June 1985.

He has now decided to honour his family's memory at McGill in a lasting way, by establishing a legacy gift that will fund two student awards, one in the Desautels Faculty of Management, named for his daughters, and the other in Engineering, in his and his wife's name.

After losing his family, Sharma is pleased to be carrying on their memory in this way. "Education is the best thing in life, and McGill meant a lot to my wife, who worked in the Library, and my daughters, who attended the summer camp. So giving back to the University in their name is the best donation I can make."



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