



Dr. Richard and Polly Valeriote.

## THE GIFT OF A LIFETIME

# The Good Doctor

Richard Valeriote, BSc'52, MDCM'57, wasn't supposed to be a success. Born into an immigrant family of 16 children and brought up in a poor part of Guelph, Ont., he had a childhood that resembled something out of Angela's Ashes.

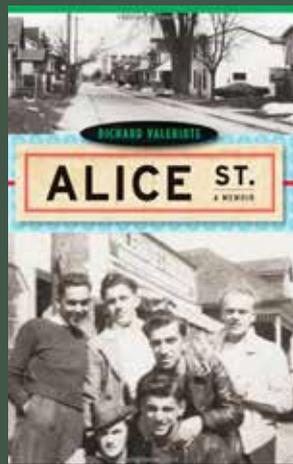
"I had to grow up fast, went to bed hungry more nights than I care to remember, and survived thanks to a series of small miracles facilitated by family, friends and strangers alike," he says. "If I hadn't lived it, I'd swear it was fiction."

Though dealt a financial bad hand, Dr. Valeriote was determined to pursue medicine at McGill. Thanks to several challenging jobs (including a stint as a construction laborer at the Goose Bay air force base in Newfoundland), a scholarship from the J.W. McConnell Foundation and 45 personal loans, he grasped his dream and went on to enjoy a successful career as a family doctor.

Now retired and living in Fairfield, Calif., Dr. Valeriote and his wife, Polly, BA'53, are among McGill's most loyal benefactors, having given back to their alma mater on an almost annual basis for over 40 years. In 2011, the couple took their commitment one step further with

a generous gift and bequest to create the Dr. Richard and Mrs. Polly Valeriote Medical Students Support Bursary, which provides financial assistance to students in financial need from the McGill Faculty of Medicine.

"I feel an obligation to give back to McGill," he explains. "I wouldn't have made it through university without the support I received. And when you are helped, you have a responsibility to give back."



Dr. Valeriote has chronicled his remarkable journey through McGill medical school in *Alice Street*, a memoir published by McGill-Queen's University Press in 2010. Dr. Valeriote then gave McGill exclusive rights to the book so that all proceeds benefit the University.

"I feel so fortunate that I attended McGill," he says.

"The University gave me my life. I wouldn't be who I am and have what I have if not for McGill."



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