Voices from the Quiet Revolution  
Confirmed date: November 10, 2010  
Date of the Inaugural Speech by the Lesage Government, November 10th 1960  
Location: McCord Museum  
Time: 1 pm to 5 pm

Presentation:
On June 22 1960, the Liberal party under Jean Lesage won the provincial election marking the beginning of what has been termed as Quebec’s “Quiet Revolution”. Under the slogan «c'est le temps qu'ça change», the Liberal «équipe du tonnerre» put forward a vast series of health, education, culture, economic and political reforms that sought to modernize the Quebec state, build a new middle class and transform Quebec society.

In the fifty years since 1960 election, historians, academics, politicians and the general public have vigorously debated the nature of the Quiet Revolution and its impact. This project, however, looks to return to the actors involved in these reforms to get their perspectives on these events and shed light on some of the myths and symbols about the Quiet Revolution and living in the 1960s and 1970s Quebec.

Beyond well known politicians of that period like Jean Lesage, René Lévesque and Georges-Émile Lapalme, many important actors of that period are still alive and will greatly contribute to a better understand of the period which seems increasing distinct from today’s reality. This is especially true for the Anglophone public to whom this series would be speaking.

By using the English language as the language for the debates, this event hopes to contribute to an oral history of the events of the Quiet Revolution in English by the actors involved. For teaching, research, public education and media purposes, the English voices and testimonies of these actors will be of great use.

Guy Rocher (Sociologist at Université de Montréal and former member of the Parent Commission, 1961) and Yves Martin (former civil servant at the time of the implementation of the reforms in Education in Quebec and the first lay Principal of the Université de Sherbrooke and) have accepted to take part as members of our organizing committee. This initiative is a joint effort of the McGill Institute for the Study of Canada and McGill’s Quebec Studies Program.

Participants:
The participants were actors involved in different sectors during the time of the Quiet Revolution. Here are the individuals and their implication back then:

Gregory Baum: Former expert for Council Vatican II, catholic theologian and known expert on the Church in Quebec.

Claude Castonguay; Former co-president of the Commission royale d’enquête sur la santé et le bien-être social
(Creation of La Régie des rentes du Québec by Jean Lesage)

Bernard Landry, student activist and former President of the Association des étudiants de la Faculté de droit de l’Université de Montréal and President of the Association générale des étudiants de l’Université de Montréal (AGEUM, 1962)
(Student Association in their political impact)

Guy Rocher, former member of the Parent Commission, 1961
(The need for a Ministry of Education)

Françoise Sullivan, a multidisciplinary artist, who signed the Refus Global Manifesto in 1948
(Art as a way to initiate the social changes)

Animators:
Kenneth McRoberts, Principal of Glendon University, political scientist and author of Quebec: Social Change and Political Crisis, Beyond Quebec; taking Stock of Canada and as well as Misconceiving Canada: The Struggle for National Unity.

Yvan Lamonde, Emeritus professor and historian at McGill University. He his the author of many books on Quebec intellectual history like Histoire sociale des idées au Québec

Format:
We want this event to be an oral history event in English where the actors of the Quiet Revolution share their thoughts and memories. Since we want to give a great emphasis to the discussion, the animator of the panel will be establishing a discussion with the participants around these 3 questions:

From your perspective, during the 1950s and mostly at the beginning of the 1960s, what were the driving and the resistant forces in place?

Keeping in mind your own professional activities in the 1960s, what were 3 or 4 important turning points that had important and lasting consequences?

50 years after many events later, what should be some of the key interpretations of the Quiet Revolution?

If they want to, when discussing their own implications during the Quiet Revolution, the participants could tackle in their short intervention 1 of these 3 questions.
The speakers will be invited to make a short presentation of 5 to 7 minutes. A discussion period will follow between the animator and the speakers. The animator of the first round table is Kenneth McRoberts and the second one is Yvan Lamonde.