



PRESS RELEASE

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THE MONTREAL HEART INSTITUTE CELEBRATES THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST HEART TRANSPLANT IN CANADA

Montreal, May 28, 2008 – The first heart transplant in Canada was performed by Dr. Pierre Grondin of the Montreal Heart Institute (MHI) on May 30, 1968. The MHI is proud to mark the 40th anniversary of this milestone in cardiac surgery. With a few rare exceptions, the first heart transplant recipients, it's important to remember, survived for no more than a few weeks, due mainly to problems related to rejection, i.e. graft-versus-host disease. In view of the situation, heart transplant programs the world over were suspended in early 1969.

After the 40th anniversary, let's celebrate the 25th!

In the early 1980s, the discovery of cyclosporin—a powerful immunosuppressant that made it possible to significantly extend the life expectancy of heart transplant recipients—was the spark needed to re-launch heart transplant programs all over the world. Thus, on April 24, 1983, the MHI successfully implemented the second phase of its heart transplant program; the first patient to benefit from the program was Ms. Diane Larose.

Over the last 25 years, some 336 heart transplant procedures have been performed at the MHI. The probability of survival is almost 90% during the first year, with life expectancy often exceeding ten years. However, cardiac transplantation remains limited in scope owing to the shortage of hearts available for transplant (organ donation).

“I'd like to pay tribute to Dr. Pierre Grondin and all of the pioneers in cardiology who worked so hard to meet the myriad challenges presented by cardiac transplantation,” says Dr. Michel Carrier, a cardiac surgeon at the MHI and full professor in the department of surgery at Université de Montréal. “With an optimism renewed by research progress, they successfully resumed cardiac transplantation and, in doing so, gave a new lease on life to people for whom it was the only viable option.” As part of a partnership with the Centre hospitalier universitaire Sainte-Justine (CHUSJ), the MHI, in the last five years, has also followed heart transplant patients from the CHUSJ when they reach adult age.

“We perform 12 to 15 heart transplant procedures per year at the MHI, and it's a great joy each time we're able to give these patients a second life,” adds Dr. Guy B. Pelletier, a cardiologist and coordinator of the heart transplant team at the MHI, and clinical assistant professor in the faculty of medicine at Université de Montréal. “The obvious joy lighting up the faces of the heart transplant recipients here today to mark this anniversary, is also a compelling testimony, one that speaks to the importance of raising public awareness of organ donation. I'd like to pay tribute to them and to the team of physicians, nurses and clerical

staff at the MHI transplant clinic, and other professionals at the MHI who dedicate themselves to the well-being of our transplant recipients.”

Diane Larose: the first heart transplant recipient 25 years ago

On April 24, 1983, 21-year-old Diane Larose, a student of fashion marketing at Lasalle College, became the first patient to benefit from the new cardiac transplant program at the MHI. This was a young woman with no previous health problems. Ms. Larose had caught a bad flu and a virus had lodged itself in her heart, giving her an extremely rare disease affecting only 1% of the population. The only viable option was a heart transplant, which she finally received after a four-month waiting period. Ms. Larose underwent a second heart transplant procedure in 1993 and has also had three kidney transplants.

“I’m extremely pleased to be here today so that I can express my profound gratitude to the many physicians and the entire transplant team for their unwavering support over the last 25 years, but also to each of my donors, for giving me new life,” says Ms. Diane Larose.

About the Montreal Heart Institute

Founded in 1954, the Montreal Heart Institute constantly aims for the highest standards of excellence in the cardiovascular field through its leadership in prevention, ultra-specialized care, training of professionals, clinical and fundamental research, and assessment of new technologies. It is affiliated with the Université de Montréal and its clinical outcomes are among the best in the world. To learn more about the Institute, please visit our website at www.icm-mhi.org.

About the Université de Montréal

Deeply rooted in Montreal and dedicated to its international mission, the Université de Montréal is one of the top universities in the world, particularly in the French-speaking world. Founded in 1878, the Université de Montréal today has 13 faculties and together with its two affiliated schools, HEC Montréal and École Polytechnique, constitutes the largest centre of higher education and research in Québec, the second largest in Canada, and one of the major centres in North America. It brings together 2,500 professors and researchers, accommodates more than 55,000 students, offers some 650 programs at all academic levels, and awards about 3,000 masters and doctorate diplomas each year.

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