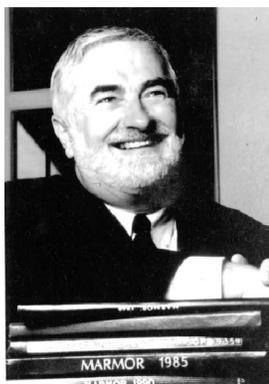


# Remembering Peter George

(1941 - 2017)

— by Roger Trull



In 1995, after thirty years as a faculty member, Peter George accepted the appointment of President of McMaster University with unprecedented enthusiasm. It was the job he always wanted. A dream come true.

I really wanted to impress the new boss on his first day so I decided to go to work earlier than normal. It would be great

if Peter could see my car in the lot when he arrived. I pulled in at 6:30 am and Peter's car was already there! I tried the same thing the next day. Same result. For the next fifteen years, the times I beat him into work were few and far between. His tireless work ethic inspired everyone around him to make McMaster the very best it could be.

Shortly after taking office, Peter was faced with an unexpected challenge. Premier Harris's Common Sense Revolution meant a 10% operating budget cut overnight for McMaster. Peter understood that we were going to need private financial support if the University was to move ahead in the way he envisioned. At a time when the rest of the University was experiencing significant budget cuts, Peter insisted on a budget increase for Advancement activities. He believed that we could continue to be a really good Canadian university with government funding alone, but with private support we could become a world leader. That is what he wanted and that is exactly what happened.

During his first two years as President, Peter travelled tirelessly with the Advancement team, telling the McMaster story of a "Student Centred Research

University" to philanthropists, corporate leaders, Premiers, Prime Ministers and McMaster Alumni.

The results of Peter's leadership are visible in the Student Centre, the Stadium, the Athletics complex, the new academic buildings and the David Braley Health Sciences Centre, a cornerstone for Hamilton downtown redevelopment. Peter believed that a strong McMaster would lead to a stronger Hamilton. However, his vision for private support went well beyond new buildings.

The endowment fund that Peter championed allowed students to receive scholarships and bursaries and is now approaching 700 million dollars. It started at 90 million dollars in his first year. These funds also allowed for the creation of more than 70 Endowed Professorial Chairs. Having the funds to attract and keep the best and brightest faculty to teach in the best possible facilities, while preserving a caring student environment. That was Peter's vision.

Peter took a genuine interest in students, and was especially fond of McMaster athletics. He was in the same seat at every football game and you could spot him in the bleachers at most basketball games. He could also be seen standing in the rain watching soccer or lacrosse. He loved it all.

Peter's legacy was recognized in May when the McMaster Advancement team, under the leadership of Mary Williams, arranged a special convocation. He received his Honorary Degree, and was recognized with a building to be named in his honour. The Peter George Living and Learning Centre, he told those in attendance, is like a tree that he has planted, but will never sit under. It is for future generations.

Thank you Peter. We will not forget you.

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