

\$15 MILLION FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

Concordian makes history with the
GINA CODY SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING AND COMPUTER SCIENCE

24.09.2018

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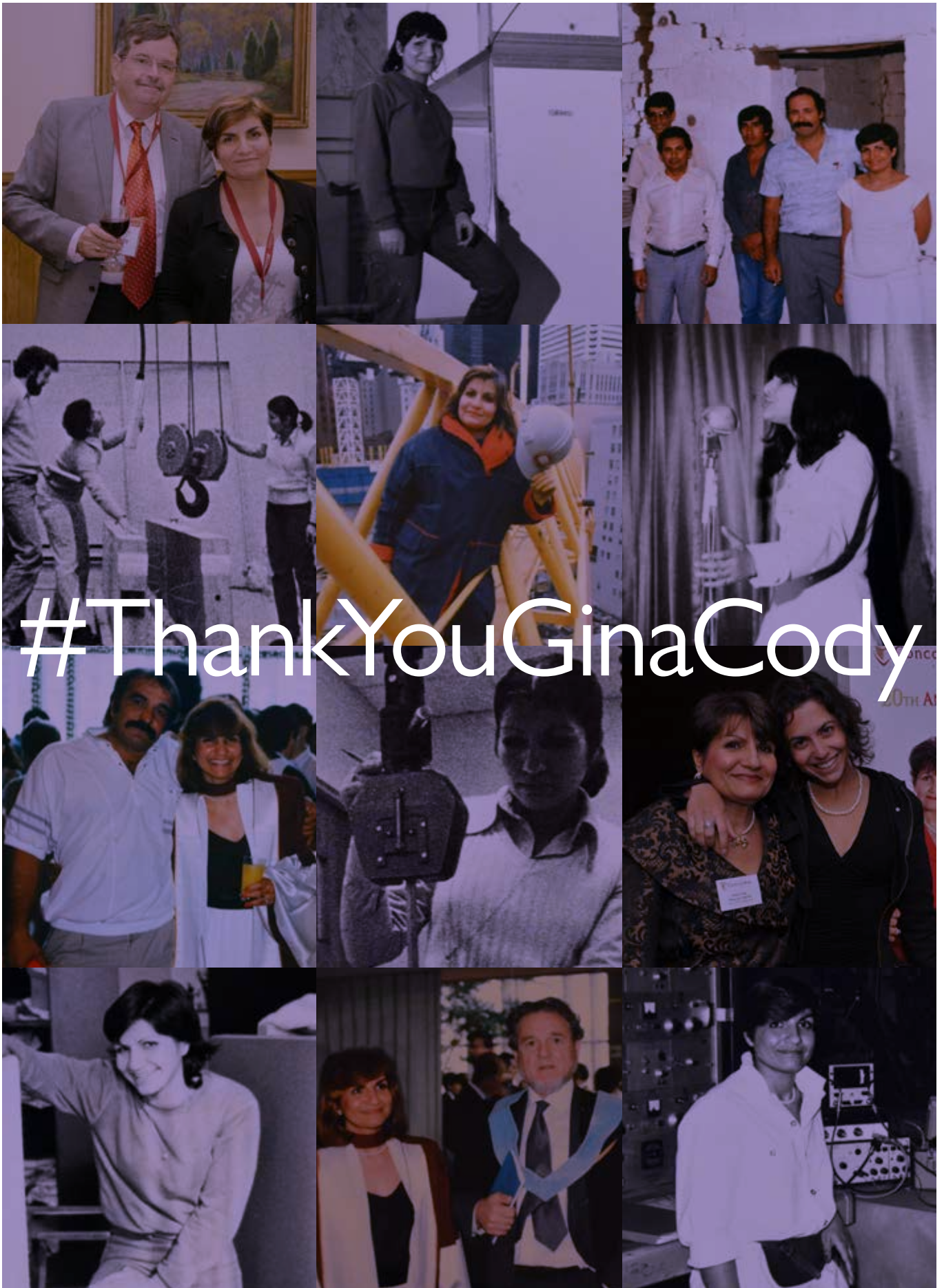


\$250-MILLION GOAL FOR CONCORDIA TO LEAD AS CANADA'S NEXT-GEN UNIVERSITY.

Whirlwind change is compelling a rethink of everything, including university education and research. To prosper in a time of fast change, students need dynamic learning that connects to the world and public good — that aligns tradition with emerging fields and global opportunities. With a strong reputation as Canada's top university under 50, we have the momentum and vitality to develop talented graduates who can engage society's biggest 21st-century challenges. 48,000 students. 215,000 alumni. A lot of talent. A lot of action!

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GINA CODY'S \$15 MILLION GIFT FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

**MEET THE ALUMNA WHO INSPIRED THE NEW NAME OF CONCORDIA'S
GINA CODY SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING AND COMPUTER SCIENCE.**

by Joseph Leger, BA 15

Nearly 30 years after becoming the first woman to earn a PhD in building engineering from Concordia, Gina Parvaneh Cody, MEng 81, PhD 89, has made an historic \$15-million gift to her alma mater — and her former faculty.

“The best way for a woman, or anyone, to succeed is through higher education,” says Gina Cody, an engineer and business leader who arrived from Iran in 1979.

“It is a platform for women, people of colour, Indigenous populations and other minorities to achieve equality and pursue their dreams. That is why I am deeply committed to Concordia, and why I am making this donation.”

In recognition of her generosity and achievements in her field, the faculty has been renamed the Gina Cody School of Engineering and Computer Science. It becomes the first engineering faculty in Canada to be named after a woman.

Concordia President Alan Shepard says the donation will help propel the faculty to even greater heights.

“Gina Cody’s gift is profoundly important for the university. Our engineering and computer science programs are among the strongest in Canada and the

world. This gift allows us to build on the incredible strength that is already recognized globally, and to make it even stronger for the next generation.”

The \$15-million donation supports the creation of three new research chairs, which focus on data analytics and artificial intelligence, the internet of things, and Industry 4.0 and advanced manufacturing.

It will also support Concordia’s Smart Cities Initiative, with additional funds for the Canada Excellence Research Chair in Smart, Sustainable and Resilient Cities and Communities.

Plus, new annual undergraduate and graduate scholarships will attract top students and researchers. Each level of support includes provisions to promote equity, gender, diversity and inclusion.

“Renaming the faculty serves as an inspiration for the next generation,” says Amir Asif, dean of the Gina Cody School of Engineering and Computer Science. “This gift allows us to direct funding towards strategic research and teaching areas that will have a huge impact on society.”



Cody earned a bachelor's degree in engineering from Aryamehr University of Technology (now Sharif University of Technology) before leaving Iran during the revolution in 1979. She then completed both her master's and doctoral degrees at Concordia. She went on to distinguish herself first as an engineer, and then as the president and principal shareholder of CCI Group Inc., a Toronto-based engineering consulting firm.

Under her leadership, CCI was named one of Canada's most profitable companies owned by a woman by *Profit* magazine in 2010, and Cody was recognized as one of the country's top female entrepreneurs.

In 2016, Cody sold her company and retired.

MEET GINA CODY

Tell us a little about yourself...

Gina Cody: I love engineering. I love math, and I was always good at it. When I was young, if something was broken — the television or a chair — I would fix it. I wanted to build things, so I went into civil engineering. I was born in Iran into a family of five children — I was the youngest. My father owned a construction company and ran a boys' school. My mother was a housewife who never finished high school. She married very young, and she felt it was extremely important for me and my sister to be in charge of our own destinies. My father was a great person and he encouraged us to pursue higher education, but it was even more important to my mother, especially regarding her daughters. I knew from a young age that higher education would be the key to my success and was fortunate to have the opportunity to pursue my ambitions.

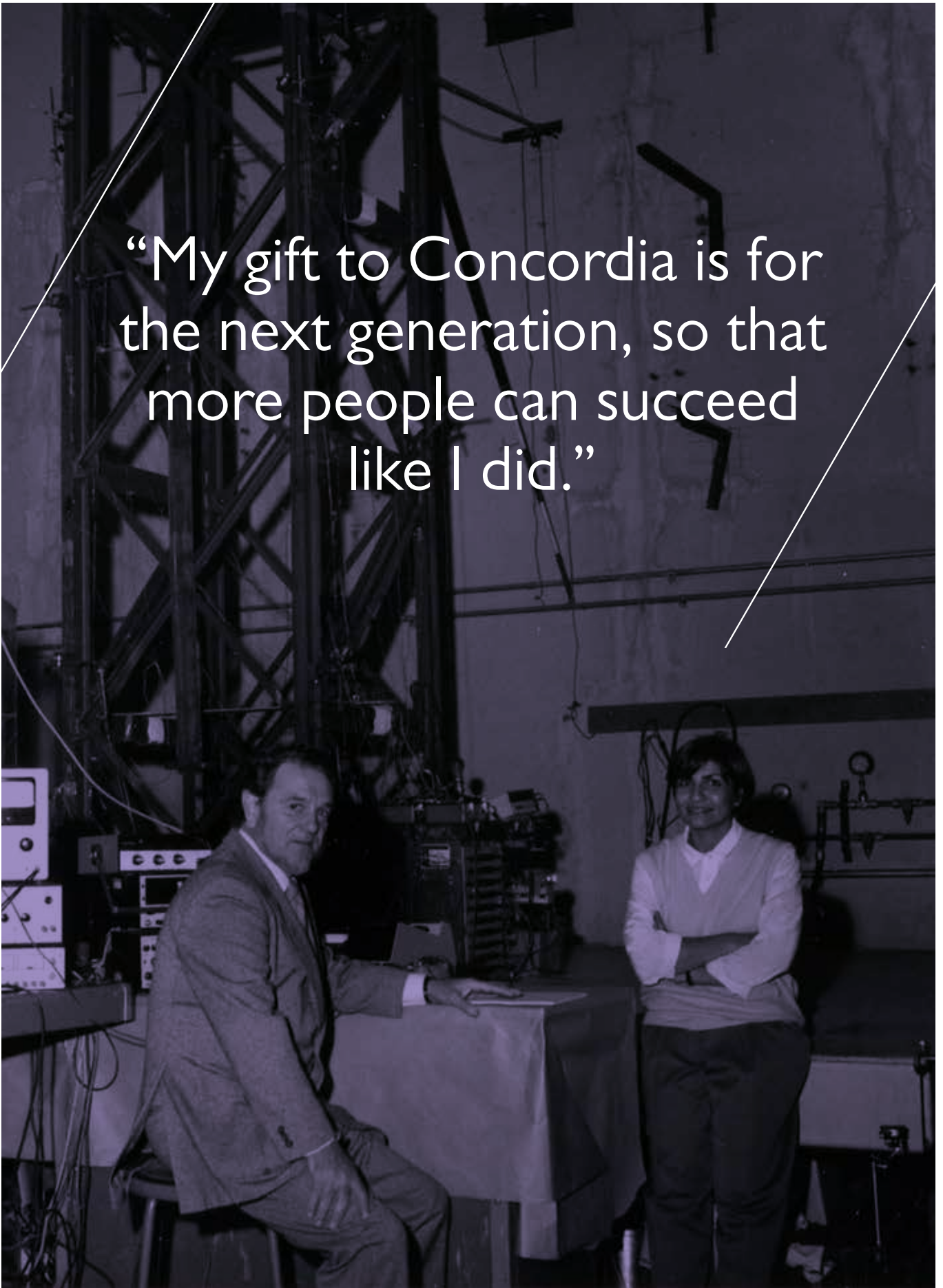
How did you come to Concordia?

GC: I left Iran in 1979. I had \$2,000 in my pocket when I arrived in Canada... but tuition was \$4,000. I don't know what I was thinking. Where was I going to get the money? My brother was doing his bachelor's degree at Concordia and he convinced me to meet with one of his professors, Cedric Marsh. Professor Marsh and I spoke for an hour, and at the end he said, "I really want you to join Concordia. Why would you go any other place?" He gave me financial support immediately. I don't know what I would have done if he hadn't — he changed my life, and so did Concordia.

What is your advice for future engineers?

GC: To succeed, you have to persevere. Hard work is required, but there is nothing that you cannot achieve once you make up your mind to pursue it — no matter the colour of your skin or your gender. My gift to Concordia is for the next generation, so that more people can succeed like I did.

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#ThankYouGinaCody

On Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, the Concordia community is sharing how Gina Cody's \$15 million gift — and her leadership — will have an impact on the university and beyond. Join the celebration by using the hashtags #ThankYouGinaCody and #MerciGinaCody!

Here are some thoughts Concordia leaders have shared with us.

ALAN SHEPARD CONCORDIA PRESIDENT



"Across Canada, only around 20 per cent of students in computer science and engineering programs are women and we would like to see that number grow significantly. To do that, we need role models like Gina Cody. She is an exemplar of success and her gift will allow us to create new opportunities for women

to come and study at Concordia. She is giving for the next generation, for students who aren't here yet. These students will benefit enormously and Concordia and society will also benefit."

AMIR ASIF DEAN, GINA CODY SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING AND COMPUTER SCIENCE



"This gift is very timely. Our faculty has made big strides recently and this donation will allow us to rise to the next level. It will provide the resources to train the next generation of engineers and computer science leaders who will develop new technologies for the benefit of society. This gift would enable that

in five meaningful ways: research intensification; scholarships for undergraduate and graduate students; 3 research chairs; equity, diversity and inclusion initiatives; and the acquisition of research infrastructure."

GOVIND GOPAKUMAR CHAIR, CENTRE FOR ENGINEERING IN SOCIETY



"The longstanding concern with diversity and inclusion in engineering practice and technological development is an important domain of focus for the Centre for Engineering in Society. Celebrating successes and creating role models are important efforts to address this challenge. This gift is a signal

that Concordia takes this concern seriously and is willing to announce to the world that it is actively engaged in responding to this challenge."

ABDESSAMAD BEN HAMZA DIRECTOR, CONCORDIA INSTITUTE FOR INFORMATION SYSTEMS ENGINEERING



"Gina Cody's historic gift will establish the first research chair of Internet of Things [IoT] at Concordia. IoT is an emerging technology of the digital revolution that will shape the classrooms of tomorrow and create smart schools, where teachers, students and devices become more connected. Thanks to

the generosity of Gina Cody, our students are well positioned for the future and better equipped to become excellent practitioners and stewards of next-generation technologies."

XENIA VRUVIDES, BENG 76, MENG 82 FRIEND AND GINA CODY'S FORMER CLASSMATE



"Gina is an amazing friend. She's a brilliant person who encouraged me and everyone around her. Engineering is not an easy field — it wasn't then and it isn't now — and Gina inspired us to continue."

Gina Cody

LATA NARAYANAN

CHAIR, DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE
AND SOFTWARE ENGINEERING



"Concordia is proud of Gina Cody and she has always maintained her connection to her alma mater. As the first woman to earn a PhD in building engineering here, she is a pioneer who will inspire young women in science and engineering, at Concordia and elsewhere. Her historic gift gives a big

boost to our resources as well as to our motivation to make it to the next level in both research and teaching."

ALEX DE VISSCHER

CHAIR, DEPARTMENT OF CHEMICAL
AND MATERIALS ENGINEERING



"The Department of Chemical and Materials Engineering was founded in 2017 and is in the process of developing labs, programs, a student population and a reputation. As a new department, we are dependent on significant resources in all these areas. Gina Cody's donation will enable us to kick-start many of

our activities and to position ourselves as a leading next-generation program in Canada and worldwide."

MARTIN PUGH

CHAIR, DEPARTMENT OF MECHANICAL,
INDUSTRIAL AND AEROSPACE ENGINEERING



"This gift will be a game changer for the Department of Mechanical, Industrial and Aerospace Engineering. We have been wanting to expand our activities, in the area of mechatronics, robotics — electrically and computer-driven machines — self-driving cars and micro-machines. This donation will create

a high-level research chair in these areas, which adds the leadership and impetus we need to make us a major centre for these activities."

CHRISTINE ANAHITA BIGTASHI

GINA CODY'S NIECE AND CONCORDIA
ENGINEERING GRADUATE STUDENT



"I'm so proud of my aunt Gina, who is one of my primary parental figures since my dad, Mahmoud Bigtashi, passed away. I'm really inspired by her. She laid the groundwork for women to become a larger population within Concordia's Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science."

WILLIAM LYNCH

CHAIR, DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRICAL
AND COMPUTER ENGINEERING



"Gina Cody's gift, with its emphasis on excellence and inclusion, will have a profound impact on our faculty far into the future."

ASHUTOSH BAGCHI

CHAIR, DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING, CIVIL
AND ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING



"This gift is very important for the next generation of building, civil and environmental engineers as it will have tremendous impact on their experiential learning, classroom experience and community outreach. It will make a big difference for scholarships and lab development and give students an enriched learning experience."



**GINA CODY SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING
AND COMPUTER SCIENCE
ECOLE DE GENIE
ET D'INFORMATIQUE
GINA-CODY**

MONTREAL, QC, CANADA