



JONATHAN
WENER

BCOMM 71

THE CONSUMMATE BUILDER




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CONCORDIA



“May the force
be with you.”

– Jonathan Wener, BComm 71



At the Faculty of Arts and Science's fall 2018 convocation with Mariam Mekdelawit Sambe, PhD 18



PREFACE

“Jonathan Wener is an unwavering champion of Concordia and has shown a ceaseless dedication to his alma mater in every possible sense. He has made generous financial contributions and given countless hours to transform Concordia into Canada’s next-generation university. His spirit is defiantly optimistic in the face of even the most daunting challenges. This good nature is infectious.

Being in Jon’s presence makes others feel that they, too, can muster the strength to improve the future. As chancellor, he has been the quintessential torchbearer for the Concordia community.

We thank Jon for his vision and tireless service to Concordia and our students.”

– **GRAHAM CARR**

*President and Vice-Chancellor
Concordia University*



INTRODUCTION: THE CONSUMMATE BUILDER

In many ways, Jonathan Wener, BComm 71, shaped the Concordia of today.

He revitalized the university through his vision and leadership in acquiring real estate, building modern facilities while preserving heritage, and accenting campuses with striking works of art.

Wener's impact at Concordia, however, goes far beyond creating inspiring spaces for teaching and learning.

He has been a steadfast supporter of his alma mater since his time as a student. Following his undergraduate studies, he gave back as a donor, as chair of the Real Estate Planning Committee, as a Board of Governors member, as a campaign volunteer and fundraiser, and as chancellor.

Wener values loyalty, family, community and societal improvement, and when he dedicates himself to a cause, he pursues it with tenacity.

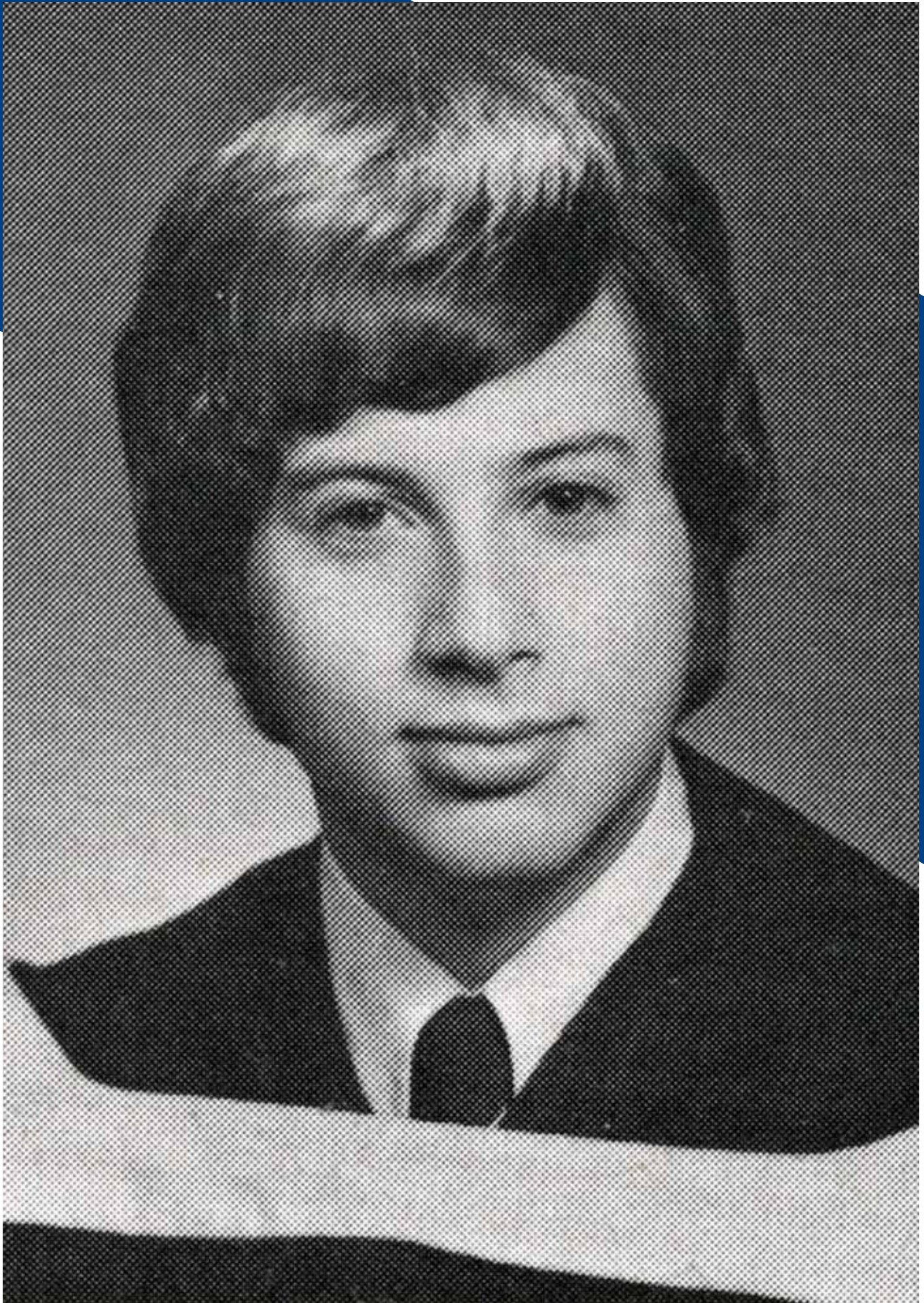
As a young entrepreneur, Wener founded Canderel and built the commercial property management company from the ground up. In the process, he helped change North America's real-estate landscape.

Dedicated to transforming the world for the better, Wener approaches philanthropy with the same verve as business. He generously donates time and money to a variety of causes spanning technology, health care, communications, finance and sustainability.

Those who know Wener best observe that he sees even the most difficult personal and professional challenges not as insurmountable obstacles but as pathways to make a positive impact beyond his immediate circumstances. Hard work, dedication and personal sacrifice are his hallmarks.

Though renowned for his work ethic, Wener has always found time to celebrate and enjoy life through interests that include travel, art, sports and the outdoors.

Widely admired for his positive outlook, open heart, kindness and humility — whether in the face of hardship or triumph — Wener is a man who has truly lived life to the fullest.





FROM SIR GEORGE WILLIAMS UNIVERSITY TO CANDEREL

Jonathan Wener began his entrepreneurial career early in life.

As a teenager, Wener delivered the *Montreal Gazette* door to door. He soon realized that if he subcontracted apartment superintendents to distribute newspapers in their own buildings, he could make fewer stops and manage more business.

While studying commerce at Sir George Williams University — one of Concordia's founding institutions — Wener was influenced by professors with industry experience who provided frank advice for the real world.

He appreciated the innovative and practical approach to learning business that involved working in management-style teams where students counted on each other to perform.

“My years at Sir George Williams University were instrumental in preparing me for the entrepreneurial life I embarked on after graduation,” said Wener.

Between semesters, he worked on construction sites in Calgary and was energized by the possibilities presented by architecture and real estate.

“I got myself a hard hat, a pair of steel-toed boots and headed west,” he told the *Gazette* in 2015.

During a three-year period between studies, Wener worked his way from labourer to “clerk of the works,” a site inspector

who helps ensure projects are on time and up to standard. Through his skill in managing the flow of construction materials, Wener generated a small windfall for the builder.

“I fell in love with the magnitude and creativity of the development business,” he said. “I was lucky to find my passion early in life.”

Gaining a clear-eyed vision for his future career emboldened his drive as a student.

Wener served as president of Sir George's Daytime Student Association and as the student club commissioner. He was also one of the first students to take a seat on the university's Board of Governors. Wener did all this while working 40 hours a week to pay for his tuition.

Among his accomplishments in student government, Wener helped the university acquire the building that would house the student society, complete with an art gallery, café, reading room and film-screening room.

When renovation permits for the student centre were delayed one summer, Wener got on the phone and dialled the Montreal mayor's office.

“His assistant said that the mayor was unable to take my call, and did I have a message for him?” said Wener.

The student politely reminded the mayor's office that the voting age had been lowered to 18 since the last municipal

election, and Montrealers were heading to the polls in just a few months. When the fall term started, Wener — now student-union president — explained that the mayor’s inaction was why the building was not completed on time.

“Within a few minutes, the assistant called back to say that the mayor would be happy to see me the next morning and that I could pick up our permits at the same time,” Wener later recalled.

Wener graduated in 1971 and, buoyed by his education and undergraduate experience at Sir George, set out to make his mark in the world of real estate. On his way out he remarked to a university official: “If you ever want to sell this place, give me a call.”

The upstart business-school graduate soon went to work for the commercial real-estate company First Quebec. By the age of 22, he was vice-president of leasing and development, and by 25 had earned a promotion to full partner.

In 1974, the newly formed Concordia University listed for sale the same student centre Wener had worked so hard to develop as an undergraduate at Sir George. Rather than linger in disappointment, however, he saw potential for a new opportunity.

Wener, then a young father with little capital, borrowed money and bought the building himself. He converted it into a restaurant and sold it for a profit. With these funds, he launched Canderel in 1975.

He may not have known that he was laying the cornerstone for what would become one of Canada’s most influential real-estate firms. Still, he did resolve to build a company that would always strive to create value, enhance community well-being and be nimble — regardless of the project.

Just down the street from Concordia’s downtown campus, 2000 Peel Street became the first development under the Canderel banner in 1981, in a joint venture with First Quebec.

Wener’s robust work ethic — the businessman worked 80 hours a week as a matter of routine — propelled Canderel forward. Over the next decade, he led more than 40 projects in the Montreal area as well as Edmonton, Ottawa, Toronto, Vancouver and the United States.

In 1987, he noticed that 630 René-Lévesque Boulevard was for sale. He recognized that a 34-storey office building in the heart of Montreal’s financial district would be an excellent addition to Canderel’s portfolio.

The company proffered a bid, but it fell short. Several weeks later, a call came in on a Friday afternoon with news that the original buyer had left the negotiating table.

“If you can close by next Tuesday,” the caller said, “the property is yours.”





“He left his signature in Toronto through a number of great projects. It has been a privilege to work with him over the decades.”

– Gina Cody, MEng 81, PhD 89

Canderel mobilized, with the entire team working day and night to close what became a complex \$65-million transaction.

Wener’s skill at recognizing young professionals who were equally entrepreneurial and hard-working helped elevate his company as well.

Gina Cody, MEng 81, PhD 89, first met Wener when Canderel hired her engineering consulting firm to work on its properties in Toronto. The namesake and historic benefactor of Concordia’s Gina Cody School of Engineering and Computer Science would later reconnect with Wener while both served on the university’s Board of Directors.

“He left his signature in Toronto through a number of great projects,” says Cody. “It has been a privilege to work with him over the decades.”

With a risk-management approach to business and a skill for reading the market, Wener foresaw a major industry correction in the late 1980s and took pre-emptive action. Canderel weathered the storm and emerged as Montreal’s third-largest property manager.

Notably, Wener merged his passion for architecture with Canderel’s day-to-day business. In 1991, when the company acquired 14 Place du Commerce in Montreal, the tenant requested that the office building connect with adjacent manufacturing and warehousing facilities.

Canderel decided not simply to create a corridor but to link the three components under one roof, with the upshot

being that office and production personnel could easily circulate and communicate in a sprawling atrium.

The tenant was thrilled with the arresting new space, and the innovative design was featured in the pages of *Architectural Digest*.

“The creative component is what I enjoy the most in developing these projects,” said Wener. “I’m not worried about making the last dollar on projects. [Canderel] is driven by profit and economics, but I’m equally driven by leaving behind signature developments. I will not let go of design excellence.”

Though the company has seen many successes, it has also faced significant challenges. In 1999, after selling 60 per cent of his company’s assets, Canderel fell to become the 28th-largest property manager in the city.

It took 15 years of drive and determination, but in 2014 Wener’s company reclaimed the number-three spot.

“We are comfortable solving difficult problems and complex issues,” he said in a 2016 speech to the Port of Sydney Development Corporation.

“My grandfather always said, ‘If you want to get comfortable, get uncomfortable.’ And so we put ourselves in the position of ensuring that we have those challenges constantly.”

Wener has been involved in many non-real-estate ventures over the years, too. His acumen has benefited many industries, including telecommunications, fibre optics,



software and data storage, rubber recycling and health care.

On February 18, 2019, Wener officially relinquished his role as CEO of Canderel — he remained on as chairman — to devote more time to philanthropy, family and other endeavours.

Canderel continues to thrive in the spirit of its founder's legacy. Among its many exciting projects is Taza, a 1,200-acre mixed-used development in Alberta. Located on the territory of the Tsuut'ina Nation, it is among North America's most extensive developments on Indigenous land.

In 2021, Canderel acquired the Quebec City-based Cominar Real Estate Investment Trust for \$5.7 billion, the largest real-estate transaction in Quebec's history.

"I'm proud to have started Canderel here, succeeded internationally and kept the headquarters here," said Wener in an interview with *The Suburban*. "Montreal is our home and we are very gratified to have completed such a historic transaction that strengthens the Quebec real-estate market.

"For our company and for myself personally, our communal commitments have always been of equal importance to our business achievements."

Through his legacy as an entrepreneur and extraordinary projects in cities across the country, Wener has made his indelible mark as a legendary figure in Canadian business history.





Born Israel Rafalsky, the painter William Raphael died in Montreal in 1914 at the age of 80.

FAMILY FIRST

Born on August 25, 1950, Jonathan Wener is a sixth-generation Montrealer.

As a child, he loved building junkyard forts and crafting complex projects out of plywood. This early talent is hardly a surprise, given that he comes from a long line of creatives.

One of Wener's ancestors, painter William Raphael, was a contemporary of the Dutch-born Canadian-American painter Cornelius Krieghoff. Born Israel Rafalsky in Prussia in 1833, Raphael moved to Montreal and became Canada's first known professional Jewish artist.

Raphael is best known for painting portraits and lively scenes depicting Canadian life and landscapes. He also contributed to the field of education by supporting public institutions and founding his own private school in Montreal.

In the field of business, Jonathan's great-uncle, Albert M. Wener, was a well-known clothing and woollens merchant who was born in Lithuania and came to Montreal before the age of 20. He was also the founder of Camp Hiawatha, situated near Sainte-Agathe-des-Monts, Quebec, in Wenerville, which was named after him.

Jonathan's parents, Marilyn (née Friedman) and Edgar Wener, were both born in Montreal and together attended McGill University.

During the Second World War, Edgar served in the Royal Canadian Air Force. Marilyn contributed to the war effort as a member of the Red Cross Corps.

In 1948, Marilyn and Edgar performed in a McGill production of *R.U.R.*, a 1920 science-fiction play by the Czech writer Karel Čapek. According to the playbill, Edgar played Radius, a robot, while Marilyn played Sulla, "a robotess." (As a teenager, Jonathan helped design sets for his high school's productions.)

Jonathan's parents graduated that same year — Marilyn with a bachelor of arts from McGill's Royal Victoria College and Edgar with a bachelor of commerce degree.

"Undisturbed by stress and hurry, inclined to work, but not to worry," was Edgar's university yearbook quote. "I dream of all I left undone, and laugh at all I dared to do," read Marilyn's.

Within a month of completing their studies, Marilyn and Edgar were wed.

Jonathan's father helped instill a keen sense of entrepreneurship. And while both his parents were actively involved in community and charity, his mother was particularly influential in the realm of philanthropy.

Marilyn was the founder chair of the Young Women's Section of the Federation Combined Jewish Appeal, an institution Jonathan continues to serve as chair of financial resource development.

Marilyn also served as vice-chair of the organization's women's division alongside Saidye Rosner Bronfman — wife of Seagram Company founder Samuel Bronfman — and was active in the Red Cross, Salvation Army, Canadian Cancer Society, Combined Appeal for the Blind and United Red Feather Services, the predecessor to Centraide. For her service to the Jewish community in Montreal, Marilyn was distinguished with the Barkoff Leadership Award.

Marilyn championed charitable acts both big and small. Later in life, she would recover golf balls from a lake near the Wener family's country home. After cleaning and packaging them in egg cartons, she would resell them and donate the money to worthy causes.

After Marilyn passed away from multiple myeloma, Jonathan created the Marilyn Wener Award of Excellence in her honour. Every year, this prestigious scholarship recognizes the exceptional volunteerism and community involvement of a student from the CHUM Research Centre who gives back to the Institut du cancer de Montréal.

"Philanthropy is something I grew up with as a kid," Wener has said of his parents' influence. "It's part of my DNA."



SUSAN WENER: A PORTRAIT OF RESILIENCE

Jonathan Wener met Susan Hanek on her first day as a student at Sir George Williams University.

“Jonathan wore a three-piece suit and was giving the welcoming address to all the first-year students. I turned to my best friend and said, ‘See that guy over there? That’s what I want!’” Susan wrote in her 2014 memoir, *Resilience: A Story of Courage and Triumph in the Face of Recurrent Cancer*.

Susan wore blue jeans, and her dark hair was long and straight. She later learned that Jonathan looked over at her and said to his friend: “See that girl over there? I’m going to ask her to have lunch with me.”

Jonathan and Susan dated throughout their undergraduate studies. They later married and had three daughters, Jacqueline, Katherine (Kassy) and Alexandra (Ali).

In 1989, the Wener family was thriving. Then, sudden and devastating news turned their household upside down. At 36, Susan was diagnosed with colon cancer. She began treatment with one goal: to see her children finish high school.

“Throughout this process, Jon has held my hand and never let go,” she said of the experience.

Before Susan had a confirmed diagnosis, a cancellation meant she could have surgery immediately. Her physician insisted that there was no time to waste. She followed the operation with chemotherapy, and the cancer went into remission.

Armed with a selflessness and zeal for philanthropy that rivals Jonathan’s, Susan soon co-founded the Défi Canderel with her husband to raise money for cancer research through an annual charity run in downtown Montreal.

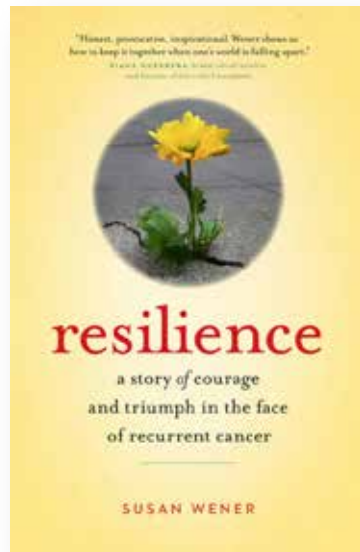
Susan then learned that three tumours had grown in her right lung. The prognosis was grim, as she required life-altering surgery to remove the entire organ.

Opting not to undergo chemotherapy a second time, Susan instead turned to alternative medicine. Her recovery stunned doctors as she recovered 90 per cent of her normal lung capacity. By medical standards, Susan had accomplished the impossible.

These trying experiences led to a new calling as an educator, guide, therapist and teacher to people coping with life-threatening illness. Susan holds a degree in teaching from McGill University and is a natural-health consultant with a certification in multi-dimensional healing.

She is also a practising member of the Canadian Association of Naturopaths and has been a member of the Canadian Guidance and Counselling Association since the mid-1990s.

In 2014, Susan authored *Resilience*, which chronicles her journey through diagnosis, surgery, chemotherapy and recovery. It’s a touching portrayal of how cancer affects both the patient and the family.



“The stories we create in light of that which we face help define our experience,” she said in a 2017 TEDx talk. “It’s how we perceive our experiences that ultimately creates our reality.”

Susan not only lived to see her daughters graduate high school, she also lived to see them thrive as professionals.

All three have fostered careers devoted to helping others. Jacqueline and Kassy have followed Susan’s path as a healer, teaching yoga, providing counselling and practising natural health. Ali, meanwhile, has devoted herself to supporting people with autism. In 2022, she became director of employment at Auticon Canada, an international firm that exclusively employs adults on the autism spectrum as information technology consultants.

Susan shares her knowledge widely as a speaker and serves on Montreal’s Jewish General Hospital’s board of governors, the board of Hope & Cope at the hospital’s Segal Cancer Centre and as a natural-health consultant with the hospital’s gynecological oncology tumour board.

Jonathan and Susan are also active members of Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom in Westmount and, perhaps most notably, the proud grandparents of nine.

“We’ve been so fortunate and lucky,” Susan has said. “We both have a fundamental belief that we have not just a responsibility but an obligation to give back to others. We don’t live life just for ourselves — we live this life for one another and that’s what gives life true meaning.”





With (from left): Rosemary Hoppenheim; Diane Proulx-Guerrera; and Mel Hoppenheim, LLD 09



With Norman Hébert Jr., BComm 77, former chair of Concordia's Board of Governors, and Diane Dunlop-Hébert, BComm 82



With Claire Mullins-Kruyt, BA 87



With daughter Kassy Wener at the Défi Canderel

PHILANTHROPY AND COMMUNITY

Community service is at the heart of Jonathan Wener's view of a successful life that is well lived. He has a long history of committing both time and money to causes he believes in as a passionate advocate for the arts, education and health care.

Wener has funded and personally supported numerous hospital boards, community organizations, foundations and research centres. These include but are not limited to the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts Foundation, the Festival des arts de Saint-Sauveur, Kehilla Montreal, the Goodman Cancer Research Centre of McGill University and the Fraser Institute.

Wener often says that Concordia has been critical to his success — from the role its business school played in his future career to the serendipitous encounter with Susan Hanek on campus.

His gratitude and firm belief in the power of a Concordia education led Wener to donate \$100,000 to enhance the university's library system in 1987.

"I felt bound to provide a meaningful donation to the university to show my gratitude for all it had done to prepare me for the world at large and for my own family unit," he said.

Wener is also generous with his time, which he has devoted in equal measure to philanthropy and his business.

"Writing a cheque is easy," he has remarked. "Anyone can do that. Many times, people would rather write a cheque than do anything — but time is the most precious gift."

As a proud Montrealer, Quebecer and Canadian, Wener has given his time to the cause of national unity.

When the result of the 1980 Quebec independence referendum was in doubt, Wener felt a responsibility to commit his resources and influence to help shift the tide.

He organized a rally in downtown Montreal, mobilizing his extensive network. As a result of Wener's efforts, tens of thousands gathered in Phillips Square to demonstrate.

"Jonathan organized the whole darn thing and got a lot of people on board to help," recalls Lillian Vineberg-Goodman, BFA 83, a long-time friend of the Wener family. "He makes things happen. He doesn't sit back if he hears there's an issue. He's going to fight, and he's so incredibly good at getting people to join him."

Ahead of a second referendum in 1995, Wener and realtor Philip O'Brien organized a giant, last-minute rally. The iconic Canadian author and journalist Peter C. Newman credits this overwhelming demonstration for wresting a narrow victory for the No side.

"My kids are seventh-generation Canadians and I love this place," Wener told Newman in a 1997 *Maclean's* article.

"The No forces were slipping tremendously and there was need for dramatic action. When I saw that number of people in that outpouring of emotion and the peacefulness in which it was all conducted, it made me very proud."

When Susan Wener received her first cancer diagnosis, Jonathan dedicated himself to fighting the disease. As a successful entrepreneur in full command of his business, the experience uprooted his sense of security.

“I wanted to fix it,” Wener said. “I was working on hope and supporting her the best way I could, but I was looking for a solution.”

He asked a doctor if there was a machine or a piece of high-tech equipment he could donate for Susan’s treatment and recovery.

“He said to me, ‘There’s nothing you can buy, and there’s nothing you can donate that will make a difference now for your wife. What you can do is put money in the hands of researchers to make sure this cannot happen again.’”

Jonathan and Susan soon embarked on a mission to raise money for cancer research and challenged Montreal’s business community to get involved in a year-round fundraising campaign culminating in a celebratory run through the city’s downtown streets.

The Défi Canderel was born.

The initiative proved to be a massive success. Since its inception, the charity run has donated more than \$22 million to two beneficiaries: the Rosalind and Morris Goodman Cancer Institute at McGill University and the Institut du cancer de Montréal, which is affiliated with the Université de Montréal.

“Cancer is a disease that touches us all,” Wener noted when Défi Canderel marked its 30th anniversary in 2019. “By working together and engaging the business community, collectively, we have the ability to make a difference in the lives of our friends, family, neighbours and co-workers.”

Says Kim Fuller, BFA 96, former president of the Concordia University Alumni Association and founder of Phil Inc.:

“Jonathan Wener has always been an inspiration, both as an entrepreneur and as a philanthropist. I had the pleasure of working on a branding and website development project that helped support the Défi Canderel for a special anniversary edition, and his generosity and kindness were evident and equal to his sharp business sense.”

Health care has grown as a priority for Wener. As president of the Montreal Jewish General Hospital, he presided over a strategic plan to acquire the Soeurs de Sainte-Croix site to help create the now renowned Segal Cancer Centre. He also led a record \$200-million campaign for the hospital.

“Let’s think big, not about what isn’t possible,” Wener said. “We finished the campaign at \$201 million after seven years.”





“By working together and engaging the business community, collectively, we have the ability to make a difference in the lives of our friends, family, neighbours and co-workers.”

– Jonathan Wener







FROM STUDENT TO CHANCELLOR: A COMMITTED CONCORDIAN

When Jonathan Wener received his acceptance letter to study at Sir George Williams University, one of Concordia's two founding institutions, his mind was made up.

"I said, 'My God, that's where I want to go,'" he later recalled.

Wener and Concordia have since been inextricably linked.

"I have a great sense of joy when I think about the quality of my education," he said.

As an undergraduate, Wener immersed himself in his studies and was active in all aspects of student life. He was also as tenacious in his pursuit of fun and brought others together to share that joy, a quality he continued to practise throughout his life.

Once, he organized a race where teams pushed beds on wheels down De Maisonneuve Boulevard for Commerce Week. He also ran a ski trip one year to Kitzbühel, Austria, making arrangements for more than 20 people for three weeks, including airfare, accommodations and skiing — all negotiated for \$275 per person.

"I was never home — I was always at the university," Wener said.

He may have been the first in the family to attend Sir George (Concordia), but Wener certainly was not the last. Among other alumni in the Wener family are Jonathan's sister, Pam Wener-Fridman, BA 77, and his nephews Andrew Fridman, BComm 10, and Justin Fridman, BComm 10, GrDip 15.

Wener's career in real estate always kept him close to his

old campus, as Canderel continuously developed Montreal's downtown core since the company's inception.

He officially returned to Concordia in 1995 as a member of the Board of Governors. Though he loved much about the university, he realized he could improve the student experience by revitalizing its aging buildings, especially on expansive but underdeveloped Loyola Campus.

In 1996, Wener became chair of the Real Estate Planning Committee and united representatives from throughout the university to envisage bold plans for the future. For the next decade and a half, he would lead the conceptualization and deployment of creative building projects that expanded the footprint of both campuses, shaping the university into what it is today.

"The most valuable gift we can give is time," Wener said. "Somebody who can't give money yet is prepared to provide their assistance, wisdom and guidance to the university — that should not be looked upon as anything less than a magnificent gift."

Using his expertise in real estate, Wener oversaw the construction of new buildings that supported more students and were more environmentally sustainable.

"Everything came in on time and on budget, with the best materials, the best planning and always going to tender, with a minimum of three bids, sometimes many, many more," says Lillian Vineberg-Goodman, who sat with Wener on the Real Estate Committee and was the first woman to chair the Board of Governors.



With (from left): Leonard Ellen, LLD 03; chancellor emeritus Eric Molson, LLD 06; and Richard Renaud, BComm 69, LLD 09



“The greatest legacy that I could leave was the replanning of the downtown campus and the construction of the various buildings on Sir George Williams and Loyola campuses that occurred during my chairmanship of the Real Estate Planning Committee.”

– *Jonathan Wener*



At convocation with former president and vice-chancellor Alan Shepard (left) and assorted university administrators

“I don’t think anybody else on the board ran as big a business and still participated as intensively at Concordia,” says Peter Kruyt, BComm 78, who served on the Board of Governors for 12 years and acted as chair from 2005 to 2012. “He was completely committed.”

Thanks in no small part to this transformative work, today’s campuses boldly proclaim Concordia’s status as a next-generation university.

“The greatest legacy that I could leave was the replanning of the downtown campus and the construction of the various buildings on Sir George Williams and Loyola campuses that occurred during my chairmanship of the Real Estate Planning Committee,” Wener said.

“Concordia has come into its own and matured to be a very thought-provoking and fine institution of learning. We have faculty members who are among the best in Canada. We’ve grown in status and predominance. We now have two campuses we can be very proud of.”

After serving on the Board of Governors for 17 years, Wener was named vice-chancellor in 2012 and then chancellor of Concordia in 2015. As the senior statesperson at the university, he proudly presides over major ceremonies, including handing new graduates their diploma at convocation.

“I’ve often wondered what it’s actually like for the students to be on stage receiving their degrees — some nervous, some incredibly confident, some with a real swagger as they come forward to be capped,” Wener said.

Looking back, he is proud of Concordia’s achievements and looks forward to its even brighter future.

“Concordia is more committed to its dreams than to its comfort zone,” he proclaimed at the university’s annual Chancellor’s Builders Circle and Friends Dinner in 2017.

MOMENTS IN TIME



With (from left): Graham Carr; Anne Whitelaw, BFA 87, GrDip 92, PhD 96; Guy Cormier, LLD 22; and Helen Antoniou



With Vikas Swarup, LLD 23





With Graham Carr and Fbbie Tatti, LLD 20



With (from left): Julie Gichuru, LLD 22; Helen Antoniou; and Graham Carr



With (from left): Anne-Marie Croteau, dean, John Molson School of Business; Mehdi Farashahi, MBA 94, PhD 03; Clare Akamanzi, LLD 18; and Lisa Ndejuru, PhD 21



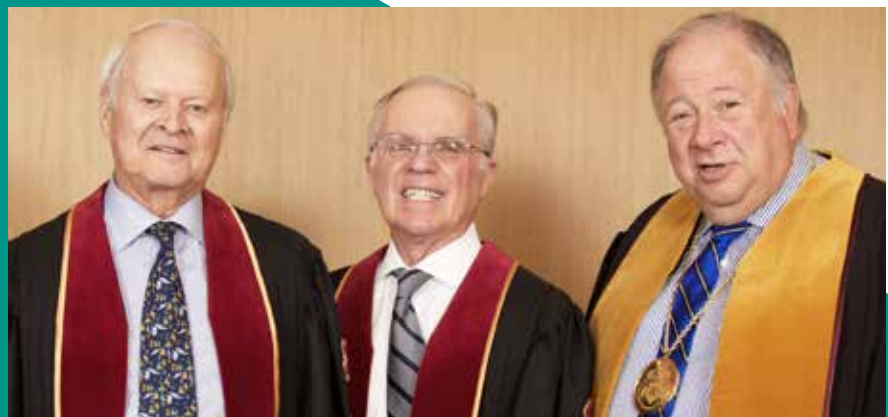
With Wilton Littlechild, LLD 18



With Natalie Panek, DSc 19



With Peter Schumann, DFA 18



With J. Sebastian van Berkom, LLD 17, and Kenneth Woods, LLD 17



With (from left): Anne-Marie Croteau; Garrett Herman, LLD 16; Richard Renaud; and Norman Hébert Jr.



With Miriam Roland, LLD 18



With William Robinson, MA 12, PhD 18



With (from left): Louis Tanguay, BComm 75, LLD 18; Gina Cody, MEng 81, PhD 89; Luigi Liberatore, LLD 18; and Anne-Marie Croteau



With Hadeel El Kassabi, PhD 18



With Régine Chassagne, DFA 16



With Robert Briscoe, LLD 18



DI-OCTO: A PERMANENT LEGACY ON CAMPUS

“I love my alma mater, Concordia. It is where my most passionate and benevolent work happens,” Wener said in 2017 while unveiling *Di-Octo*, a kinetic sculpture he and Susan Wener donated to Sir George Williams Campus on the occasion of Montreal’s 375th anniversary and Canada’s 150th anniversary.

The eight-metre-high, 725-kilogram aluminum piece comes alive as the wind blows, stretching out hypnotically with open arms and reopening its stainless-steel tentacles ad infinitum. Permanently installed on the corner of Mackay Street and De Maisonneuve Boulevard West, the sculpture represents a significant contribution to Concordia’s public art collection.

“I have always loved public art, going back to my very first buildings in 1980. This opportunity seemed like such a wonderful confluence of events to celebrate our history with another piece of magnificent sculpture by an internationally famous artist,” Wener told the *Montreal Gazette* in September 2017.

Di-Octo was designed by American artist Anthony Howe, who also created a kinetic sculpture used at the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Wener discovered Howe’s work through his daughter Kassy, who was given the family mandate to find an appropriately inspirational sculpture.

“*Di-Octo* is a beautiful, original sculpture whose graceful folding arms are a symbolic greeting for students, faculty, staff, alumni and visitors,” Wener said. “What better way to welcome everyone to our great university, city, province and country!”

There is no other sculpture like it in Canada, and only a handful exist worldwide.

“I chose Concordia’s Sir George Williams Campus because it was here that I began my journey as a student — before embarking as a businessman and real-estate developer,” said Wener. “It was here, in 1971, at the Henry F. Hall Building, that I met my dear wife Susan on her very first day of freshman orientation.”

“*Di-Octo* is a beautiful, original sculpture whose graceful folding arms are a symbolic greeting for students, faculty, staff, alumni and visitors.”

– Jonathan Wener







Anthony Howe's *Di-Octo* sculpture was unveiled on September 28, 2017, by the Wener family and distinguished guests.





BUSINESS-SCHOOL INNOVATOR: THE JONATHAN WENER CENTRE FOR REAL ESTATE

In September 2020, the Jonathan Wener Centre for Real Estate opened at Concordia to serve as a hub for teaching and research on one of the single-largest contributors to Canada's economy.

The creation of the centre at the John Molson School of Business was made possible through a visionary \$10-million donation to the Campaign for Concordia: Next-Gen Now by Jonathan and Susan Wener.

The first-of-its-kind Canadian centre unites students, faculty, researchers and industry players to share knowledge and best practices regarding the rapidly changing commercial and residential real-estate markets.

“The Jonathan Wener Centre for Real Estate is going to add great momentum for Concordia because of its uniqueness and relevance,” said Concordia President Graham Carr. “We are grateful that our chancellor made his transformative gift to allow generations of students to make a dynamic contribution to Canadian society, to Canadian business and to the world in which we live.”

The Wener Center for Real Estate advances both the theoretical understanding and real-world applications of real estate through collaborations with all Concordia faculties, including urban planning, geography, engineering and design.

“Real estate is a very sophisticated industry, requiring an awful lot of talent and knowledge from the people who enter

the workforce,” said Wener. “My hope is that our centre will provide the education and backing that our students need in a very demanding world.”

The centre trains the next generation of real-estate professionals with the cutting-edge knowledge and experience they need to succeed in the field. Recent grads are already gaining an advantage in this challenging yet rewarding industry through study programs, internships and case competitions.

“Students who graduated with a major in finance and a minor in real estate tell me their level of knowledge is head and shoulders above everybody else they start with,” said Michel Deslauriers, BComm 85, director of the Wener Centre for Real Estate, full-time lecturer in the Department of Finance and a strategic advisor to Montreal's real-estate development and construction industry. “They will certainly have a huge impact in this field.”

Connected to local, national and global real-estate ecosystems, the centre provides industry leaders with insights into evolving markets while offering training and tools to current professionals.

The centre serves as yet another cornerstone of Wener's legacy at Concordia, and his commitment to advance knowledge and new innovations for the benefit of Montreal, Quebec and Canada.

MOMENTS IN TIME







TESTIMONIALS



“Intelligent, determined and charismatic as an individual, Jon is a force to be reckoned with. However, I believe his greatest attribute lies in showing what can be accomplished through the power of community.”

– Graham Carr, Concordia president and vice-chancellor



“Jonathan Wener is a great Concordian who has graciously given his own support while also recruiting countless others to advance our young and ambitious institution.”

– Paul Chesser, BA 94, GrDip 97, vice-president, University Advancement



“For almost 30 years Jon has been a mentor and a friend who, more than anyone, is responsible for the physical growth of Concordia over the past 20 years. He is a visionary leader and philanthropist who has contributed so much to our university and the broader community.”

– Michael Di Grappa, BA 84, vice-president, Services and Sustainability



“Jonathan Wener is Mr. Concordia writ large. A former student, former member of the Board of Governors and university chancellor, he is more than anyone else responsible for the construction that has reshaped its two campuses.”

– Fredrick Lowy, LLD 08, Concordia president emeritus



“Jonathan Wener is one of the most special people in the world. He really is a man who lives to help others.”

– Richard J. Renaud, BComm 69, LLD 09, chairman and CEO of TNG Corporation, Concordia governor emeritus



“When anybody in need reaches out to him, he will extend himself to do what he can to help. That is not common for someone of his stature.”

– Salvatore Guerrera, Campaign for Concordia donor, founder of SAJO



“You can’t put a price tag on Jonathan’s generosity. I only wish there were more people who shared his values.”

– Charles Cavell, former vice-chair and member, Concordia University Board of Governors



“What I appreciate about Jon is how forward-thinking he is. He is always planning for future generations. His leadership and his contributions to Concordia have been very inspiring. He shows gratitude for the start Concordia gave him, and he does so regularly. His personal contributions of time, financial resources, smarts and overall devotion to this university are really inspiring. He sets a standard of excellence.”

– Helen Antoniou, chair, Concordia University Board of Governors



“He is probably the most forward-thinking real-estate committee chair Concordia has ever had — or any other university in the country has ever had, for that matter. He had the ability to foresee where we would grow. He is always upbeat, very thoughtful, always sees the silver lining and is very devoted. He’s a hard guy not to love!”

– Peter Kruyt, BComm 78, former chair, Concordia University Board of Governors



“Jon is a highly principled individual who will always try to do the right thing. He has a huge amount of integrity and fairness.”

– Mark Sherman, CEO of Media Experts, Campaign for Concordia donor



“He’s not just smart — he’s brilliant. He’s also forward-thinking and gutsy. Jonathan doesn’t spend time complaining. He looks for solutions.”

– Lillian Vineberg-Goodman, BFA 83, former chair, Concordia University Board of Governors



“Jonathan and I both believe that if you have passion for what you choose to do with your time, you never have to work a day in your life.”

– Morris Goodman, founder of the Morris and Rosalind Goodman Family Foundation



“He is good with people and is a natural motivator. He’s a very generous person, not only financially but with his time.”

– W. Brian Edwards, BComm 71, former vice-chair and member, Concordia University Board of Governors, and current vice-chair of the Concordia University Foundation



“Jonathan has a twinkle in his eye and a boyish grin that is so endearing. He is easy to talk to, when you can catch him!”

– Kim Fuller, BFA 96, Concordia Board of Governors external member and former president, Concordia University Alumni Association





HONOURS AND DISTINCTIONS

- Member of the Order of Canada (2003)
- Chairman's Award for Outstanding Commitment and Leadership, Federation CJA (2008)
- Inducted into the Club des entrepreneurs of the Conseil du patronat du Québec (2009)
- The Fraser Institute's T. Patrick Boyle Founders' Award (2012)
- Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal (2013)
- Défi Canderel honoured with Award of Excellence in the Outstanding Corporation Category by the Association of Fundraising Professionals (2016)
- Federation CJA Samuel Bronfman Medal (2017)
- Knight of the Order of Montreal (2018)

MOMENTS IN TIME



With (from left): Norman Hébert Jr.; Peter Kruyt; and Salvatore Guerrera



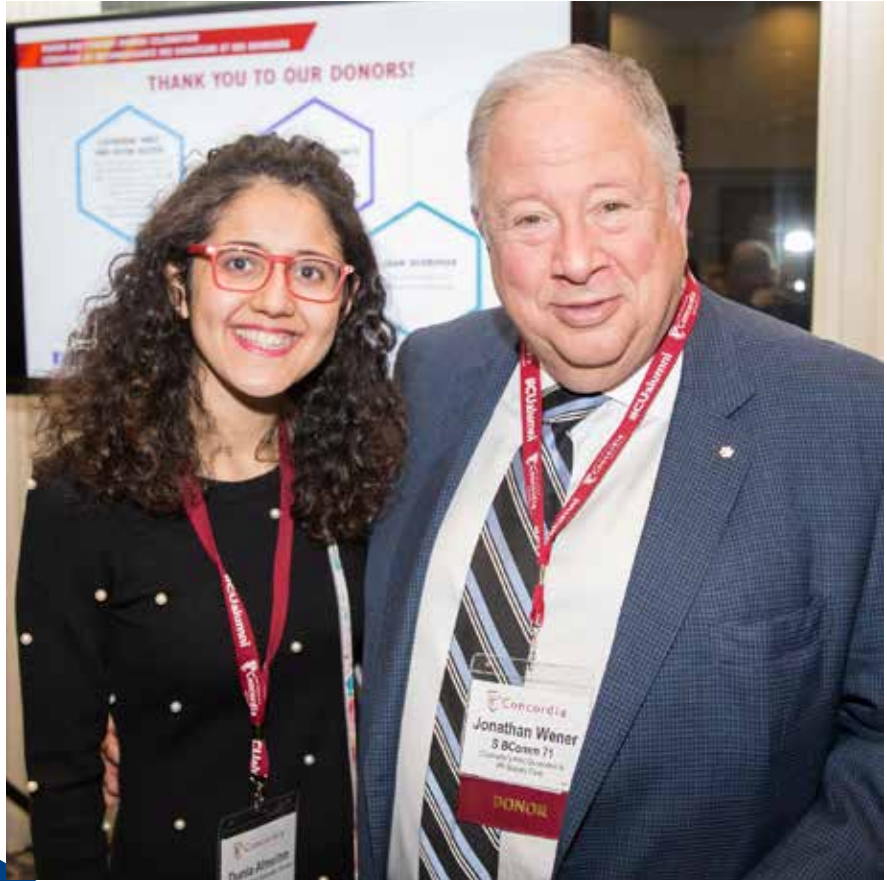
With (from left): Andrew Molson, Campaign for Concordia co-chair; Helen Antoniou; Diane Proulx-Guerrera; and Salvatore Guerrera



With Mutsumi Takahashi, BA 79, MBA 95, LLD 13



With long-time John Molson faculty member, Mahesh Sharma



With Christine Lengvari, BSc 72, and Brian Neysmith, BSc 66



With (from left): Frederick Lowy; Stephen Jarislawsky, LLD 03; and Alan Shepard



FINAL THANKS

“So much of Concordia’s upward trajectory as Canada’s next-generation university can be directly attributed to Jonathan Wener. Using his remarkable gift of uniting people in service of a worthy cause, he led the revitalization of both of our campuses, advanced our fundraising goals and developed unique opportunities for education and research. We are indescribably lucky that he chose this institution as a beneficiary of his dedication, vision and enthusiasm. On behalf of all Concordians, thank you.”

– **Paul Chesser, BA 94, GrDip 97**
*Vice-President, Advancement
Concordia University*



On behalf of all Concordians,
thank you.