



Foundation Connection

Delivering Tomorrow's Health Care, Today

SUMMER 2025

A Life Changed by Precision

Donor support powers lifesaving surgical robot at HSC, bringing hope to lung cancer patients

For lung cancer patients like An Ji Li, time is everything. And thanks to HSC Foundation donors, state-of-the-art, robot-assisted surgery is making every second count.

“When you hear the word ‘cancer’ everything stops. But knowing I had access to this technology gave me real hope,” says 33-year-old Li.

Born and raised in China, Li moved to Winnipeg in 2011. After graduating from the electrical engineering department at the University of Manitoba he began working in his field. He was healthy, thriving in his career, and building an exciting new life in Manitoba—until December 2024.

“In December I began coughing up blood. That was the first sign of trouble,” Li explains. After a trip to his family doctor to address the alarming symptoms, Li underwent an emergency CT scan. “Almost immediately after the CT scan I was referred to HSC under the care of Dr. Gilly Akhtar-Danesh and her team.”

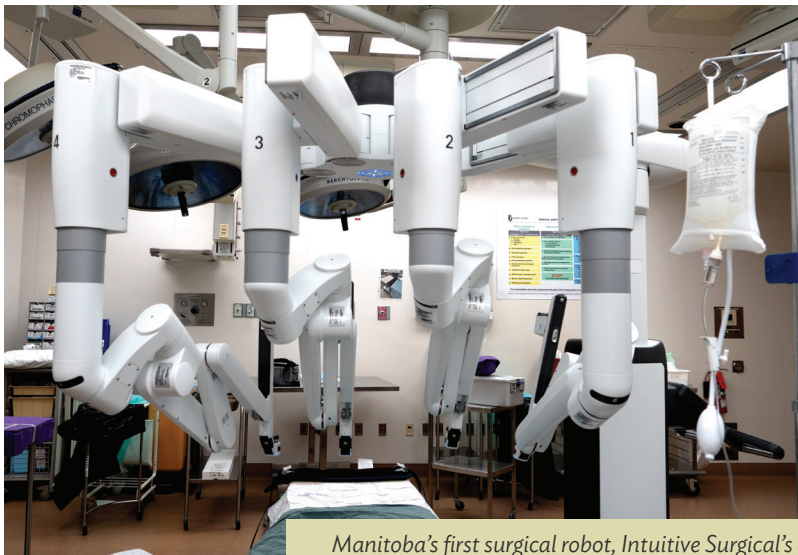
Thoracic surgeon Dr. Akhtar-Danesh joined HSC in 2023 from Ontario with a master’s degree in robotic surgery. Today, she leads a team of health care professionals working at HSC’s donor-funded Wilf Taillieu Thoracic Surgery Clinic and Endoscopy Unit as they treat patients from across Manitoba and beyond who are coping with lung and esophageal conditions.

Earlier this year, the HSC Foundation, in partnership with HSC and the provincial government, announced the arrival of the province’s first surgical robot. The da Vinci Xi surgical robot was funded through the HSC Foundation’s Operation Excellence campaign, a multi-year plan with the goal of elevating health care in Manitoba. The robot is currently being used across multiple specialties at HSC including thoracic surgery, gynecologic cancer surgery, and urology.



Thirty-three-year-old An Ji Li was diagnosed with lung cancer in early 2025.

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Manitoba's first surgical robot, Intuitive Surgical's da Vinci Xi, was officially unveiled in late April and funded by the HSC Foundation's Operation Excellence campaign in partnership with the Province of Manitoba.

Upon receiving Li's case, Dr. Akhtar-Danesh and her team moved Li through a rapid series of tests. The diagnosis: a tumour, more than four centimetres in his lower right lung. Li needed surgery and he quickly became one of the first lung cancer patients in the region to benefit from a robot-assisted lobectomy.

"I was nervous about having surgery for the first time," Li says. "But going into the surgery, knowing that it was robot-assisted really eased my mind."

Unlike traditional lung surgery that requires a large incision, robot-assisted surgery uses a high-definition 3D camera and tiny instruments to remove cancerous tissue with pinpoint accuracy. The use of the surgical robot allows for smaller incisions, fewer complications, and a much faster recovery.

"I have compared my experience with a friend of mine who underwent the traditional surgery for lung cancer, and the whole experience is night and day for the patient," he says.

Li underwent a robot-assisted lobectomy at HSC in February 2025, three months after his symptoms first appeared. He was discharged one day after his surgery and promptly began chemotherapy to reduce the risk of recurrence.

"The robot, the surgical team, the care I received—it all worked together to change what could have been the worst chapter of my life into something I could face with strength and confidence," Li adds.

This is what donor support makes possible: faster access to lifesaving care, less invasive procedures, and hope when it is needed most.



An Ji Li received lifesaving, robot-assisted surgery at HSC in February 2025.

Please support Operation Excellence—a community campaign for surgical innovation at HSC Winnipeg—to improve care for patients like An Ji Li. To learn more about Operation Excellence and to make your donation, visit OperationExcellence.ca.



Katie Hall Hursh Elected New Chair of Foundation Board

Community champion Katie Hall Hursh was elected Chair of the HSC Foundation Board of Directors at the organization's Annual General Meeting on June 17, following the extraordinary 10-year-run of her predecessor, Tina Jones, C.M., O.M.

Hursh joined the Board in 2019, and has served as Chair of the Fundraising Committee, Co-Chair of the Operation Excellence Corporate Challenge, and Vice Chair of the Board. When nominated as Chair, though, she initially hesitated.

"I had to think about it for a few days. It is a major responsibility, and I wanted to assure myself that I could honour Tina's unbelievable legacy," says Hursh, Vice President at the McGill-Stephenson Company. "I came to realize that this is exactly what I should be doing. I had the benefit of having seen Tina at work and have had a chance to learn from her outstanding leadership and the way she modelled excellence in everything she did. I have spent six years developing meaningful relationships with our Board, staff, and donors alike. And, I'm confident that by working together, we will continue to make a significant difference for Manitobans."

Long-time Board member Brian Lerner was elected Vice Chair at the meeting, while Sarah Anderson, Ken Bolt, and Grant White were elected as new members of the Board. Board member Ray Bouchard assumed Katie's previous role as Chair of the Fundraising Committee.

"Having worked with Katie on the Corporate Challenge, I have seen her commitment to our shared vision, her inspiring leadership, and her ability to rally people around our cause," says Bouchard. "She understands the important role philanthropy plays in advancing



New Board Chair, Katie Hall Hursh: "I'm confident that by working together, we will continue to make a significant difference for Manitobans."

health care and she is able to convey that message to others with heart and conviction. She will be an outstanding Chair."

Hursh points to the Foundation's strong progress with the Operation Excellence campaign and the community's buy-in as sources of great optimism for the future.

"It's a time of enormous opportunity to invest in the types of technologies and facility upgrades that attract leading surgeons and other medical professionals to HSC," adds Hursh. "Aligned with our partners in government, Shared Health, and at HSC, we are eager to continue making important contributions to patient care in Manitoba."

Read a profile of Katie Hall Hursh on the HSC Foundation website.



SCAN ME



The HSC Foundation Board Members: (back L-R) Trish Gehlen Preston, Mike Linton (former Board Member), Jarrett Bishop, Chris Watson, Richard Buchwald, K.C., Brian Lerner, Dr. Perry Gray, and Jim Eng. (front L-R) Jackie Wild, William S. Gardner, K.C., Katie Hall Hursh, Tina Jones, C.M., O.M. (former Board Member), Jonathon Lyon, President & CEO, HSC Foundation, Tara Kroeker, Margaret Proven, and Doug Stephen. Absent from the photo: Sarah Anderson, Ken Bolt, Ray Bouchard, Danny Menard, Andrew Stibbard, and Grant White.

Savour New Zealand Raises Over \$1 Million for Health Care in Manitoba

Funds support vital upgrades to the HSC Adult Emergency Department



Guests supporting the Fund-A-Need Auction at Savour New Zealand.

On February 22, more than 800 guests gathered at the RBC Convention Centre for an extraordinary evening of generosity and glamour at Savour New Zealand: Wine & Food Experience, presented by Garcea Group of Companies.

The sold-out event raised more than \$1 million, a record-breaking amount, in support of vital upgrades to the HSC Adult Emergency Department. From the powerful opening haka, a ceremonial Māori dance, to gourmet New Zealand-inspired cuisine and wine pairings, the night was a celebration of unity and impact.

“We are overwhelmed by the success of Savour New Zealand. It is a testament to the remarkable generosity of our community,” says Jonathon Lyon, President and CEO, HSC Foundation.

Highlights of the evening were the Live Auction and Fund-A-Need Auction, where donors rallied behind the HSC Foundation’s goal to purchase life-saving medical equipment for the Emergency Department including:

- Specialized bedside monitors to assess CPR effectiveness in real-time

- Portable ultrasound units
- Slit lamps for eye emergencies
- Rapid infusers for safer and quicker blood transfusions

Thank you to all the guests, partners, Savour Committee members, and volunteers, whose enthusiasm and generosity made the event truly special.



Savour New Zealand guests mingling before the event begins at the RBC Convention Centre.

Savour New Zealand would not have been possible without the generous support of:

Presenting Partner: *Garcea Group of Companies*

Fund-A-Need Champion: *Just Like New...to You*

Fund-A-Need Leader: *Wellington-Altus Private Wealth Inc.*

Tasting Experience Partner: *Manitoba Liquor Mart*

Entertainment Partner: *TD Bank*

Dinner Wine Partner: *Jones & Company Wine Merchants*

Key Event Partners: *Radiology Consultants of Winnipeg and HSC Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology & Reproductive Sciences*

Décor Partner: *PCL Construction*

Photography Partners: *Bell MTS and Master Flooring*

Auckland Partners: *HSC Section of Plastic Surgery; HSC Emergency Department; HSC Section of Thoracic Surgery; HSC Section of Urology; HSC Department of Surgery; CN; Pitblado Law; Solinsky Consulting; Winnipeg Spine Program; University of Manitoba Rady Faculty of Health Sciences—Anesthesiology, Perioperative and Pain Medicine*

Catering Partners: *Tomahawk Chips and Manitoba Pork*

Queenstown Partners: *Allco Electrical Ltd. and HSC Department of Internal Medicine*

Online Auction Partner: *Western Financial Group*

Registration Partners: *BMO and Golden West*

Wellington Partners: *BOMImed; Canada Life; Global Philanthropic; Nelson River Construction; HSC Department of Psychiatry CBTm Team; HSC Department of Psychiatry; HSC Section of Neurosurgery; IG Private Wealth Management—Buhr Blaylock & Associates; RBC Wealth Management Dominion Securities; Transplant Manitoba; McFadden Benefits & Pension Ltd.; Irwin Homes*

Signage Partner: *Contemptra Signs*

Print Media Partner: *Winnipeg Free Press*

Special thanks to friends of the Foundation:
Gene Fraser & Sheri Betker; Ray & Debbie Bouchard; Christine & Paul Soubry



Ceremonial Māori haka being performed to open the evening and welcome everyone attending Savour New Zealand.



Generosity is the Norm

Long-time supporter leaves legacy gift

It wasn't until after Norm Humby passed away in September 2024 at the age of 89 that his daughter, Karen Raimo, learned the full extent of his kindness.

"We always knew he was generous," says Raimo, "but since he passed away, people have shared many examples of his generosity that we didn't even know about. It has been truly heartwarming."

Humby, a former member of the HSC Foundation Board of Directors, was always very modest about his giving and his volunteer work. He shunned the limelight, says Raimo, choosing instead to roll up his sleeves and use his considerable business acumen to quietly help the HSC Foundation and other organizations excel.

"Norm had a very high degree of competence and professionalism," says Lynn Bishop, a long-time friend of Humby and a former Chair of the HSC Foundation Board. "He was a caring and empathetic man who was a strong and passionate advocate for health care."

One of the ways in which Humby demonstrated his passion was by leaving a gift in his will to the HSC Foundation, thereby becoming a member of the Bannatyne Legacy Circle. He had a special place in his heart for the HSC Foundation and he deeply understood that bequests were vital for sustaining excellence at HSC.

"He cared so much about HSC, the health care system, and about the community," says Raimo. "In his last days we asked him what his final wishes were. Among them, he made it clear that he wanted people to support health care."

Professionally, Humby was a chartered accountant. After a few years in public practice, he became the treasurer and then president at Soo Line Mills. The company was sold to ADM and Humby stayed on as general manager before retiring from full-time work in 1996. In retirement, he became a shareholder in charge of investments and operations at Kanee Investments.



The late Norm and Helen Humby: "My dad had such amazing ethics; he was a true gentleman and was shamelessly authentic," says Karen Raimo.

Norm Humby and his late wife Helen had four daughters and three grandchildren. They lived in St. Andrews and enjoyed leisure time in Lac du Bonnet at a cottage that Humby—a talented craftsman—built himself (a property that came to be known as the "Humby Hilton" to family and friends). He also built boats, canoes, and birdhouses, but, above all, he built community, memories, and an exceptional reputation.

"My dad had such amazing ethics; he was a true gentleman and was shamelessly authentic," says Raimo. "He was humble and modest in everything that he did. He didn't seek recognition or praise; he simply wanted to have an impact."

Innovation HSC Continues to Raise Much-Needed Funds to Support Critical Care at HSC

Your contributions are making a difference for health care in Manitoba

Since 2019, thousands of donors have stepped forward to support the annual Innovation HSC campaign, cumulatively donating more than \$17 million. This generosity helps Manitoba's hospital embrace new technology, upgrade clinical spaces, and advance research.

This year, the annual Innovation HSC campaign has a goal to raise \$2,897,620. With more than \$153,000 already raised, your continued support helps keep Manitoba's hospital nimble, responsive, and well positioned to meet the needs of Manitobans.

"Your support enables HSC to keep pace and set new standards for our health care. We're able to embrace the exciting developments in medical technology and acquire the best equipment quickly for the benefit of all Manitobans," says Jonathon Lyon, President and CEO, HSC Foundation.



Donations to the Innovation HSC campaign benefit hundreds of thousands of Manitobans who count on HSC to provide leading-edge care.



The annual Innovation HSC campaign raises funds to acquire new, cutting-edge technology and set the standard for health care excellence in Canada.

Your support allows HSC to:

- acquire the latest technology to diagnose and treat patients more quickly and effectively;
- improve systems and facilities to reduce wait times and improve outcomes as the health care needs of Manitobans change;
- initiate and advance important health care research; and
- attract and retain leading medical talent.

When innovation thrives, health care professionals can do their best work, and patients can get the best care possible. Thank you for your continued support and donations.



SCAN ME

“Every Penny Counts”

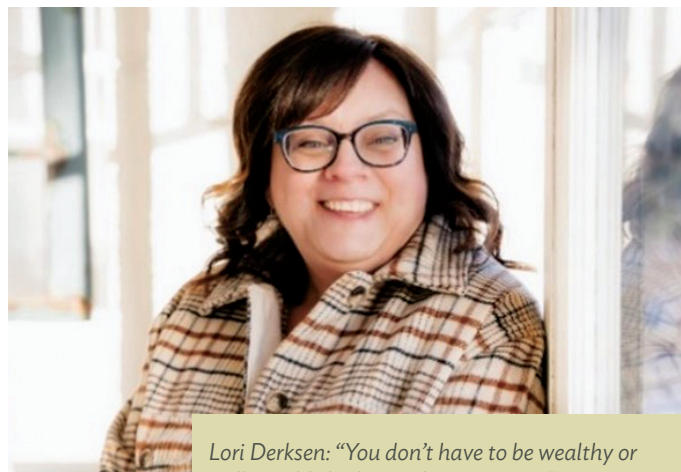
Lori Derksen has directed a gift toward spine and back research through the HSC Foundation.

Lori Derksen was raised on a farm near Alexander, Manitoba, and has always been motivated by a strong desire to help those around her. She is deeply committed to the power of philanthropy, believing that gifts of all sizes, from people of all backgrounds, can make a meaningful difference.

“I’m certainly not a wealthy woman,” she says. “I’ve spent my entire career in the not-for-profit sector, and I grew up on a small family farm. But I want to emphasize that you don’t have to be wealthy or well-established to make an impact. My philosophy in fundraising is simple: every penny counts.”

Derksen’s estate planning includes a gift to the HSC Foundation, designated for spine and back research and care. This is especially personal to her, as she lives with chronic spine and back issues.

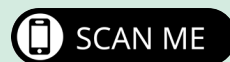
By including a gift to the HSC Foundation in her will, she is ensuring that her legacy of kindness and service will continue to benefit others long after she’s gone. Her story is a reminder that anyone, regardless of financial means, can make a lasting impact by including charitable giving in their estate planning.



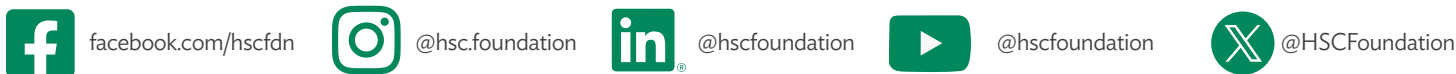
Lori Derksen: “You don’t have to be wealthy or well-established to make an impact.”

By leaving a gift to the HSC Foundation in your will you are contributing to the future of health care, helping to support innovative research and patient care for generations to come. For more information, contact Irma McKenzie, Director of Gift Planning, HSC Foundation, at 204-515-5624 or imckenzie@hscfoundation.mb.ca.

To make your donation today, visit hscfoundation.mb.ca or call 204-515-5612 or 1-800-679-8493 (toll-free).



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