



Calvin Stiller, MD

Dr. Calvin Stiller was Canada's major voice in organ transplantation during the 1970's, 1980's and early 1990's when the field transformed from a risky experimental undertaking to a reliable, successful venture. It was Dr. Stiller who, in the late 1970's, obtained the promising new drug cyclosporine and organized its first multi-centre clinical trial in kidney transplantation in North America, creating the foundation for subsequent studies that put Canada on the world stage.

Cyclosporine remains today as the drug of choice to combat tissue rejection after transplantation. He was responsible for the controversial but groundbreaking research that showed that cyclosporine, an immunosuppressant, could halt the progression of Type 1 Diabetes – demonstrating that it was an immune disorder.

Dr. Stiller's magic touch as a builder pervades every phase of his career. A physician, scientist, administrator, policy innovator and entrepreneur, Dr. Stiller developed one of the most dynamic organ transplant programs in the nation and championed countless other initiatives that have enriched research enterprise in Canada. He is a visionary with organizational genius.

In a lifetime, an individual might be successful in creating one institution or program. Dr. Stiller has been the architect of many, including the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame, Ontario Institute for Cancer Research, MaRs, and the Stiller Centre. From 1984 to 1996, he established and led the Multi-Organ Transplant Service (MOTS) at the London Health Sciences Centre's University Hospital, the first of its kind in Canada and one of the first in the world. During this time, Dr. Stiller had a remarkable run as a crusader for organ donation and the organ donor card, and popularized, if not coined, the term "Gift of Life".

Dr. Stiller's appointment to the board of the Medical Research Council of Canada in 1987 coincided with his shift towards medical entrepreneurship, along with a belief in the role of productive partnerships between the private, public and voluntary sectors. In 1996 he was named Ontario Entrepreneur of the Year. Convinced that there was a serious lack of capital available to Canadian bioscientists, he honed his idea of involving the private sector in stimulating a real Canadian-grown life sciences industry. Accordingly, he built four venture funds – the largest being the Canadian Medical Discovery Fund – that served as the catalyst for biotechnology in Canada and developed early-seed investments in discoveries coming out of universities.

A recipient of numerous prestigious awards and honours, Dr. Stiller is a Member of the Order of Canada (1995) and the Order of Ontario (2000), and has received the Queen's Jubilee Award (2002). Recognized for Life Time Achievement by the Canadian Society of Transplantation (2003), he also holds five honorary doctorate degrees.

Dr. Stiller was promoted to Officer of the Order of Canada on December 30, 2011.