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HAMILTON REGION

Mac prof appointed to the Order of Canada for revolutionary telerobotic surgery research

His research allows patients to be operated on from a distance, improving health-care access to people living in remote regions of Canada

By **Alessia Passafiume** Spectator Reporter

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For the past 30 years, Dr. Mehran Anvari, a professor of surgery at McMaster University, has been working to improve quality and access to health care for patients in remote regions of Canada.

On Wednesday, that work was recognized by the Governor General, landing him an appointment to the [Order of Canada](#), which recognizes “outstanding achievement, dedication to the community and service to the nation.”

“It’s a great honour,” he said, “not only for myself, but for the team at St. Joseph’s and McMaster.”

It’s an honour at least 30 years in the making.

In the late 1990s, Anvari travelled to Nunavut to visit some friends when he came across a young mother who let him know her son had died due to a lack of health-care access.

“It appeared to me that in a country like Canada where we have such a significant population living in remote areas, we need to improve access,” he said.

At that time, his team at St. Joseph’s Hospital and McMaster University had just begun experimenting with robotic surgery when they realized they could use those robots to offer surgery to patients from a distance.

After two years, their revolutionary research was put to the test, and they performed a series of complex telerobotic surgeries between St. Joseph’s Hospital and North Bay, Ont.

When the mode of surgery proved to be a success, Anvari and his team worked toward developing and commercializing tele-operable and medical robots, and are now working toward creating an autonomous system with the use of artificial intelligence.

“It’s really thanks to the effort of everyone involved that we’ve been able to pioneer this field.”

Other Canadians appointed to the Order of Canada this year include Carol Tator for her social justice advocacy, Lynn Posluns for her research on women’s cognitive health and aging, and Victoria Grant for bridging the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples culture, business and community.



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