

# MITACS 10th Anniversary

Creation and Early Years

Dr. Luc Vinet  
Rector, Université de Montréal  
Co-founder, MITACS

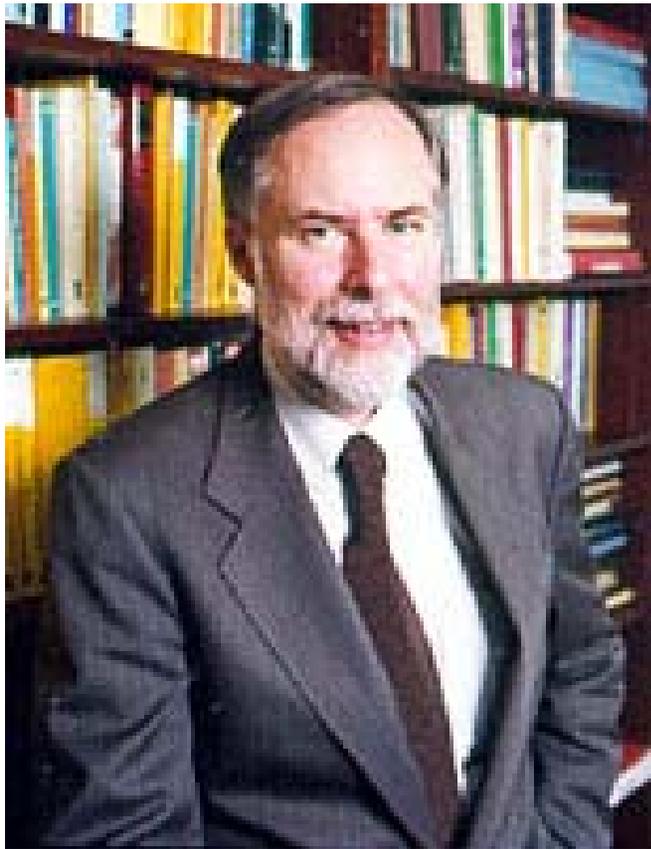
June 4, 2009

The Success of MITACS:  
A reflection on the vitality of the  
Canadian mathematical science  
community.

A privilege to have contributed to it's  
creation.

We were four who took on to set  
MITACS up in 1997

# Porthos



# Athos



# Aramis



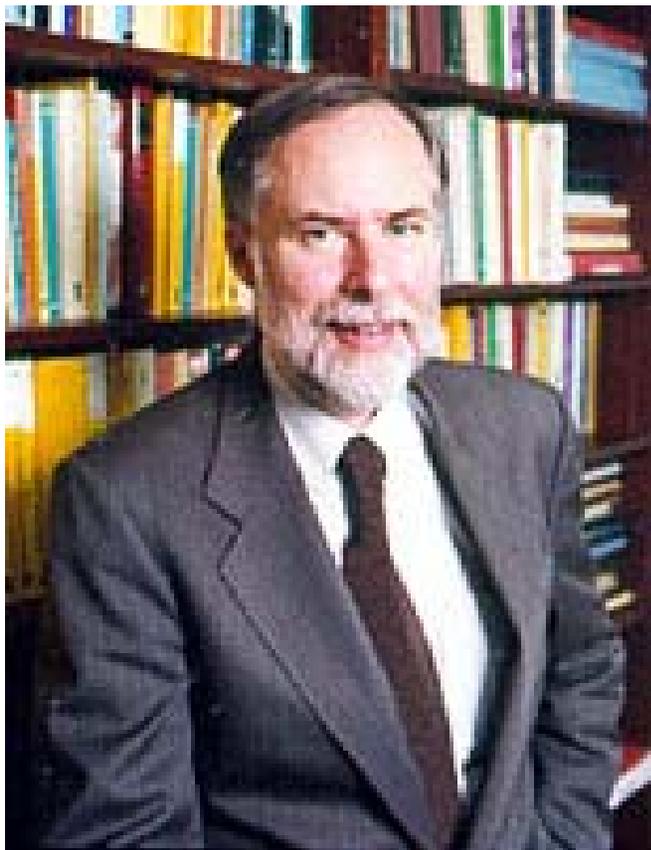
# d'Artagnan



# The 3 Musketeers : 10 years after



# Porthos



## Steve Halperin

Then Chair of Mathematics Department  
University of Toronto

Now Dean. College of Computer,  
Mathematical and Physical Sciences  
University of Maryland

# Athos



## Nassif Ghoussoub

Then Director of PIMS

Now Director of BIRS

# Aramis



## Donald A. Dawson

Then Director of the Fields  
Institute

Now Professor Emeritus and  
Distinguished Research  
Professor

Carleton University

# d'Artagnan



## Luc Vinet

Then	Director of the CRM
Now	Rector Université de Montréal

Of course we basically aimed to get the support of...

# Richelieu



## Tom Brzustowski

Then President of NSERC

Now RBC Professor  
University of Ottawa

# Context

- Disastrous 1<sup>st</sup> NSERC reallocation exercise
- A show of character : partnering and outreaching
- Existence of three reasonably well funded national mathematical science institutes:  
    CRM, Fields, PIMS
- MITACS a manifestation of the revolution in the Canadian mathematics spirit – often given as an example.

# Proposal Development

Under driven leadership of Steve Halperin whose importance will never be stressed enough, we had numerous meetings across the country and used the regional bases of the institutes

- To establish the scientific program
- To select the PIs
- To establish the governance
- To identify the board members
- To agree on the management
- To develop the application

etc

An anecdote for the MITACS records:

How its founders almost got barred from a famous Vancouver restaurant.

# A few slackers

June 99

Steven Halperin left for University of Maryland

Replaced as MITACS director by Donald Dawson (interim)

July 99

Luc Vinet became provost at McGill

Replaced by Jacques Hurtubise as Director of CRM

Left the hard work to the faithfuls

**Allen Eaves**

present Chairman

Board member since the beginning

Brother-in-law of Steve Halperin

# Arvind Gupta

2000



Director since  
November 1999

Leading MITACS  
with dedication and  
inspiration

We owe him much.

2009



MITACS has made a name for itself

You should all be proud.

A striking example of notoriety: MITACS  
internship program

- Transcends mathematics
- Noticed in particular by PM's advisory committee on public service renewal.

MITACS has remarkably delivered on promises we had made

Congratulations to Arvind, Allen and all the MITACS community

MITACS will do great beyond 2012

# Message from Don Dawson

It is with great pleasure to congratulate the entire MITACS family across Canada on the occasion of the 10th anniversary. When a group of us including Nassif Ghoussoub, Arvind Gupta, Steve Halperin, Luc Vinet, and 218 mathematical scientists from across Canada submitted a proposal to the Networks of Centres of Excellence for the creation of MITACS on April 24, 1998 we had the dream of creating a framework to bring together mathematical scientists from across Canada and across disciplines to “Harness Mathematical Power for the 21st Century”, to bring together researchers from universities, industry, health sciences, business and finance and to provide a new collaborative setting for training a new generation of mathematical scientists. During the past 10 year the phenomenal successes and innovations of MITACS have far surpassed our highest expectations. This is thanks to the great contributions from senior researchers, the MITACS staff and the many young mathematical scientists who have been involved during these years. This success story would have been impossible without the exceptional leadership and dedication of Arvind Gupta. He has guided MITACS to its current status as a model for the world which provides dramatic proof of the enormous benefits of networking mathematical scientists from across the disciplines to address the challenges we all face in the 21st century. My best wishes to all participants at this 10th anniversary celebration.

Don Dawson

Université   
de Montréal

# Message from Nassif Ghoussoub

Dear Luc, Don, Steve and Arvind,

I cherished to be with you today to be part of this wonderful event, but also to compare hairline and hair color.

Unfortunately, exceptional circumstances made it impossible.

As you must know by now – since I brag about it all the time – I had the privilege to join Luc, Steve and Don, in the founding of MITACS 10 years ago, and in the process to have tons of fun (too embarrassing to tell you about now that we all qualify for senior bus passes). This is a contribution we made to Canadian science that seems to be never forgotten as it keeps making comebacks. Why?

# Message from Nassif Ghoussoub (cont'd)

Because Arvind Gupta keeps it alive over the years by leading MITACS to higher and higher levels , and in the process adding more and more value to our bragging rights.

My hearty congratulations to MITACS on its 10th anniversary, to Arvind, And to all the MITACS investigators, interns, students and staff for making this institution such a success story for mathematics and for Canada.

Nassif

# Message from Steven Halperin

As the founding PI for MITACS It is with pleasure and pride that I congratulate the program on its wonderful success! The idea that Mathematics could make a direct contribution to industrial development and the economy was not one that was easily accepted by NSERC at the time. So it was a real pleasure to have our proposal ranked first in that competition and, ultimately, to have its implementation approved by NSERC. However, I admit that I never dreamed that it would take off so spectacularly, and passing one review after another with flying colors.

Even before its approval this proposal had a major accomplishment to its credit. Namely, it provided the occasion for a serious joint co-operative venture among the CRM, Fields and PIMS, and the credit for the initial success belongs in large part to the collaborative efforts of the three directors: Luc Vinet, Don Dawson, and Nassif Ghoussoub. The country owes them a great debt. And, on a personal note, I would recall to my three colleagues (and good friends) our hysterical celebratory dinner in Vancouver, which will always be one of my very fond memories. It is my great regret that my current job makes it impossible to be with you today, but I challenge my three colleagues to organize another such dinner at a time when we can all be there.

# Message from Steven Halperin (cont'd)

After the initial euphoria of winning the award, it became clear that the work of accomplishing what we had promised had only begun. But not for me, because almost immediately I changed universities and countries, leaving that hard work to the new Director, Arvind Gupta, who had been an active participant in the proposal, and whose leadership since has guided MITACS to its current place in the national sun. Arvind has earned our grateful thanks, respect and admiration. He certainly has mine, since he has so magnificently delivered on the promises I made on behalf of all of us! I would also like to express my thanks to all the initial members of the MITACS Board, and especially to our first Chair, Hugh Morris, whose wise counsel and helpful interventions got the program off to a strong start. I am told that the current Chair continues that good work at the same high level!

with all best wishes,

steve

Happy 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary MITACS  
and  
Many Happy Returns.