



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Honorary Degree Citations The degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*, conferred on Dr. Djavad Mowafaghian Friday, June 5, 2009

Mr. Chancellor, this country gains much of its strength from those who come here to share their talent and vision with all Canadians. Djavad Mowafaghian is one such individual. An unassuming man of great generosity and compassion, he is an exemplary citizen who has given back as much as he has received.

His journey began in Iran, his country of birth. No stranger to hardship, he lost his father at an early age, and was raised by his mother in very modest circumstances. It was she who taught him the importance of community and instilled in him a passion for helping others. In time, he became the largest construction contractor in Tehran and enjoyed an enviable reputation for his business acumen. In 1987, he immigrated to Canada with his family and used his gifts for business to build a significant real estate development enterprise here in British Columbia. Yet, throughout these many years of success, he has never lost sight of his mother's teachings.

For more than thirty years, his paramount concern has been the welfare of others, and most especially the health and education of children. In his native country, he has funded the construction of numerous schools, including schools for the visually and hearing impaired. He has also established more than seventy scholarships for international students in London.

Convinced that young people must be healthy before they can learn, he has made several gifts to improve the physical health of children, such as the four pressure rooms for bone marrow transplants in Geneva, Switzerland. In 2004, he bestowed a significant gift on the BC Children's Hospital for redevelopment of their oncology unit and out-patient clinics.

We too have been the fortunate beneficiaries of his friendship and generosity. His magnificent multi-million dollar gift to our Faculty of Health Sciences will enable researchers to focus their efforts on health policy and programs that will improve children's physical and emotional development and mental health. A part of this exceptionally generous gift will also provide facilities for infectious disease research that will have a significant effect on global health for people of all ages, particularly children who are victims of such disease.

In 2003, and with his usual foresight, Mr. Mowafaghian created the Djavad Mowafaghian Foundation to ensure that his good work carries on well into the future. Today, we honour this visionary philanthropist and humanitarian.

Mr. Chancellor, on behalf of the Senate of this university, I ask that you now confer upon Mr. Djavad Mowafaghian the degree Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*.