

## [GOVERNMENT OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND, 1821]

[2 George IV]

**Royal Charter of McGill College**

[Granted on March 31, 1821]

[1] Province of Lower Canada  
*Fiat*  
 Recorded in the Office of Enrollment at  
 Quebec the 3<sup>rd</sup>. day of October 1821 in  
 the first Register of Commissions from  
 His Majesty

Folio 279.

J. Ready Clerk Provl. Regr.

**G**eorge the Fourth by the Grace of God,  
 of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and  
 Ireland King Defender of the Faith

To all to whom these Pre[sen]ts shall come,  
 Greeting.—

**W**hereas The Honorable Jam[es] McGill late  
 of the City of Montreal in th[e Pro]vince  
 of Lower Canada now deceased by Hi[s] last Will  
 and Testament bearing date at Montreal the Eighth  
 day of January, in the year of our Lord one thou-  
 sand Eight hundred and Eleven did give and  
 bequeath a certain Tract of land near the Said City  
 of Montreal with the Dwelling House and other  
 Buildings thereon erected, To Trustees in Trust to  
 convey and assure the same to the Royal Institu-  
 tion for the advancement of Learning established  
 by virtue of an act of the Provincial Parliament of  
 Lower Canada made and passed in the forty first  
 year of the reign of His late Majesty intituled “*an  
 act for the establishment of Free Schools and the  
 advancement of Learning in this Province*” upon  
 condition that the sa[id] Institution should within  
 Ten years from the decease of the said James  
 McGill erect and Establish or cause to be erected  
 and established upon the said land an University  
 [or Col]lege for the purposes of Education and the  
 advancement of Learning in the said Province  
 with a competent number of Professors and  
 Teachers to render such establishment effectual

and beneficial for the purposes intended and also  
 upon condition that one of the Colleges to be  
 comprised in the said University should be called  
 “McGill College”.—

And whereas the said James McGill, Esquire,  
 [by] his said last will did further give and bequeath  
 to the said Trustees the sum of Ten thousand  
 pounds in trust to pay the same with Interest to  
 accrue thereon from and after the expiration of  
 Three years from his decease to the said Royal  
 Institution for the advancement of Learning to be  
 applied as soon as the said Institution should have  
 erected an University or College on the Said land  
 toward[s] defraying the Expenses thereby in-  
 curred and [to]wards maintaining the said Univer-  
 sity or College so erected and established.

And whereas we have been humbly petitioned  
 by Said Royal Institution for the advancement of  
 Lea[rn]ing that we would be pleased to grant our  
 Royal Charter for the more perfect erection and  
 Establishment of the said College and for incor-  
 porating the members thereof for the purposes  
 aforesaid, and for such further endowment thereof  
 as to us should seem meet.

We having taken the premises into our Royal  
 consideration and being desirous that an Univer-  
 sity or College should be Established for the edu-  
 cation of Youth in the principles of true Religion  
 and for their Instruction in the different Branches  
 of Science and literature are willing to comply  
 with the prayer of the said petition and to afford  
 every assistance towards carrying the Intentions  
 of the said James McGill into exec[ution.]

Therefore Know ye that we of our especial grace  
 certain Knowledge and mere motion ha[ve]  
 willed, ordained and granted and do by [these]  
 presents for us our heirs and Successors [will,]  
 Ordain and grant that upon the said land and in the  
 Said Buildings thereon erected or to be erected  
 there shall be established from this time one Col-  
 lege at the least for the education of Youth and  
 Students in the Arts and Faculties to continue for  
 ever,

[1.]

[1] Copied from images of a damaged 1833 exemplification of the original charter at <http://www.archives.mcgill.ca/public/exhibits/installation/main/gallery-1821.htm>; text also recited in the 1852 charter at <https://www.mcgill.ca/secretariat/charter-statutes/royal>, as copied from *McGill University: Charters Provincial Statutes and Various Agreements* (1934). Text missing from the former copy has been supplied from the latter, where shown. The original is one block of text. For easier reading, this edition divides the text into paragraphs with clauses numbered in the margin.

and that the First College to be erected thereon shall be called “McGill College”

and that our Trusty and Well Beloved the Governor of Lower Canada, Lieutenant Governor of Lower Canada, Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada, The Bishop of Quebec, The Chief Justice of Montreal and the Chief Justice [of Upper] Canada for the time being shall be G[overnors] of the said McGill College

and that t[he said McGill] College shall consist of one principal [to be] elected in manner herein-after mentioned a[nd] who shall be during His continuance in the Said Office a Governor of the Said College of Four Profefsors to be also elected in manner hereinafter mentioned, and of fellows, Tutors and Scholars in such numbers and at such Salaries and Subject to such provisions rules and regulations as shall hereafter be appointed by the Statutes Rules and ordinances of the said College.

[2.] And we do by these presents for us our heirs and Succefsors will ordain and grant that the Principal and Profefsors of the Said College Shall be from time to time elected by the said Governors or the major part of such of them of them as Shall be present at any meeting to be holden for such election

and in case of an equality of votes the officer present at such meeting whose office is first described in order in these presents shall hav[e] a double or casting vote,

provided always that the persons by whom such elections shall be [made] shall notify the Same respectively to us our he[irs] or successors through one of our or their [prin]cipal Secretaries of State by the first opportunity

and in case that we our heirs or Successors shall disapprove of any persons so elected and shall cause such disapprobation to be notified to him under the Royal Signet and Sign manual or through one of the Principal Secretaries of State the person so elected as aforesaid shall immediately upon such Notification cease to hold the Office of Principal or Professor to which he shall have been elected as aforesaid

and the Said Governors shall thereupon proceed to the election of another person to fill the office of such Principal or professor respectively and so from time to time as often as the case shall happen.

And We do by these presents for us our heirs and Successors will ordain and Grant that the said Governors Prin[cipal] and Fellows and their Successors for ever shall be one distinct and separate Body Politic and Corporate in Deed and in word by the name and style of the “Governors Principal and Fellows of McGill Coll[ege] at Montreal in the said Province of Lower Canada”

and that by the Same name they shall have perpetual Succession and a common Seal

and that they and their Successors shall from time to time have full power to Break alter make new or change such common Seal at their will and pleasure and as shall be found expedient

and that by the Said name the Said Governors, Principal and Fellows and their Successors from time to time and at all times here after shall be a Body Politic and corporate in deed and in law and be able and capable to have, take, receive, purchase acquire hold pofsess enjoy and retain

[4.] And we do hereby for us our Heirs and Successors give and grant full authority and free license to them and their Successors by the name aforesaid

to have [take] receive and purchase acquire, hold, pos[sess en]joy and retain to and for the use of [the said] College notwithstanding any Statutes [or] Statute of Mortmain any manors, Rectories Advowsons, Mefsuages, Lands, Tenements, Rents, Hereditaments of what Kind, nature or quality soever so as that the Same do not exceed in yearly value the Sum of Six thousand pounds above all charges

and moreover, to take, purchase, acquire, have, hold enjoy receive possess and retain notwithstanding any Such Statutes or Statute to the contrary all or any goods, chattels, charitable and other contributions Gifts and Benefactions whatsoever;

and that the said [Go]vernors, Principal and Fellows and th[eir Successors] by the same name shall and may be able and cap[able] in Law to Sue and be sued, implead and be imp[lead]ed answer and be answered in all and every Court [or] Courts of record or places of Judicature within o[ur] United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and our Said Province of Lower Canada and other Our Dominions and in all and singular actions causes

- pleas, Suits, matters and Demands whatsoever of what kind and nature or Sort soever in as large ample and Beneficial manner and form as any other Body politic or Corporate or any other our liege subjects being persons able and Capable in law may or can have, take, purchase, receive, hold, possess, enjoy, retain sue implead or answer or be sued impleaded or answered in any manner whatsoever;
- [5.] and we do by these presents for us our heirs and Successors will ordain and grant that the Governors of the Said College or the major Part of them shall have power and authority
- to frame and make Statutes Rules and ordinances touching an[d] concerning the good Government of the Said College the performance of Divine Service therein, the Studies, lectures, Exercises and degrees in arts and faculties and all matters regarding the Same the Election Qualification and residence of the principal Professors Fellows and Scholars the Salaries, Stipends and provisions for the principal Professors Fellows Scholars and officers of the Said College and touching and concerning any other matter or thing which to them shall seem good, fit useful and agreeable to this our Charter. Provided that [no] such Statutes, Rules and ordinances shall have any Force or effect until allowed and confirmed by us our Heirs and Successors
- and also from time to time to revoke, augment or alter the Same as to them or the major part of them shall deem expedient subject always to our allowance and confirmation as aforesaid.
- Provided that the said Statutes, Rules and ordinances or any of them shall not be repugnant to the Laws and Statutes of this our Realm an[d] of our Said Province of Lower Canada,
- [6.] And we do hereby for us our heirs and Successors charge and command that the Statutes Rules and ordinances aforesaid subject to the said Provisions shall be strictly and inviolably observed Kept and performed so long as they shall respectively remain in force and effect under the Penalties to be thereby or therein inflicted or contained;
- And we do by these presents for us our heirs and Successors will ordain direct and appoint that the members of the Royal Institution aforesaid for the time being shall be visitors of the Said College
- [7.]
- and we do further will and ordain and grant that the Said College Shall be deemed and taken to be an University and that the Students in the Said College sh[all] have liberty and faculty of taking the degrees of Bach[elor] Master and Doctor in the Several arts and [fa]culties at the appointed times and shall have liberty within themselves of performing Scholastic Exercises for the conferring [of such degrees] in such manner as shall be directed by the [Statutes] Rules and ordinances of the Said College
- [8.]
- And [we] do by these presents for us our heirs and Successors grant and declare that these our Letters Patent or the enrollments or exemplifications thereof shall and may be good firm valid sufficient and effectual in the Law according to the [true] inten[t] and meaning of the same and shall [be] tak[en and] construed and adjudged in the most favo[urable] and beneficial Sense for the best advan[tage] of the Said Governors, Principal, fellows [and] Scholars of the Said College at Montreal [afore]Said as well in our Courts of Rec[ord as else]where and by all and Singular Judges Justices, Officers, Ministers and other [sub]jects whatsoever of us our heirs and Successors [any] misrecital, nonrecital, omission, imperfect[ion,] defect, matter, cause or thing whatsoever to [the] contrary thereof in any wise notwithstan[ding] without fine or fee great or small to be for the same in any manner rendered done or paid to us in our Hanaper or elsewhere to our use.
- [9.]
- In witness whereof we have caused these our Letters to be made Patent.
- Witness ourself at Westminster this thirty first day of March in the Second year of our Reign.
- By Writ of Privy Seal signed *Bathurst*

I do hereby certify that this and the foregoing three half Sheets of paper, contain a true Copy of an Entry as on record in the office of the records at Quebec, in the First Register of Letters Patent from His Majesty. Folio 2[79]

Secretary's Office  
Quebec 10th July 1833.  
*D Daly* [ . . . ]

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